



DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD



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www.thedcpg.org.uk

NEWSLETTER
WINTER 2010
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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.

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 ILLUSTRATION

The nineteen entries for the Stan Romer Award this year. Photograph by Sylvia Fitzwilliam. See the same photograph below with the names of entrants designated.

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Editorial

After eighteen years (ie, for half of the life of the Guild!) as Newsletter Editor I feel that the time has come to pass the production of the Newsletter on to another Guild member. This issue is the last one I am planning to produce, but Harry Karnac has volunteered his services on typing & layout, so that could be a real initial advantage to whoever takes the Newsletter forward. I will summarise all the records for this particular issue, & any current articles & photographs, so that a basic reference is available for the next person to carry on.

I will also give any advice needed, & help to get the next issue into print, due out in February 2011, but there is some leeway, since this present issue will be rather late. If you feel like the next editor, please give me a ring.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

GUILD MEETINGS

Margaret O'Rorke.

Margaret was booked for 3rd December 2010, but had to postpone , due to illness, until Friday 13th May 2011 'Lights Fantastic'. We are delighted that Margaret is making a return visit to the Guild. Do not miss the chance to find out more about the work of this pioneering potter who makes large light shades, chandeliers and installations from the finest porcelain, using techniques both ancient and modern. See www.castlight.co.uk

14 Jan Russell Coates. Trained in Japan and makes underglaze blue enamelled porcelain. These finely painted pots with figures and patterns are inspired by Kutani pottery and each piece is a work of art. Spode have made limited editions using some of his designs. Will demonstrate a soft slab vase, the use of moulds, and his decorating techniques, including his approach to design. Fellow of CPA.

11 Feb John Higgins. Well known local ceramicist, teacher, and fellow of CPA. His work is sculptural and is becoming increasingly experimental in the use of colour and texture. He is planning an evening of demonstrations including altering thrown forms and adding textures. Come to the meeting and stretch your mind.

11 Mar David Wright. On coiling large pots and wood firing, accompanied by his wife, who makes the famous potters' pinny. See www.davidwrightpottery.co.uk

OTHER EVENTS

MAAC events

Ceramics at the Ashmolean Museum Oxford

This will take place on Monday 31st January (when the museum is closed) from 2.00 pm till 4.00 pm

Studio Visit - Ruthanne Tudball

Ruthanne Tudball's Workshop Talk/ Demonstration will take place on the 5th March 2011. It will start at 11.00 and break for lunch from 12.30 to 1.30 and finish at 4.00. It will take place at her workshop in Solomon's Temple, Welborne, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 3LD. She will talk about and demonstrate her making glazing and firing techniques.

To 3 April Richard Slee. 'From Utility to Futility' at the V&A.

1-15 Dec London Potters. Annual show at the Morley Gallery, 61 Westminster Bridge Road, SE1 7HT. 0207 450 9226. Mon-Fri 11-6pm, Sat 12-2pm, Sun 12-4pm.

8-16 Jan Designer Crafts at the Mall 2011. Annual show of the Society of Designer Crafts. Includes ceramics. Mall Gallery, 17 Carlton House Terrace, SW1Y 5BD. Tel: 0207 334 3922. 10-5pm

25-27 Feb Ceramic Art London. Major selling fair by CPA at the Royal College of Art. Over 75 big names plus talks, demos, films. Tickets £12, concs. £9 (students, seniors wheelchairs users, unemployed.) 3-day pass

Membership News

Wendy Keen of Watford is one of our new members, she had a previous career as a midwife & health visitor, but as a housewife & mother has also been studying Art & Design for the past seven years. Currently Wendy is in her third year of studying ceramics. With an interest in raku, stoneware & porcelain, she is a hand - builder, strongly interested in decoration.

We are very glad to welcome **Terry Newman**, who lives at Wingrave, Bucks., & is a full time student. Terry has ticked all the "interest" boxes on his application form, so is obviously interested in all aspects of Pottery/Ceramics.

Lutz Krainhoefner of Hemel Hempstead has joined us. Lutz is a full time Potter & Sculptor, working in porcelain & stoneware, with particular interests in throwing &

decorating, having an interest in polished smoked pottery, and ash glazed stoneware.

