



# DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD



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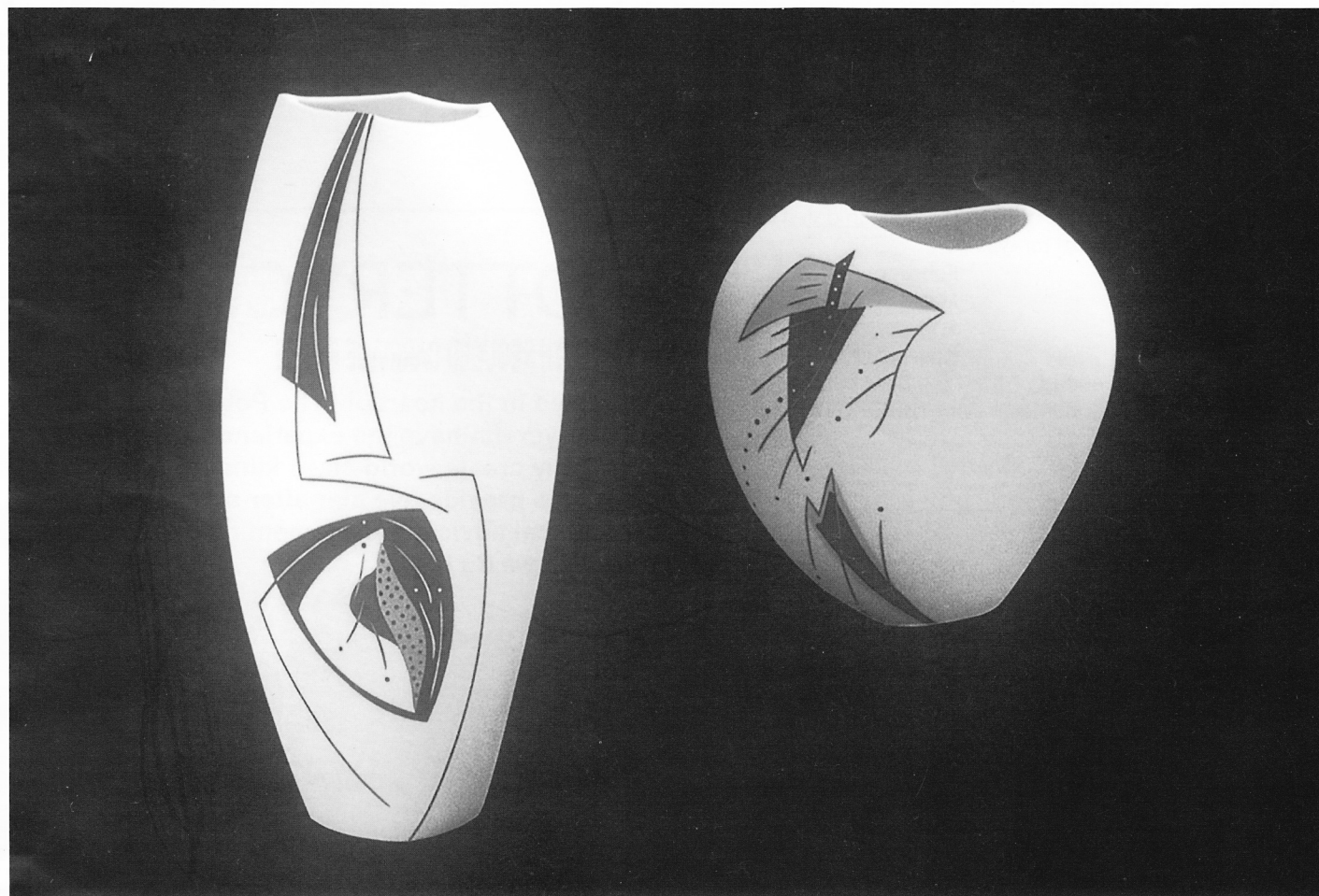
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[www.thedcpg.org.uk](http://www.thedcpg.org.uk)

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2010

£1.50

## ABOUT THE GUILD & THE NEWSLETTER

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 £22.50 Single £19.50 Student £9.50 Newsletter only; £7 per annum.

