

BULLETIN  
JANUARY  
1986

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

January 24th (Friday)

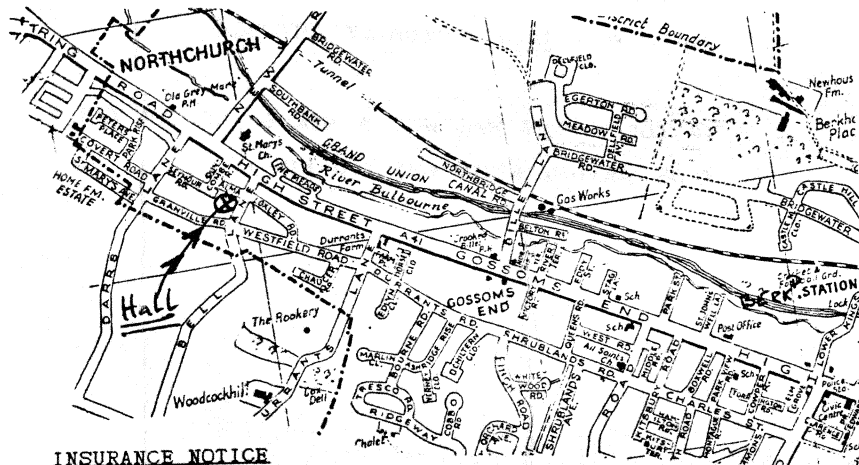
Film Evening:

- (1) "Grand Feu" - John Tchalenko's film about the workings of a pottery in La Boyrne.
- (2) "Lustre Firing" featuring the work of Alan Caiger-Smith

February 28th (Friday)

Peter Dick - Slipware

Both events will be at the Northchurch Social Centre, Bell Lane, Northchurch - see map below.  
PLEASE KEEP THIS MAP FOR FUTURE REFERENCE. The majority of this year's events will be there and we do not propose to print the same map over again.



INSURANCE NOTICE

We should like to point out that the Guild does not hold itself responsible for accident, loss or damage occurring to people or property at its meetings and activities.

ANOTHER MESSAGE FROM YOUR SECRETARY

At the time of typing this (November 30th 1985)

I HAVE ONLY RECEIVED 77 MEMBERSHIP FEES

Thank you to all members who have paid their fees (and to any who will have sent me their subscription during December and January up to receiving this bulletin).

BUT WHAT OF THE REST OF YOU ???

The Guild needs your support in order to continue and our Treasurer is only able to maintain the low membership fee so long as we are able to keep membership up.

Several members are making requests for an up-to-date membership list and this I am unable to provide until I receive all the subscriptions, nor can I produce a complete mailing list.

PLEASE PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD and fill in the attached membership form and send it off with your cheque directly.

IF YOU DON'T WISH TO CONTINUE YOUR MEMBERSHIP, THEN SADLY THIS IS THE LAST BULLETIN YOU WILL RECEIVE.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE ATTACHED FORM  
FOR YOURSELF OR NEW MEMBERS

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

TELEPHONE .....

CHEQUES MADE PAYABLE TO: DACORUM & CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD

SEND TO:

Valerie Williams  
5 Saxon Close  
LETCHWORTH

Tel: LETCHWORTH 686765

Herts SG6 4RF

SINGLE MEMBERSHIP £6  
FAMILY MEMBERSHIP £8  
FULL TIME STUDENT £3

## PAST EVENTS

A number of reports of meetings, including the 1984 Open Day were mislaid, but have recently surfaced. We shall print some of these in the next few Bulletins, in addition to printing the up-to-date reports. This month we have two impressions from the 1984 Open Day, by Marion Frances on Andrew McGarva, and by Ruth Karnac on Brenda Pegrum.

### ANDREW MCGARVA at the OPEN DAY, November 3rd 1984

In a soporific atmosphere I became aware of a very confident and direct man. The quiet will somehow challenging my consciousness as Andrew McGarva offered himself, with his rugged masculine pots, simple eloquent designs, and controlled flowing brushwork. He modestly referred to his work being currently exhibited in the Kurashiki Museum of Folk Craft in Japan, revealing his position amongst his contemporaries.