Karen George lives at Bushey Heath, Watford, & has now joined the guild. Karen is an event organiser & Sculptor, so I think that she may well find that we will be asking her for her advice on organising some of our activities, particularly events where guild members can exhibit & sell their work, or perhaps keeping us informed when a suitable event is coming up. Karen has indicated an interest in all kinds of ceramic work.

Lynne McGecchie has joined us. Lynne lives in Harrow, & is retired. She has an interest in most aspects of ceramics. Welcome aboard Lynne.

Kevin Leeman has joined the guild. Kevin lives in London N8, and is a retired Musician. The areas of pottery that Kevin has indicated an interest in are; Hand Building & Throwing of stoneware & earthenware. He also has an interest in Raku.

We hope that our new members will enjoy our guild events & activities, and we look forward to meeting you at the Potters Open Day & evening meetings, or possibly on one of our visits.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

The Stan Romer Award 8th October 2010

SEE ALSO PAGES 6 - 8

This year the theme for this event was "Vessel" which is quite loose enough to allow virtually any item (that could possibly contain something, even just air) to be entered in the competition. A second effect of this loose definition was that the interpretations were very diverse. The number of entries at nineteen, was a record. (all of this gives food for thought).

We were very lucky to have John Romer and his Wife Caroline with us. John presented the prizes to our winner, Nigel Carrick, our runner-up was Ros McGuirk, and third prize winner was Margaret Tatton Brown.

Our Judge & demonstrator for the evening was Joanna Howells.

The Theme for the Stan Romer award next year will be selected, at our Potters Open day on 13th November. I will be very interested to see which theme the guild members select, at our Potters Open Day.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

Book Reviews

Introducing pottery, the complete Guide by Dan Rhode A&C Black. £19.95

This book is set out as a course of instruction, so it is really a complete guide to how to do it & what to do, in terms of pottery. Starting with a brief ceramic historical overview, then moving on to clay, what it is & how it is produced, mixing it & additives to give colour to clay bodies, & making a clay body from square one.

The "methods of working" chapter is fairly comprehensive, with details that might be expected, such as tools, wheels,

studio set-up, Throwing information, hand building, coiling clay recycling etc. The chapter ends with some notes on safety, which are more detailed than perhaps might have been found in such a book, previously.

A further six chapters deal quite comprehensively with firing & glazes, and at the end of chapter fi are some details on testing glazes for leachability & toxicity, very essential information if you are intending to produce ware for food use. The bibliography at the end of the book gives a useful list (in table 2) of colourant limits for reducing leaching.

Kiln firing is covered for electric, gas & wood fired kilns, & the final chapter is entitled "Getting started as an Artist"

Generally this would be a good book for someone starting out, or thinking seriously about making a start in the world of ceramics.

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

Forthcoming book launch

Linda Bloomfield has produced a book entitled **Advanced Pottery**, which will be coming out on 31 Jan 2011. We have the following details from Linda, but I do not know who the publisher is yet, we hope to have a full review later.

Advanced Pottery describes and illustrates the latest pottery techniques, particularly for making large or complex pots, with examples from leading potters from the UK and abroad. The book shows work from a cross-section of different studio potters and the materials, tools and methods they use. It focuses on advanced techniques, including throwing on the wheel, hand building, coiling, slabbing, making and using moulds and altering thrown work. Clays and glazes are explained in detail, highlighting the many different colours obtainable and giving recipes and methods for creating and modifying glazes. Firing techniques are also covered and instructions for building a fast-fire kiln are included. The book is intended as a practical guide to the latest techniques for potters, teachers, students and anyone interested in working with clay and glazes.

The DCPG at Apsley Green Fair 15th may

"Where is Apsley Green?" someone asked. The question initiated a search on the computer. The Multimap site was confused about Apsley Green, so I tried putting in the name of the venue, Two Waters Primary School. This time I got Birmingham, so I asked Mervyn. "It's off Featherbed Lane", he replied. Easy! The trick is to ask the right person.