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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 ILLUSTRATION

Porcelain inlaid pots by Sue Dyer height 24 cm & 15 cm,

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## Editorial

The visit to the V&A Museum, to see the new ceramics gallery had rather limited support, with several last minute cancellations. Only five guild members eventually made the trip, although they all enjoyed their visit (did any of you find the Murray Fieldhouse pots?). We are planning a visit to the British Museum in the Autumn, to see the Percival David collection, & will keep you all informed when we have a date.

The proposed kiln building & wood firing Workshop with Joe Finch is still under consideration, with various hurdles to be overcome. Autumn is the earliest that we can expect to proceed.

What your committee really need to know is what level of support this type of activity will receive from guild members. Please consider the details on the form, which is with this Newsletter, then either send it to me, or send your comments by e.mail, or phone me. We really do need to know what you think & what level of support exists, before we commit more time & possibly guild funds to this activity.

Obviously it would be pointless to go to a lot of effort and expenditure, only to find that no-one is interested in the project. Please do make an effort for us on this, we are not mind readers (well not all of us) so we do need to have some indication of what guild members expect or want.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

## Future Guild Events

### Please note

Unless otherwise stated our usual meeting venue is the Methodist Church Hall in Kings Langley. (WD4 8PA) Doors open 7.45pm. & meetings start at 8.00 pm.

**Fri 14 May Richard Miller "from thrower to tile maker".** A young maker now running a successful tile business [www.froyletiles.co.uk](http://www.froyletiles.co.uk). Recently re-located to the restored Farnham Pottery, Wrecclesham.

**Fri 11 June Alison and Anthony Dix. 'Torsos and Tableware'.** A soda-firing duo who work in contrasting styles. Alison makes torsos from textured clay, and Tony throws functional ware. This is the meeting that was postponed in the midst of the January blizzards. Come and find out how, among other things, to convert an old electric kiln into something completely different.

### The Stan Romer Award.

This year will be the eleventh since this award was introduced. The subject this year is "Vessel"

### Save the Date: POD 2010

**Potters Open day (POD) Saturday 13th November at Longdean School in Hemel Hempstead.**

Please save the date and tell anyone you know that we have managed to clinch Elaine Peto to come and demonstrate for us on our special day. (Animal sculptures.)

Joining her will be Mark Griffiths. He is a well known and well respected potter. (Wood fired kilns and gas kilns. Thrown ware.)

Please visit their websites for an interesting insight into their incredible abilities.

[http://www.hampshirearts.co.uk/pages/pages/elaine\\_peto.html](http://www.hampshirearts.co.uk/pages/pages/elaine_peto.html)

<http://www.markgriffithspottery.co.uk>

PLEASE NOTE you can book your place on the guild Website [www.thedcpg.org.uk](http://www.thedcpg.org.uk)

## Other Events

**1 May-30 Jun Lucy Rie, Peter Collingwood and Claudia Cassanovas' Galerie Besso, 15 Royal Arcade, 280 Bond St, W1X 3HB Tel: 0207 491 1706 to check the dates. Mon-Fri 10-5.30pm.**

**8-31 May Artspace 2010.** At the Barn Galleries near Henley-on-Thames.

Annual show of ceramics, sculpture and paintings. Over 70 selected exhibitors

**8 June Opening of Phase 2 of ceramics galleries. V&A.**

**19-20 June Slipware Workshop.** Taena Pottery, Whitley Court, Upton St Leonards, Glos. GL4 8ED

**25-27 June Earth and Fire.** Rufford Craft Centre, Nr. Ollerton, Notts, NG2 01623 822944



[www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/leisure/arts/earthfire](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/leisure/arts/earthfire).

**1-4 July New Designers 2010 – Part 1** Includes ceramics, textiles, fashion, glass, jewellery. 52 Upper St. Islington, N1 0QH. 0207 7270398 [www.newdesigners.com](http://www.newdesigners.com)

**2-5 July Ceramics S.E.** The Friars, Aylesford, Nr. Maidstone, Kent, ME20 7BX 01622 790796 [www.ceramics-southeast.co.uk](http://www.ceramics-southeast.co.uk). 10-5pm, £4 adults, £3 concs

**15-18 July Art in Action** Waterperry House, Nr. Wheatley, Oxon, OX33 1J2 10am-5.30pm 0207 381 3192 [www.artinaction.org.uk](http://www.artinaction.org.uk) Adults £15, snr. citizens £12, concs £8, child 9-17yrs £5, under 9 – free  
NB reduction of £1 on all tickets if booked online.

