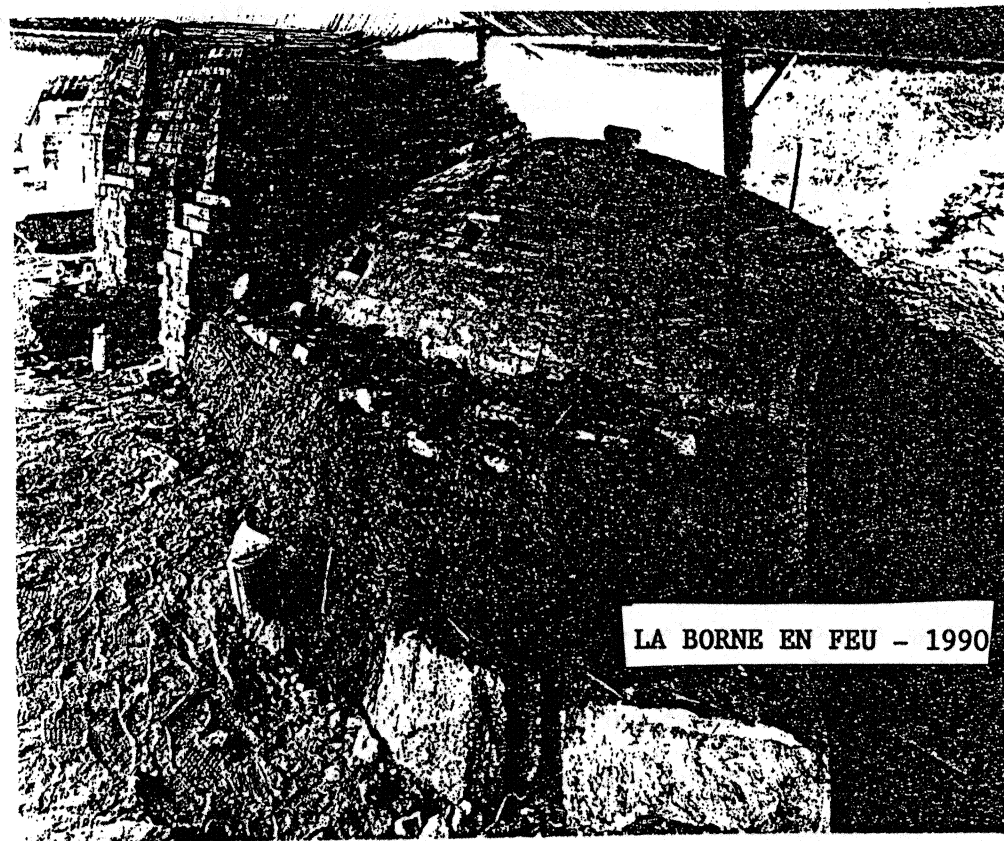


DCPG



LA BORNE EN FEU - 1990

NEWSLETTER MARCHI<sup>9</sup>91

Sadly, our last event - George Wilson's 'Pots in the Round', had to be cancelled due to the over enthusiastic weather. We are hoping that he will be able to visit us at a later date.

This month's 'Crafts Magazine' has an article by Emmanuel Cooper lamenting the closure of the Michaelson and Orient Gallery which was noted for exhibiting young, unknown potters. It makes sad reading. There is also a beautifully illustrated article on the ceramic sculptures of Michael Flynn whose work is to be exhibited at the Crafts Council Shop at the V & A. from April 23rd to May 19th.

Don't forget to enter for the Volunteer Review writer's prize at the next Guild Event!

Material for the next Newsletter should be with me by 28th March.

---

#### GUILD EVENTS

Slab Built Pots with Porcelain Decorative Jewellery.

March 8th at Northchurch Social Centre,  
8pm. Northchurch, Berkhamstead.

Judith Wootton will demonstrate pots and jewellery.

Pleasures and difficulties of working with porcelain

April 12th at Northchurch Social Centre,  
8pm Northchurch, Berkhamstead.

Caroline Whyman will give a presentation.

---

Another anonymous missive!