Well, the day dawned warm and sunny and we all found the place easily enough. It is tucked away in a quiet corner on the edge of Apsley with a great view across the valley. Everyone chose to arrive at the same time, which caused a traffic jam right where we had to unload. However, no-one seemed too bothered, and one enterprising stallholder cycled in with all her stock in a bike trailer.

We set up our two shimpo wheels in the school hall beside the entrance to the site. There were benches for the children to sit on while they waited their turn, and chairs for their parents. Mervyn and Ronnie prepared the wheels and

clay, while John organised the participants, and I sat outside ready to sell our pots and entice passers by to "come in and have a go". Soon we had a steady stream of people, both young and old. Many just went in to have a look and then joined the queue. The atmosphere in the hall was of intense concentration! Outside, in contrast, there was all the noise and fun of a summer fair, with events such as welly wanging, and salsa dancing for all. There were a few other crafters, including a woman making baskets from newspaper. Mostly there were plant and food stalls, including Indian snacks, homemade bread and soup, fair-trade tea and coffee, a gardener who grows only vegetables in his clients' gardens, and an organic veggie box supplier.

Time flew by and suddenly it was 2 o'clock, and time to pack up and go home to watch the end of the football cup final. The potters in the hall had made over £100 and I had sold one flowerpot. The headmistress had shown a keen interest in inviting us back to the school, and the group from Frogmore Paper Mill said they would send us information about their craft fairs. It had all worked out surprisingly well, and had been a most enjoyable event.

It was not till sometime later that it finally dawned on me that it was my first Green Fair. I will definitely look out for another one.

Ros McGuirk

The Box Moor Conker Festival 17th October 2010

I don't know how they do it, but sure enough it was another lovely day for this event. We set-up with three wheels & various tables & chairs to start our pottery throwing lessons, but the generator could not be used, due to being supplied without any suitable electrical connectors. We made a start with the hand building, & another generator was eventually found, so then we were into top gear, with lots of people wanting a lesson on the wheels, although the Hand -Building was also very popular, particularly with the younger participants and parents or grand parents.

We had an excellent team of helpers; John Powell supervised the money, aprons, & place allocation in his usual efficient way, Sylvia Fitzwilliam & Linda Ablett supervised the hand - building, with help from others including Linda Culverwell (Fitzwilliam). Throwing was supported by Ronnie Powell, Ros McGuirk, Selina Mancey, Ruby Sharp & myself. My daughter Carol helped with pot sales, & my son Steven helped wherever he could.

With the combined efforts of the Pottery Throwing, Hand - Building, commission from the pretty healthy sales of Pots, & last minute sales of hand building clay, we made a grand total of £265, a superb result for the charity we were supporting, which was the Hospice of St. Francis. They wrote us a nice letter thanking us for our support, and they were delighted to receive that amount of money for their funds.

Thanks to Louise Baldwin, Peter Ablett & others for the very well organised support we always get from the Trust, & the box of chocolates which were shared before we left.

since it was so cold, the hot water supplied for our throwing activities was a very welcome addition.

The clearing up can be time consuming, but the excellent teamwork of all helpers meant that we finished & cleared away on time.

Thanks again, to you all, it was a pleasure to work with you at this event, and to have so many smiling faces around us,

Mervyn Fitzwilliam

DCPG Chairmans report

[For the AGM on Friday 8th October 2010]

The 2009 AGM (ie last year)

After the business of the AGM, the prizes were given for the 10th Stan Romer Award. The subject was "The Elements", & our judge was Rob Bibby. First prize went to Les Parrott for a small thrown "flame" bottle. Second prize was given to Paul Rowbottom, for a large smoke fired terracotta pebble. Susan Eglington had produced a very ambitious Maize Sculpture, which took third prize.

Exhibition & Evening Meetings

Our guild Exhibition was arranged by Sue Lines at The gallery, Letchworth Art Centre, & ran 4th to 12th November 2009. This was very successful, & we hoped to have another Exhibition in 2010 but Sue was unable to arrange one at the same venue, & no-one else has come forward to act as a co - ordinator.