**30Jul-1Aug Potfest in the Park** Selected show of 100 potters. Hutton-in-the Forest Penrith. 10-5pm. Tel: 017684 83820. [www.potfest.co.uk](http://www.potfest.co.uk)

**6-8 Aug Potfest in the Pens** Unselected show of 120 potters. Agricultural Mart, Penrith. 017684 83820

**6-8 Aug Art in Clay 2010** Hatfield House. 10-5.30pm Fri Sat, 10-5pm Sun [www.hatfield.artinclay.co.uk](http://www.hatfield.artinclay.co.uk)  
Look out for newcomer (Guild Member) Marshall Colman

**17-19 Sept Ceramics in the City** Geffry Museum, Kingsland Rd, London, E2 8EA 0207 7399893  
For more information and events [www.studiopottery.co.uk](http://www.studiopottery.co.uk)

### MEMBERSHIP NEWS

**Karen George** has joined the Guild. Karen is a self-employed events manager, and she lives in Bushey. Her Pottery interests are; throwing, hand building and decorating in porcelain, stoneware and earthenware.

Another new member is **Hannah Ruddock**, who lives in Little Chalfont. Hannah indicates an interest in porcelain, stoneware and raku, using both hand building and throwing. She lists her occupations as Sculptor and Potter.

**Keith Wischhusen** & his wife / partner (status & name not shown on application) have joined us. We know that Keith is retired, and he indicates interest in stoneware & earthenware, both throwing & hand building.

**Mary Payne-Cooke** has re-joined the Guild after a period of some years. Mary lives at Pirton, and is retired. She has indicated interest in throwing and hand building, working in stoneware, earthenware and raku.

As always, we are delighted to welcome new members, as well as previous members re-joining our group. We hope that you will enjoy being with us & participating in our events and activities.

As reported via email, one of our members, Doug Jones, had a serious accident when felling a tree. I am glad to report that he is now up and walking again, although still having treatment for a frozen shoulder.

Our president, Murray Fieldhouse is also improving now, having been unwell during the winter. We hope his health will continue to improve.

**Mervyn Fitzwilliam**

### Kings Langley Methodist Church 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May dawned with blue skies & guild members arriving to set up for "Throw a Pot" in the Church Hall. To celebrate this special day, Kings Langley Historical society had organized a display of village life circa 1935. There were photographs of the original church opening, & highlights from the past 75 years, including photographs & reports of some of the weddings conducted in the church since 1935. There were also Photographic competitions for adults & children, a celebration of banners, & the community choir singing their hearts out, plus cream teas.

Throwing a pot was organized by our guild along with selling of the Potters wares. Good fun was had by all with a lovely community spirit

**Ronnie Powell**

### Pitstone Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> May

The day started dull & cold, but it became busy very quickly. We had quite a few people taking an interest in raku, & several wanting to have a lesson on the Wheel. Those helping were Ruby Sharp, John & Ronnie Powell, & Mervyn Fitzwilliam. The weather brightened up, & we took £104 in total, so made a good contribution to the Museum funds, the balance being held by Ruby for more materials & gas etc. Next date is Monday 31<sup>st</sup> May, spring bank Hol.

**Mervyn Fitzwilliam**



## LEXA LAURENCE IN MARCH 2010

Lexa trained at Farnham where she became interested in kiln building. With great determination she built her first one in the hard winter of January 1978. It had a catenary arch, was fuelled by oil, and took 24 hours to reach 800°C. After that inauspicious beginning she began wood firing, and never looked back.

In 1984 she went out to Malawi as a VSO, and stayed four years, helping to develop the country's first big pottery business. Up to then, as in much of Africa, local cooking vessels and water pots were made by women at home, and glazed ware was imported. This new pottery had been founded by an English potter married to a Malawian, and soon expanded to three different sites; at Dedza in the hills close to the Mozambique border, and at Malindi and Nkhota Kota which both lie on the idyllic shores of Lake Malawi, one of the great African rift valley lakes. Lexa was there to help train the pottery apprentices. She explained how the rising population of the country created a fuel problem and there was a shortage of wood. The potteries had to source more unusual fuels such as rice husks and sawdust. Local potters may also use cassava roots, or even grass, but they fire for only one and a half hours, and to much lower temperatures. Lexa made a few kilns for fun, and showed a photo of a monster sculpture made of wattle and daub. It was her Nkhanga (guinea fowl) kiln. In England she would have used willow wands as a former for the kiln. Here she used split bamboo which is more flexible, but liable to sag when wet.