I kniht ruo tneserp rettelswen recudorp, Eniluap Lled'o si  
gniod a tnecefingam boj. Sa ehs si a yrev tsedom nosrep ohw  
dluow reven tnirp hcus a etubirt ot flesreh, I evah dediced  
ot etirw siht ni edoc, ylsuomynona.

#### WEST MARSHALL

#### Dorley Fieldhouse

January 1991, the first meeting of the year. West set a standard that will be hard to better. It is a long time since he first talked to the Guild and although his work has changed it still retains the meticulous attention to detail and a deceptive quality of simplicity.

That West is a perfectionist was evident all through his very carefully thought out demonstration and slide show.

About eight or nine years ago, West got fed up with production pottery and took a year off and a bit more; he took time to look at pots in museums, and studied ways of making. He found himself drawn to the amazing colours of enamel decoration on the 12th Century Sung pots.

We were shown slides of particular interest from early Sung to 17th Century Japanese, and on to more modern works, including Kandinsky and Clarice Cliff. There were some beautifully decorated teapots designed for industry and painted by very skilled unknown painters in Stoke on Trent.

Alongside the enamel decoration and the colour, West had been interested by English Creamware and pierced work, he went on to show us slides of his own work developed in his Chesham work shop during the last few years. He has used ideas of colour on water and has expanded details of this to produce the range of work he had brought along to show us.

He started to work on patterns and decorations based on photographs of sunlight on the river Chess. He found that he enjoyed working with a limited palette at first, and using enamel made a change from glaze. Working with the final colours meant that they could be washed off and repainted if the effect was wrong. This gave West a certain freedom that he had not experienced before whilst decorating.

#### DEMONSTRATION - Piercing

First make your piercers! (Arthur will show you how)

West had a very impressive set of around 12 shapes made from sheets of metal cut out of an old oil tin. They were scored on the outside and bent round to make a metal tube. The side was then soldered to make a diamond, square, circle etc. and it was complete with a wooden plunger to push out the shape. The cutting edge must be put on the inside, not the outside or the pot will be split.

Piercing is done at the leather hard stage and any burrs on the outside can be rubbed off safely after the biscuit firing. Sometimes a cardboard guide is used to mark out areas to be pierced to avoid bunching up the pattern at the end.

#### A Method of getting Solid Areas of Colour.

Before enamel colour can be put on, the surface must be prepared. A recognised method demonstrated by West, (but not used by him) is to use Groundlay Oil - a sticky, messy grey stuff made from a mixture of:

Raw Linseed Oil

Real Turpentine

Red Lead

Copal Varnish (rosin from tropical trees)

Boil this mixture for 4 hours - Good luck! West stressed that it should be put on to the glazed surface in a dust free atmosphere and left to go tacky - don't wear a woolly jumper!

This groundlay oil is put on with a brush or dabbed on with a cotton wool ball wrapped in silk to give an even layer of stickiness. Enamel powders from Pottery Crafts can be dusted on to the groundlay oil with non absorbent cotton wool. West uses Fat Oil mixed with enamel with a palette knife. Fat Oil is made from real Turpentine left to stand in a shallow vessel covered with paper to exclude dust. Leave until 2/3 has evaporated, leaving a thick, viscous oil. Alternatively, you can buy it from Pottery crafts.

Sharp lines in the decoration are achieved by masking with tape. Black treacle and sugar were also mentioned as resist materials. Colour can be sprayed on to glazed forms without any surface preparation. (Use a spray booth; enamels are

dangerous to breathe in) West found that when spraying, you can grade the depth of colour you use and it reacts well to the forms.

#### To Spray

Mix some enamel colour with milk; about a 6ml. teaspoon of milk to 2 grams of colour, put the mixture through a fine sieve - about 200 mesh before putting it into the air brush.

#### Decorated Goblets

The enamel was mixed to a sort of paste with fat oil, and a little turps was added to get the right brushing consistency. 4 colours were laid on the surface of the goblet and left for about 10 minutes to go tacky. Using an eye dropper, turps was dripped on to the surface causing the colours to move and run and mix with each other. This movement can be directed by twisting the pot. Unwanted decoration can be washed off with turps (or paint stripper if left on a long time) and the decoration can be started again.