Ros McGuirk continues to organise our programme of evening meetings, usually held at the Methodist Church Hall, in Kings Langley, & well attended. Richard Miller was a recent demonstrator, getting full marks for his positive attitude to his work.

Workshops & Visits

A workshop with Pollie & Gary Uttley was organised by Ros McGuirk for 10th July, & was reported to be productive & enjoyable. A visit to the V&A Museum was enjoyed by those attending, although several people intending to go could not do so due to various unrelated circumstances. A Pot-Crawl was not organised this year.

Potters Open Day

Our POD for 2010 was organised by Veronica (Ronnie) Powell, with strong assistance from her husband John. The Demonstrators were Morgen Hall and Chris Lewis, and the slides and demonstrations showed two very different & interesting approaches to ceramics. The event made an overall profit, which was helped considerably by the sale of materials & tools collected from closing schools, & surplus items & books from members, sold on commission.

Support from Longdean School is greatly appreciated, & we did give Pottery Lessons to 24 school pupils in February. This work was well supported by the Art Dept. with designs for sculptures etc being prepared previously by individual

pupils before they met us. Our teachers were; Jane Kilvington, Ronnie Powell, Ros McGuirk & Mervyn Fitzwilliam.

Pitstone Museum – raku & throwing & hand building

The Pitstone activities have been much more successful in recent times, since more people attend the open days. Both Ruby Sharp and Ronnie Powell have been selling their pots, & the general takings have supported the firings & given the Museum some income. Anyone wanting to sell at Pitstone can talk to Ruby or Ronnie.

Box Moor Conker Festival

Now a fixture in the Box Moor Trust calendar, on Blackbirds Moor, The Pottery activities were very well received by many participants. (Will be on Sunday 17th October this year).

Kiln Building Project

The guild were given the opportunity to purchase approx. 2000 HTI bricks for a nominal sum. That was easy, but trying to resolve what Guild Members want to build and use (in conjunction with West Herts College) is proving more difficult, for many reasons, but we continue to work on this. Please watch the Newsletter for updates.

The Methodist Church Hall

We have supported two Pottery events to give financial support to the church this past year; A daffodil day, & a seventy five year celebration. Gunizzi Amirak, Ronnie & John Powell, Ros McGuirk & Mervyn Fitzwilliam were the members helping with this activity, & all funds raised were given to the Church. The cost of using the Church Hall has also risen, & the Church Trustees have spent money re-decorating the Hall.

Two Waters School

We were asked to support an open day at this Primary school, following the above church activity. We did this with virtually the same DCPG team, & raised money for the school, & also for Guild funds

Membership

We have had a quite dramatic reduction in membership numbers; Last year 150, but currently about 117 (from memory). If the trend continues we will have less than 100 members in 2011. We have held our membership subscriptions down for a very long time, & we know everyone is feeling the pinch, but will have to review this position going forward. Please make an effort to recruit new members to the guild.

Newsletter

Remains basically quarterly, with some difficulty producing the autumn issue. When I took over Editing & management of the Newsletter in 1992, we were streets ahead of other guilds, with a litho production. Those Guilds have now definitely overtaken us, & we need a new person to carry the newsletter forward. This has been identified for some time now. The target position is one more issue & then; Who is going to pick up the pen?

Website & emails

The website is managed very well, by John Powell (www.thedcp.org) who also manages our projector & laptop for presentations, plus any odd engineering problems that arise. Communication to Guild members via email is mostly managed by Ros McGuirk.

Library

The Library has gone through a sudden hiccup, since a misunderstanding led to some books being discarded & going missing. We need all of those books to be returned as soon as possible please

Committee

Jane Kilvington stepped into the breach when John Beckley stepped down as Secretary, & has been a great help during the past year. Jane is now standing down, at this AGM, & her place will be taken by Mary Anne Bonney, who has come forward to help as our new Secretary. Digby Stott is also leaving the Committee, & his record keeping & label production will now be taken over by Jan Kent. Digby has been a very active committee member in the past, having been membership secretary, and also the Newsletter Editor for many years at an earlier time.

I would remind you all again that we are an entirely voluntary organisation, & if we do not have help with our activities from members, then those activities or events do not take place.