Lexa showed us a couple of useful hand-building techniques that she learned in Malawi. First there was the 'fist pot', which is a sort of big brother of the 'thumb pot'. It is a good way of starting a round bottomed pot. Take your clay, and pat it to form a cone. Hold it in your left hand. Make a fist with the right hand and drive the knuckle of your forefinger into the clay and twist. Support the outer sides with your left hand and keep going as you would with a thumb pot. Soon you will have a bowl. Small cooking pots are started like this. They are then placed in a bowl or broken water pot, and the clay is pulled up with the fingers of the right hand, with the left hand supporting.

Pots are generally fired in heaps on the ground or in pits, with the fuel piled around and over them. The open nature of the clay combined with the low firing temperatures mean that the fired pots are porous. This quality is most useful for water pots, as evaporation from the outer surface causes cooling

and keeps the water within cool and fresh. Similarly, these pots may be used to keep food cool.

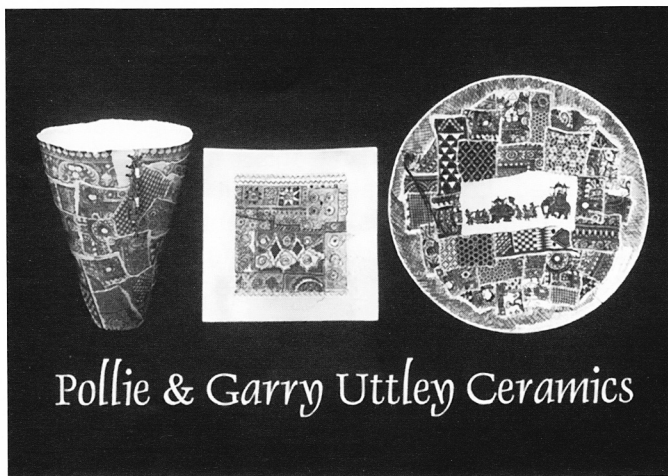
Water pots are big pots and thus are made in two stages. The first stage involves making the lower half of the pot upside down. Lexa made a fat coil (at least two inches thick) in mid-air by rolling a large piece of clay between her hands. This was placed on a bat covered with a sheet of plastic to keep the base moist. The ends of the coil were joined together to form a ring. This was thumbed down all the way round on the outside and then on the inside, so that it was well stuck to the plastic on the base. The ring was then pinched up coming inwards to form the beginnings of a dome. A second coil was made and small pieces were pulled off and rolled to form balls about one and a half inches in diameter. These were taken one at a time and flattened in the palm of the hands to form a disc which was then placed on the wall of the pot and joined on by smoothing the clay. The discs were added in pairs with one on each side of the top of the wall, and smoothed together using the knuckles. Although this method sounds complicated, Lexa explained that it can actually be done very quickly, and is an excellent way of bringing in the walls to make a dome. It is faster than coiling and makes higher building possible without collapsing.

The dome would be left for an hour or three to firm up. However, for the demonstration, Lexa had one she had made earlier. This was placed base down in the padded top of a bucket, to show how the pot would be completed by making a second dome, which, however, would have a rim to finish it. The pot would be quite thick at this stage. To achieve the renowned lightness of these pots, Lexa showed us how to use the side of a surform blade to pare it down.

After the break we were treated to more photos, but this time they were mostly of potters and potteries in Nepal where Lexa worked at a women's refuge run by the Esther Benjamins Trust. (See [www.ebtrsut.org.uk](http://www.ebtrsut.org.uk)) Here pottery training is just one of the skills taught to girls who have been abandoned or trafficked. The photos were shown on our digital projector, and were not only of excellent quality, but there was also much to see and think about. I jotted down only a few notes, but was deeply impressed by how creative and resourceful are people in the poorest communities. This applied especially to the potters. One had made a momentum wheel from a car tyre – or was it a truck tyre? In another pottery the bottom half of large pots were made by beating the clay into moulds using a large mallet. Then there was a kiln with both walls and roof built of ash, where the pots were packed in with straw like a haystack. As in Malawi, conventional fuel can be expensive and alternatives have to be found.