He has developed some delightfully simple animal studies influenced greatly by the woodcut engravings of Thomas Bewick, 1753-1828, an artist who made many humorous studies of animals from life, whilst preparing with Ralph Beilby the illustrations for "A General History of Quadrupeds", 1790. Perhaps the humour in these woodcuts is responsible for the results, which I saw recently at the CPA exhibition of "Animals, People and Things". I particularly noticed the free line drawing in his cobalt mix - 1 part cobalt + 2 parts manganese + 1 part iron - of a pig looking back over his body at a fly hovering. Such touches seem very characteristic of Andrew's work. He gave a full and impressive demonstration of his free brush work inside bowls, which he had already dipped in a thick shino-type glaze; removing mistakes if necessary with a knife, and banding on the outside with oxide. He said that his first love had been English domestic ware, and that this and French stoneware had influenced him greatly. He also said he was influenced by what he needs to achieve, by glazing the base and tilting the pots for firing, he avoids the need for turning, which he doesn't like. By his decoration he creates a piece which is saleable by others (ie more special and interesting) as he is not good at selling himself. He aims at making for people what they want to buy. He likes to draw ideas from life, portraying animals which are distorted to fit into his shapes. He uses a variety of brushes with thick and thin strokes, making the spaces of his design become as important as the area of line, creating a set vocabulary on which to improvise.

The quiet approach became a little obscure at times and I wondered if others too thought that a microphone may have helped us to enjoy even more this very full and well-prepared demonstration.

MARION FRANCES

### BRENDA PEGRUM at the OPEN DAY, November 3rd 1984

Anyone who missed seeing Brenda Pegrum demonstrating at the Open Day this year, missed a treat. Her pots are made of agate ware in the most delicate of colours arranged in intricate but informal patterns. She makes her own plaster of paris moulds and uses them to form her pots into elegant shapes.

She told us that there are two basic ways to make agate ware, one is with two or more different coloured clays - say three different colours of earthenware clay, or, one clay divided up and each piece coloured differently. This last is her method.

She used porcelain:

- 1 part grey (unwedged trimmings)
- 1 part coloured with iron chromate
- 1 part coloured with less iron chromate

This combination would, she said, give very subtle differences of green and grey when fired, though scarcely noticeable at the time.

First she cut each rectangular block of coloured clay into 4" slices freehand with a wire and then sandwiched them together into a new block. Then she made "swiss rolls" of the different coloured clays and rolled them out into long, thin coils. She cut the coils into short lengths and made a new block with alternate layers of coils with a rolling pin and guides. Then, using templates, she cut out shapes and fitted them into the mould, sticking the pieces together with a watery solution of gum arabic.

All this was a lengthy and obviously very skilled process which she demonstrated and explained with satisfying clarity.

When the pots are shrunk away from the moulds, they are tipped out and wrapped in polythene for several weeks to even out the dampness and are then dried very slowly. They are scraped down at leather-hard and when dry are fired, also very slowly, to a bisque temperature of 800°C. After this, they are rubbed down with wet and dry fine carborundum paper to get very sharp edges showing between the colours. Then they are refired to vitrification, unglazed, in an oxidising atmosphere to 1240°C over a period of 12-14 hours. They are finally cooled for one day in the kiln to avoid stress to the clay, thus avoiding distortion in the finished pot.

This was all most enjoyable to watch and we learned a great deal. Anyone who wants to follow in her footsteps will need much practice, patience and talent to make pots as successfully as Brenda does. We are all delighted to have seen her fascinating demonstration and hope some day we will see her again.

RUTH KARNAC

## POTTERS OPEN DAY

AT RUDOLPH STEINER SCHOOL, KINGS LANGLEY  
on Saturday November 16th 1985

It was a very cold crisp morning with the sun coming up over a spectacular frost-covered countryside. About 150 potters came, many arrived early and the hot toddy was very welcome.

Murray who opened the day's proceedings was in good form and in full agreement with committee's choice of potters. It just had to be a success.

### JOHN MALTBY

It didn't take long to realize that John Maltby holds very strong views on his role as a potter. He feels that there is too much technology and mechanisation in pottery today. Glazes and pots are too perfect. We do not accept accidents in glaze finishes as part of the human expression. He is interested in a pot as a creative art, is always trying to encourage this sense of creativity and hopes that the pots are a reflection of himself. He endeavours to find new methods of working with clay and having spent several years as a sculpture student, possessing a natural facility for drawing and also having worked in the disciplined pottery of David Leach, he was well equipped to develop his own expression.

John admitted to being a rather quick-thinking, volatile personality, requiring to find quick techniques to achieve immediate results. He considers that Hamada was one of the greatest potters of all time.

Where ideas were concerned, he didn't like the usual way of copying or adapting other people's designs, preferring to take from the most natural source - that of nature herself. He only has to look out into his own garden for a constant source of inspiration.