- * Could you organise a Pot Crawl for 2011?
- * Or an Exhibition?
- * Or suggest a Workshop?
- * Or arrange a Garden party?
- * Or a social activity?

Mervyn Fitzwilliam (Chairman)

Pitstone Museum Open days 2011

Easter Monday 25th April
 Spring Bank Holiday, 2nd May
 Late Spring Bank Holiday, 30th May
 Sunday, 12th June
 Sunday, 10th July
 Sunday, 14th August
 Summer bank Holiday, 29th August
 Sunday, 11th September.
 Opening times 11.00 am to 5.00pm.
 Admission; adults £4, Children £2 Members Free.

The Guild have a permanent Raku Site at Pitstone, with two gas fired raku Kilns. We also have an electric wheel, work tables, & display tables for sale of Pots.

If you are helping at the raku site there is usually no admission charge if you are a Guild Member. If you want to visit or participate, or sell pots please talk to either Ruby Sharp 01494 728 364, or Ronnie Powell 01494 774 398

Visit to the Percival David Collection at the British Museum on Monday 11th October 2010

Twenty One Guild Members assembled in Gallery 95 to meet the Curator, Jessica Harrison - Hall, who was to be our guide for the next hour. The Gallery is well laid out, with all of the collection, 1,700 pieces, on display, in specialist cabinets, which have non - reflective glass, making the viewing very clear.

Jessica explained that this collection is probably the most important one of Chinese ceramics in the western world. Sir Percival David (1892 - 1964) was passionate about collecting, & he did extensive research to help him understand the historical & geographical background of his collecting. He began when twenty two, & amassed his collection over four decades. He was fortunate in that the collapse of the Quing Dynasty (1644 - 1911) led to many pieces coming onto the market. Apparently the history of Sir Percival's acquisitions is not recorded, but it is thought likely that many pieces came from the imperial collection.

There was much to see, & the glazes, decoration & shapes were all an inspiration to look at. For those wanting a lasting memento, there is a book available from the British Museum Bookshop, entitled Chinese Ceramics - Highlights of the Sir Percival David Collection, written & prepared by Regina Krahl & Jessica Harrison - Hall.

One person who could not resist recording some of the pieces in her sketchbook was Vivienne Rodwell - Davies, & I include the sketch she made of a vessel in the form of a "cong". This was covered with a beautiful celadon glaze., & was Guan ware, Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. Southern Song Dynasty, AD 1127 - 1279. Originally cong were made of jade, in the second & third millenium B.C. buried with a deceased person probably as a sign of wealth.

After lunch some members explored other areas, & some returned to the collection for a second look. in general I think that we all enjoyed our visit, & I did briefly discuss the possibility of a future visit to see other ceramics, possibly in a hands - on situation.