I would like to thank Lexa for making a long journey by train to bring over her pictures and stories of potters in other lands, and also for showing us two useful techniques she had learned during her time working in Malawi. She worked hard to pack a lot in to two hours, and produced a fascinating and thought-provoking evening. I was reminded of the two years I spent teaching in a bush school in Malawi, and all the beautiful and remote places I saw there – not least of my first Christmas away from home, at Malindi on the shores of the Lake – which, I can assure you is a very romantic place indeed.....

Ros McGuirk



#### POLLIE & GARRY UTTLEY CERAMICS

Pollie & Garry first visited India in 1995 and have travelled there every year since then. They have previously taught at the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad and taken part in a months residency at the Global Arts Village in Delhi where they produced a large ceramic wall panel. In 2008 they ran a workshop for a group of Indian ceramicists, resulting in an installation of tiles at the Sanskrit Kendra Arts centre, also in Delhi.

Their work is inspired by the patterns and textures of tribal textiles and patchwork quilts and they respond to these in a variety of ways. In their most recent pieces they are working with a white earthenware clay and are combining the techniques of screen printing, mono printing, applying and impressing clay, using stamps, raku firing and applying underglaze colours and lustres

Their passion for India can clearly be seen in their richly decorated bowls and wall panels.

They sell at ceramic shows throughout the UK and in Europe & news of the latest developments in their work can be found on their monthly update on their web site..... [www.polliegarryceramics.com](http://www.polliegarryceramics.com)

Ros McGuirk

#### SUE DYER DEMONSTRATION

Sue Dyer broke with DCPG tradition and launched straight into a demonstration taking her audience through her making and decorating techniques and along the way giving us insights into the origins of her work and into her career as potter and teacher.

Sue finds her inspiration in the natural world and has created a range of elegant often asymmetric vases and bowls which she makes in two piece moulds and decorates with distinctive inlay and slip painting.

Sue began by showing how she inlays sun and moon shapes: she cut a disc from a sheet of marbled porcelain slip, leather hard but flexible enough to be pushed into the concave side of a dampened mould. The edges of the disc were brushed with water to minimise the risk of cracking as the pot dried. The two sides of the mould were bound together with bands of inner tube – not as easy to come by these days! – and slip poured steadily into the centre of the hole. As the clay dried into the mould, it was topped up, to ensure a surplus at the mouth of the pot which could be used to assess when (after approximately 10 minutes) the thickness was right to take the pot from the mould and left clay to be cut into to form the rim. The leather hard pot was trimmed with razor and surform blades – taking care to scrape the seam at an angle to avoid a mark on the finished pot – to produce an even, flowing surface. At this stage the pot was still on the thick side to allow for the inlay and further scraping to achieve an almost silky finish.

Sue's forms and decorating style owe a good deal to her interest in Ikebana. The Japanese influence is evident too in the inlay technique, brought from Korea to Japan. (see P.9 Sue draws freehand with a blade, responding to the curves of the pot and the plants and landscapes that inspire her designs and then cuts into the line to form a v shaped groove into which she paints a thick layer of coloured slip. Once the slip has dried to leather hard, the pot is scraped again, revealing the precision of the inlaid decoration.

Sue decided early in her career that she would not sell seconds and you can understand why: her pots are characterised by clean lines, the perfect finish of their shape and texture and their spare, graceful decoration. The risk of cracks, even with the Valentines special porcelain casting slip, which Sue finds generally very reliable, is a constant hazard.

Sue's pots are unglazed but fired twice, making them watertight and strong enough, if they become grubby, to be scrubbed back to pristine cleanliness with kitchen cleaner. For decorating the white and colouring the deep blue and black pots she uses mazarine blue stain from PotteryCrafts, other colours come from Scarva. The coloured slips tend to shrink more than the white but adjusting the firing temperature can help avoid cracks. The white based pots are fired to 1260° the coloured pots to 1240° and held.

Sue demonstrated how she translates her sketches of Norfolk and Cumbria landscapes onto the inside of a dampened bowl shaped mould, painting with slip and achieving a fluid watercolour like effect. There is no time to hesitate or rework, and painting from the foreground to the background takes some getting used to. When freed from the mould, the pot is trimmed to produce a smooth surface and elements of the painting highlighted with inlay.