John uses Craft Crank and wires off slabs from a wedged and flattened lump. He puts canvas on the working table to prevent sticking and for ease of handling. As an example, he made a shallow four-sided dish from cut slabs, pinching and pressing together without the use of slip. He uses liquid latex resists with shoe dye added to identify it when applied to the biscuit pot. He finds a broad brush most suitable, then infills the shape created with coloured enamels and pigments or white slip in a plastic state (the slip recipe being 50% malachite and 50% ACR ball clay. His only glazes are tenmoku and clear.

Continued.....

### JOHN MALTBY (Continued)

Stencil techniques are used for applying coloured clays, then the latex is peeled off to reveal the final decorative shape.

John learnt reduction with the Leaches but found for his own work, the iron pyrites coming through and spoiling the purity of the colours. So he prefers oxidation to get what he terms a cleaner more singing quality of colour.

An invigorating start to the day, with all his pots on display finding new homes.

### ROGER COCKRAM

Here was another potter with very strong ideas although he projected them in a rather quieter manner.

He is a fine thrower believing primarily in simple forms to emphasize strength and presence. He's a great admirer of Ray Finch.

He finds bowls the most satisfying shapes to make. Most of the pots have narrow bases to emphasize growth, and turning pots is, for him, a technique to be avoided.

Roger says that he feels taken by the shapes of boats, their constantly changing shapes with movement, the bows, sterns and curving hulls.

### JOHN HOY

John Hoy's report on the demonstration given by Rosemary Wren and Peter Crotty will follow in the next issue.

## **SPECIALIST GROUPS AND OTHER NOTICES**

**RAKU** Weekend firings at roughly monthly intervals at Bulbaggers Tip. Contact Roy Adams, 55 Shrublands Avenue, Berkhamstead Tel: Berkhamstead 71095

**MEDIEVALISTS** Contact Leslie and Ann Sutherland, 40 Churchill Avenue, Kenton, Middx. Tel: 01-907 4944

**IRON AGE GROUP** In the process of building an iron age kiln at the Chiltern Open Air Museum, Newland Park near Chalfont St Peter. Helpers urgently wanted. Contact Martin Bluhm, Tel: Chalfont St Giles 71117

**SALT GLAZING OR KILN BUILDING** Contact Alan O'Dell, 35 Pondfield Crescent, St Albans, Herts Tel: St Albans 69385

**OPEN HOUSE** Will be resumed in April. If interested in promoting one, contact Roger Winn, Tel: Chesham 782033

**EXHIBITION QUERIES** Contact Ruth Karnac, 35 Kingsend, Ruislip, Middx Tel: Ruislip 31738

**LA BORNE** Spring Bank Holiday week. Expected cost approx £55 per head without food, though this may be revised a little up or down. Contact Murray Fieldhouse, Tel: Aldbury Common 229

**WEST FOREST POTTERS** Have agreed to an exchange of newsletters. Space will be given in our own newsletter to their activities. This group is centred close to Reading. On occasions it is hoped that the two Guilds will be able to combine activities.

**CHRISTMAS PARTY DECEMBER 1985** It was a foul night, bucketing with rain, and possibly because of this, only about 20 stalwarts turned up. There was plenty to eat and drink, accompanied by Christmas crackers and paper hats. Jenny and Christine organized two quizzes, one a series of photographs to guess the potting personalities, the other, 24 varied pots to name, some very valuable ones amongst them. Not an easy task, but very enjoyable.

As this event was so poorly attended, consideration will be given to changing this activity. Any suggestions welcome.

H E L P !

\*\*\*\*\* F I N D T H E B I R D I E \*\*\*\*\*

PLEASE WOULD THE WINNER OF A ROSEMARY WREN/  
PETER CROTTY BIRD IN THE RAFFLE AT THE POTTERS  
OPEN DAY ON NOVEMBER 16th 1985 GET IN TOUCH  
WITH ELSA BENATTAR ON BERKHAMSTED 4592.

THE PARTICULAR BIRD PUT UP AS A PRIZE (IN ERROR)  
HAD SPECIAL VALUE FOR ROSEMARY, HAVING BEEN  
MADE MANY YEARS AGO, AND SHE WOULD VERY MUCH  
LIKE TO EXCHANGE IT FOR ONE OF RECENT VINTAGE  
WHICH WILL LOOK VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL.

IF THE WINNER WAS NOT A MEMBER OF THE GUILD  
DOES ANYONE KNOW WHO DID WIN IT ?