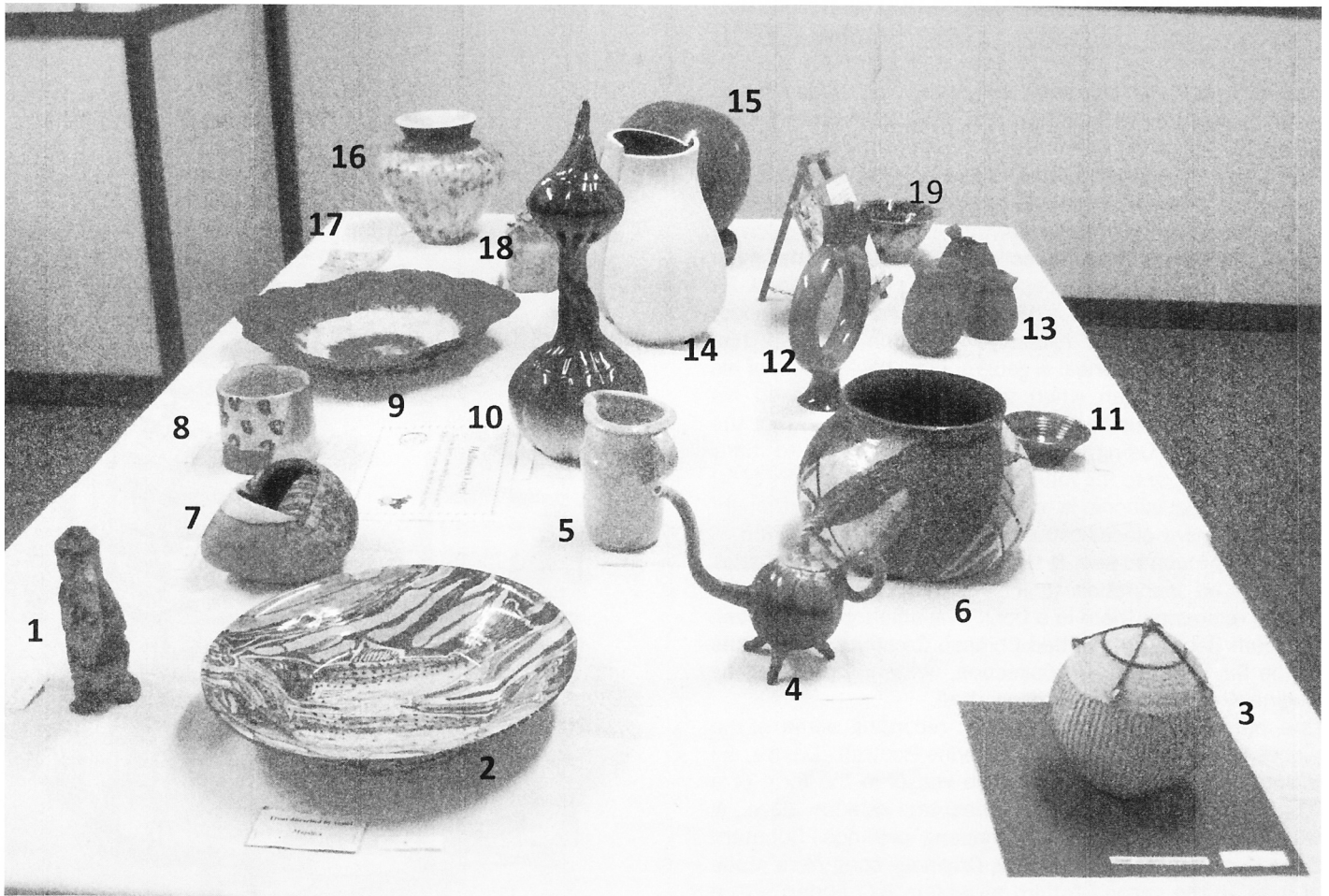


Mervyn Fitzwilliam

The stan Romer Award



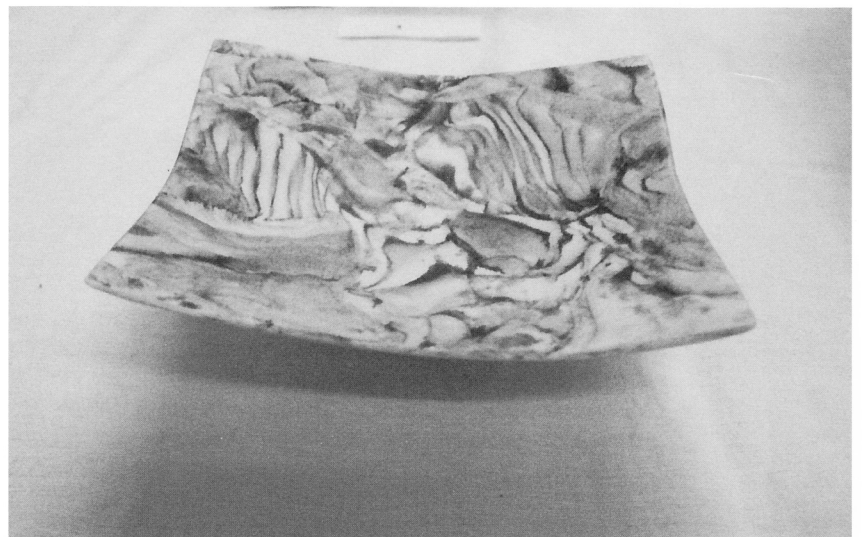
Nigel is given the Stan Romer Award by John Romer (left). Our judge & demonstrator for the evening was Joanna Howells



- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Danielle Bunker |
| 2 | Mike strange |
| 3 | Colin Hazelwood |
| 4 | Vivienne Rodwell Davies |
| 5 | Margaret tatton-Brown 3 rd Prize |
| 6 | Lisbeth De La Cour |
| 7 | Helen Haliday |
| 8 | Marshall Colman |
| 9 | Judi Tribe |
| 10 | Selena Mancey |

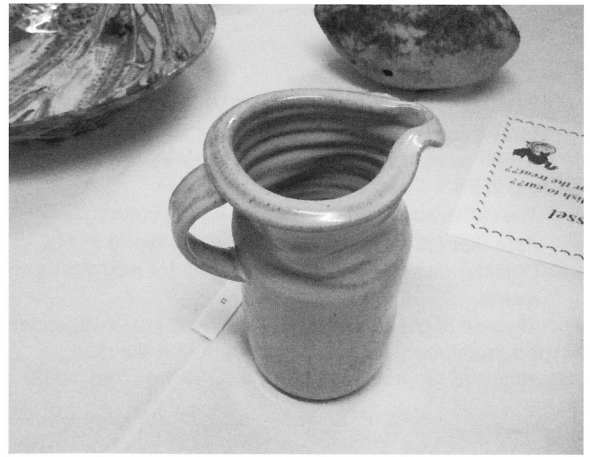
- | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|
| 11 | Ronnie Powell |
| 12 | Gunizi Amirak |
| 13 | Marion Frances |
| 14 | Kirsteen Holouj |
| 15 | Paul rowbottom |
| 16 | Jean Langdon |
| 17 | Nigel Carrick 1 st Prize |
| 18 | Ros McGuirk 2 nd Prize |
| 19 | Les Parrot |

winning piece, made by Nigel was a shallow square dish, shown on the right. The tea pot, by Ros McGuirk, which took second prize is shown below left. The Jug by Margaret Tatton-Brown is below right





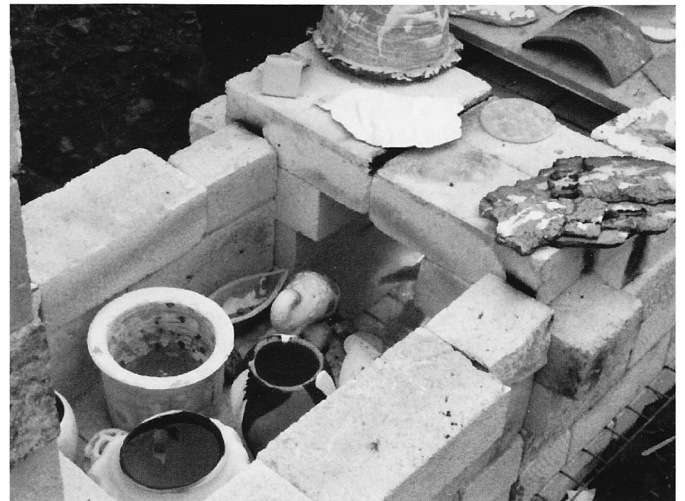
Ros McGuirk



Margaret Tatton-Brown

Kiln build & firing at Rickmansworth

During October Paul Rowbottom arranged to have a kiln building & firing session at the Subud Site in Rickmansworth, which is where the HT bricks are stored. Wood & coke firings took place, with three kilns being built for the purpose (see illustrations below). Members of the Guild & West Herts. College took part in the activities, which were spread over a weekend.



Best Trio of work Award

Gunizi Amirak was the very proud winner of the above award, which was given to her at the London Potters Annual open Exhibition nauguration, at Morley Gallery on 1st December. The exhibition continues during December. The award was presented to Gunizi by Christine Lowe.



SUMMARY OF MEETING HELD ON NOVEMBER 23rd 2010

Present Mervyn, Jan, Ronnie, John, Ros, and Mary Anne
Ronnie gave an overview of POD: Attendance was only 54 – total membership is 85

- The raffle was good and prizes were excellent.
- *Pots that tell tales* (cf A History of the World in 100 Objects) was selected as the subject for next year's award
- The use of the school, at no cost, was much appreciated.