Sue enjoys participating at Art in Action but confessed that she does not relish sitting behind a stall, so concentrates on selling through galleries which she often approaches by letter, with photographs of her work. Cecilia Colman in St John's Wood began accepting Sue's work early in her career, when other galleries were unsure about her mould-made pots, feeling that the process was too industrial to fit with their craft ethos, and the gallery continues to sell on her behalf.

Sue also teaches adults which she enjoys, and highly recommends Jo Connor's books, *Colouring Clay* and *The Potter's Guide to Ceramic Surfaces*.

Mary Anne Bonney

#### URSULA MOMMENS OBITUARY

Distinguished maker of well-designed, functional pottery Mommens believed in making pots that people could use on a daily basis

A potter of distinction and considerable longevity, Ursula Mommens, who has died aged 101, was

remarkable not only for her contribution to studio ceramics, but also for the artistic milieu in which she moved, and, as a great-granddaughter of Charles Darwin, for her spirited continuance of a family tradition of great creativity.

Ursula seemed to have known almost everyone of note in the London cultural world of the 1930s and beyond, particularly when she was married to her first husband, the painter Julian Trevelyan, but still maintained her characteristic modesty in her vocation as a potter. She had a passion for living which kept her mentally young to the end. Naturally preferring the company of youth, she said that "old" people bored her. There was always a sense with Ursula of the next great adventure, whether it was her wish (aged 95) to "make bigger pots" or, as an inveterate traveller, to take another overseas trip to some intrepid location.

She was born Ursula Darwin in Cambridge and brought up at Down, Kent, in a house adjacent to Darwin's own home. Her father, Bernard, was a noted writer on golf and her brother Robin went on to become principal of the Royal College of Art. Ursula was a direct descendent of another famous potter, Josiah Wedgwood, and was related to the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, but she was irritated by her provenance when she failed at school assignments; "and you a Darwin" was a familiar response from her teachers.

Still, St Paul's girls' school, in west London, had its compensations. She developed her lifelong love of music there, learning to play the cello and being conducted in the second orchestra by the music teacher, Gustav Holst. However, it was the sight of a man making pots at the Ideal Home Exhibition that truly inspired her, and her artistic mother sent her to pottery classes at weekends.

Ursula persuaded her parents that an academic life was not for her, and she began to train part-time in ceramics at the Central School of Art and Design in London under the influential Dora Billington. The pottery department in those days was under-resourced, and Ursula recalled only one wheel on which to practise, "and what clay there was lay in bins where mice had died". The distinguished London potter Charles Vyse recognised her frustration and advised her to go to the Royal College of Art. Her tutor there, William Staite Murray, expounded the idea of pottery as sculpture, and showed his own work alongside the leading artists of the London avant garde. Indebted to Murray though she was, Ursula believed in making pots that people could use on a daily basis.



In 1932, back in Kent, she established a studio in an old cookhouse near her parents' home and made earthenware bowls and jars. Though clearly influenced by Murray and the prevailing anglo-oriental aesthetic of Bernard Leach, Ursula was personally drawn to early Persian, Cretan and Hispano-Moresque pots and their lively brushwork. She exhibited at the Brygos Gallery in London with other pupils of Murray, and in 1934 she had an important show at the Bloomsbury Gallery with Trevelyan, a leading surrealist whose artistic connections with the continent and the Parisian avant garde ensured a culturally active marriage ahead.

In 1935 they set up studios at Durham Wharf, on the Thames at Hammersmith, west London. In an enlightened act of patronage, they also established there a lending library of modern pictures, many of which came from France. Visitors to the Wharf included their friends Cyril Connolly, Henry Moore, the poet David Gascoyne and the art critic and surrealist Roland Penrose. In 1937 Ursula and Julian made trips around England for the Mass Observation project, in which Trevelyan was closely involved, taking note of some of the more eccentric (and suitably surrealist) aspects of national life before the second world war.

At the outbreak of hostilities, Ursula and her husband, now a camouflage officer, met Leach at Dartington in Devon. Leach suggested Ursula go and work for Michael Cardew in Cornwall, and here she spent six happy months, in addition to a briefer period at Winchcombe Pottery in Gloucestershire. These two workshops instilled in her a renewed sense of purpose in making good household pottery – excited as she was by Cardew's life-embracing passion for traditional functional wares.

However, the next few years were to be difficult. Now separated from her husband (who went to live with the painter Mary Fedden) and with a young son Philip, she went to work at a pottery in Kingswood, Surrey, working long hours to produce garishly coloured earthenware. Eventually she and her newfound friend, the sculptor Norman Mommens, escaped to Kent, and in 1951 the couple, soon to be married, found a property near Newhaven in Sussex. Here they made an initial income producing mould-made heraldic beasts for the Festival of Britain.

Through the 1950s Ursula continued to make vibrant earthenware, soon to be superseded by stoneware and porcelain, making fine individual bowls and jars and a range of well-designed tablewares. Decoration was incised or painted, her shapes often richly glazed with irons and wood ashes and animated by her lyrical

foliate or fish motifs. She had an innate feeling for early European pottery, combined with a strong sense of ancient Mediterranean and far eastern form, an aesthetic that sprang as strongly from her love and knowledge of the British landscape.

In 1962 Norman left Ursula, subsequently setting up home with the writer and cook Patience Gray. Ursula, however, had much to occupy her, not only her pots but, over the next decades, many trips abroad. She went to Bali, Indonesia, in 1973 to set up a pottery to aid regional development and later journeyed to Peru, Guatemala, Crete, Nigeria, Mexico and, at the age of 88, India. At home, she continued to immerse herself in her love of Bach, in a wide circle of friends and the delights of her Sussex garden, latterly sharing her workshop with the potter Chris Lewis, who provided invaluable support. Far from being "irresponsible" or a "lazy dog", as she laughingly claimed, Ursula, through her vivid, life-enhancing personality and sensitive appreciation of ceramic tradition, truly enriched 20th-century British craft. She is survived by Philip.

David Whiting

- Ursula Mommens, potter, born 20 August 1908; died 30 January 2010

*This obituary was originally published in "The Guardian" and is reprinted here with their kind permission*

## BOOK REVIEWS

**'Modern British Potters and their studios' by David Whiting. Published by A&C Black**

This is the most beautifully produced book of its kind that I have ever seen. Even the monochrome picture on the cover tempts one to open the book and discover the treasures that lie within. David Whiting's intelligent and sympathetic writing is greatly enhanced by the work of the photographer Jay Goldmark.

David Whiting is a collector and curator of ceramics and his writing reveals his passion for pots and their makers. He has chosen twenty four potters and grouped them into the three broad categories of functional, sculptural and figurative. The selection itself is interesting. Some are well known and influential, whereas others are not. Some are highly productive, while others work quietly, hand building, with a low turn over.

Each potter gets four or six pages, and half the space is taken with images. These lovely photos are either portraits of pots, or of potters in their studio, absorbed in their work, or explaining a point.

Tina Vlassopoulos is talking with her hands. Some are talking to the camera. Some are shown in heroic pose. Clive Bowen is carrying a board of pots like a javelin thrower about to take a shot, and Phil Rogers is gazing inscrutably towards the heavens.

This is a Desert Island Discs of a book, a chocolate box of a book. It is delightful and indulgent, and should be sampled at leisure, sparingly.

Would I recommend you buy it? Well, it depends. This is not a manual. There are no technical details, no glaze recipes. However, if you are a collector, or dream of becoming one, then this book is an excellent buy.

**'Searching for Beauty. Letters from a Collector to a Studio Potter' by Richard Jacobs. Published by Kestrel Books. £25**

One day, a retired American professor of philosophy, and ardent collector of ceramics, walked into a pottery workshop, and, taken by the work, started talking to the young maker. Thus began a conversation that was to continue over a period of three years in the series of letters, forty in all, that were eventually compiled to produce this wonderful book.

In writing to Christa Assad, Richard Jacobs was writing to all makers, aesthetes, collectors and to humanity itself. He uses his collection as objects of art, and as instigators of his thoughts and reflections. He wanders from one topic to another, always questioning in his search for integrity and for beauty, very much in the manner of Rilke in his classic piece of writing entitled 'Letters to a Young Poet'.

This is the most fascinating read. It provides a feast for the mind and food for the soul. Hunt down a copy and you will not be disappointed.

Ros McGuirk

**Clay, Light & Water. Margaret O'Rorke**  
**Ceramics Handbook, A&C Black, Paperback £15.99**

This book will give those interested a good outline of using fired translucent clay materials to produce attractive lighting for various situations, including domestic, exhibition, display & water features.