Jan tabled a preliminary note of the accounts for the day.

Approximately half the net income of £428.84 was from raffle tickets.

Notes for next year:

- Consider changing the timing for the afternoon session.
- Allow members to sell materials/tools, & possibly pots ask that they notify organisers in advance
- Discuss demonstrators at next committee meeting – combination of one thrower and one hand builder/sculptor is successful.
- Consider asking participants to bring mugs – polystyrene is wasteful and not very efficient.

Thanks were recorded to Ronnie and all helpers.

Newsletter status

No obvious way forward had emerged from short meeting at POD. Mervyn tabled a proposal for sharing roles between a number of volunteers. It was hoped to continue with a paper newsletter (with colour if possible), also available online (or by email?). The editor should join the committee. John would update Mervyn's proposal which would be circulated to members, John would investigate local printers, Thorntons, Mervyn would seek information from other guilds on printers they used.

Exhibition

Sue Lines had booked the Letchworth Gallery for 2012 and would be requesting re-imbursement of the booking fee. She did not propose to arrange anything for 2011.

Kiln Project

The leased site presently being used by Paul Rowbotham (?) to construct temporary kilns with the Guild's bricks was not ideal. It was hoped that the bricks could be used to construct a more permanent kiln, for group firings by all interested Guild members. Mervyn would follow up contacts identified by Danielle at the Boxmoor Trust (wood available) and Ashridge Estate (no surplus wood, so Guild would have to source fuel and/or consider alternatives to wood firing).

The relatively low level of members' interest in the project at this stage was a concern, as was the labour intensive nature of wood firing, although a Joe Finch style kiln was reasonably manageable.

Mervyn would establish the cost of a Shippo wheel to replace the wheel currently used for demonstrators, The wheel needs to fit into a cupboard at the hall, either in Committee room or corridor. The Guild's funds were declining. The increase in the cost of subscriptions – which were agreed to be reasonable (less than most other guilds) had coincided with a reduction in the number of members. The cost of demonstrators had risen.

The Guild would be attending the Queen's Park Centre's event in Aylesbury's during National Ceramics week. A social event was suggested. Jan would enquire about an evening hiring at Pitstone and Ros would look into the possibility of an exhibition at Chenies – a good site for visitor numbers and a launch party, if not for sales.

Date of next meeting: 21st January 2011 at Longfield.

COMMITTEE & HELPERS LIST

Murray Fieldhouse (President) 01442-851 229
 Northfields Studio, Tring, Herts. HP23 5QW
Mervyn Fitzwilliam (Chairman & Newsletter) "Longfield", Bulstrode Lane, Felden, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP3 0BP 01442-242 332 mfitzwilliam@hotmail.com
Jan Kent (Treasurer /Membership)/database) 01908-674051.
 48 Coleshill Place, Bradwell Common, Milton Keynes, Bucks. MK13 8DP jankent@gmail.com
Anne Bonney (Secretary) 56 Clarence Road, St. Albans, Herts. AL14NG 01727 860 787 maBonney@dsl.pipex.co.uk
Ros McGuirk (Programme Organiser & Vice-Chairman)
 13 The Park, St. Albans, Herts. AL1 4RU
 01727-834 326 ros.mcguirk@googlemail.com
Veronica Powell (Open Day Organiser) 01494-774398
ronnie.powell@btinternet.com
John Powell (Guild Web-master) 01494-774398
 2 Abbots Place, Chesham, Bucks. HP5 3HL
john@cjp.com
Kirsteen Holuj (Publicity) 01280-823 331
 Railing, 7a Mitre St. Buckingham, Bucks. MK18 1DW
kirsteenholuj@hotmail.com
Sue Lines (Library & Exhibitions) 78 Bedford Rd. Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4DU sue.lines@nthworld.com
Selina Mancey (Workshops) 01707 650 233
 52 Byng Drive, Potters Bar, Herts. EN6 1UF
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