The author, Margaret O'Rorke, is a full time Potter, credited with being a leading artist in this subject, & she has a large repertoire in the work she has produced.

The work of several other artists is included in the book, with insights into the methods & problems encountered in producing complete finished lighting.

A large part of the success that Margaret has had comes from her determination to fully embrace all

aspects of producing the electrical fittings needed & to engage professional help with engineering & safety. Methods of making lights individually, & also details of working to manufacture lighting on a commercial scale are given.

The book has a list of suppliers & useful organisations. A list of contributors to the book, with website or contact details is also given.

In general this would be a very helpful starting-out book, if lighting, using clay, is your interest.

**Techniques using Slips, by John Mathieson paperback**  
**A&C black £16.99**

This book is intended as a practical guide to using slips.

The first four chapters cover History, Application Techniques, Mixing Slips, & Colour in Slips. These first chapters take up only twenty pages (of 143) to cover all of the basic techniques. The rest of the book is dedicated to the interpretation of these techniques through the different approaches used by a great variety of ceramic artists, totalling in excess of forty, & including many very well known potters such as Tim Andrews, Rebecca Harvey, Mike Dodd, Ashraf Hanna, Roger Cockram, to name just a few. The techniques section has many excellent photographs, mostly of finished work, but also of work in progress, & can be regarded as comprehensive.

**Ceramic Jewellery. Joy Bosworth. Ceramics Handbook,**  
**A&C black Paperback £15.99**

As with most of the "Ceramics Handbooks" from A&C Black, this book covers the title subject in sufficient depth to give anyone interested a good grounding in pretty much all aspects of the subject.

Starting with a good introduction, the first chapter is Design considerations for jewellery, which gives more than one approach to the subject. The following chapters cover Decorative clay surface techniques, forming & colour. Moving on to kilns, those for most jewellery work are usually small, but a miniature kiln for use in the microwave oven is also included.

Chapter 6 gives simple methods of metal forming, annealing etc. & chapter 7 covers Findings & how to use them. The usual notes on health & safety plus a Supplier list is given. There are many good photographs in this book, & a Gallery section completes the illustrations.

Reviews by Mervyn Fitzwilliam

Summary of Main points at Committee Mtg.  
23/04/2010

**The wood firing kiln project;** Bricks are now on proposed site, transport paid by West Herts. College. The site is offered at no cost, but security of tenure not clear. Autumn most likely for build. Help would be needed from guild members during initial stages.

**Potters Open Day;** Elaine Peto & Mark Griffiths booked, for Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November.

**Membership** 102, with 17 unpaid. Jan Kent investigating alternative payment methods for membership Subs., with possible decline of cheques.

**Pollie & Garry Uttley W.shop** will proceed, with only 7 guild applicants. Sat 10<sup>th</sup> July.

**Joanna Howells** to demonstrate at AGM

Next Committee Mtg. Friday 27<sup>th</sup> Aug.

Mishima (Inlay):- 'This was the name given by the Japanese to Korean Ware imported to Japan between 918 - 1392 A. D.'

An incised line is cut into 'leather hard' porcelain. The grooves are then filled proud with stained porcelain slip, once this has stiffened the piece is painstakingly scraped and sanded, revealing fine decorative designs. Many colours can be inlaid in successive operations, inlaying one upon another.

The predominate influence of my work has been Japanese, largely as a result of my study of Ikebana. For me, the Art of Japanese Flower Arranging represents asymmetrical design in its most perfect form and I have tried to include this concept within my own work.

The delicate, decorative asymmetrical vessels in white, black and blue porcelain incorporate curvilinear, subtly coloured inlays in blues, greens, black and grey.

I have continued to use this timeless technique on each individually designed porcelain pot. My latest pieces combine elegant austerity with a new lightness of spirit, winged patterns of flecked colour swoop and dive animating the immaculate surface with fresh vivacity.





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**Pottery supplies**

With the closure of Potteryworks branch at Rickmansworth the company have made an effort to keep their transport costs down, when dispatching from Stoke on Trent.

Members have been doing their own research on where to buy materials, & the best deals available. One member has been very enthusiastic about materials from Clayman (see advert, this page) who offer good prices, a very fast dispatch & 5% discount to guild members.

Potters Connection also continue to offer their services, & Potclays also give a 5% discount (Advertisements elsewhere in Newsletter).

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