#### Banding

This is best done using oil of cloves or aniseed oil mixed into the enamel, it dries slowly in the brush on the way round. NB. If the enamel is put on too thickly it will crawl.

#### Brushes

Squirrel hair is good. Sable is a bit soft. Daylon is not very good for fine work. Tracers are good for fine work and banding. Flat shaders will do fine lines and squares in decoration.

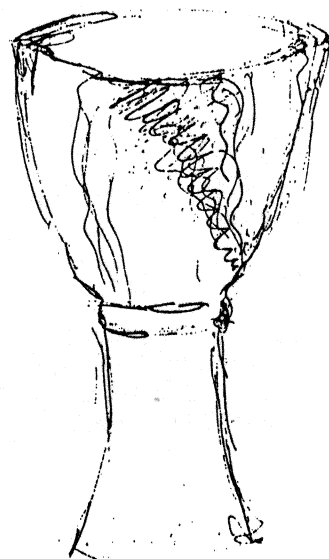
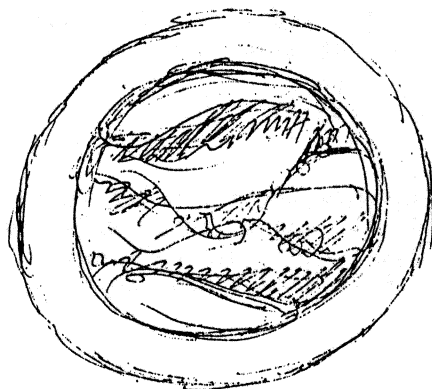
#### Rubber Stamps

Used for decorating - they were made from red tap washers cut to required shapes and backed with spongy inner soles and stuck to wood using black Evostick. Again, these were beautifully made and a pleasure to handle and use.

## Firing

The enamels are fired on between 780°C and 840°C with the bung out. West takes the kiln up and down very slowly; 10 hours up and 10 hours down. He finds that porcelain doesn't like sudden changes of temperature and has to be treated carefully. If he goes too fast, plates will crack. All his enamel work is done with porcelain body and a clear glaze. Sometimes he has to do more than one enamel firing to get some results. Gold and platinum are best at 800°C; they bleed at 840°C: oranges and reds, not more than 800°C; they are best at about 775°C, start to go at 800°C and by 1100°C they have disappeared. Blue can be fired a bit higher. West showed us tile tests of the colours at various temperatures - essential work if you mean to become familiar with the material.

It was nice to see how the pierced decoration on the finished pieces echoed the enamel colours, somehow drawing the whole together. Also to see how relaxed West was at all stages in spite of the complicated material and 40 people watching him intently.



## A VISIT TO LA BORNE EN FEU - 1990.

Stephanie Frost

Having decided on a motorcycling holiday in the Dordogne at the beginning of July, I was reading the DCPG newsletter and saw that we would be travelling south whilst 'La Borne en Feu' was taking place. A thorough search of my map of France failed to locate La Borne, so I rang Murray who not only told me where to find it (near Henrichmont, south of Orleans), but also kindly sent me details of the event.

We arrived at Caen on Sunday morning after a rough crossing and set straight off, arriving in La Borne at 4.30pm. after having stopped to arrange accommodation. The whole village was full of people, cars and pots. Nearly every shop along the main street seemed to have an exhibition of pottery within.

We decided to call in at the central organisation point to get an idea of the events during the next two days, and arrived in time to see the firing of one paper kiln already in progress, and another only awaiting some coals from the first to set it off. The kilns were conical cones of paper, and stood on a platform of bricks which contained the fire, although there were many gaps between the bricks so that fuel could be added. When we returned late the next day, the potters had left their pots near the site of the kilns, so we could see the results. They had fired porcelain and stoneware pots, and the colours they had created were smoky pinks and browns - very effective, although one or two pots had not survived this method of firing.

The exhibition at the main hall contained work from many different potters and was tremendously varied, ranging from smooth amber coloured bowls to huge stoneware pigs and pots large enough to climb into. I also admired a small harlequin figure I saw in one of the upper rooms.

Along the main street, individual potters had exhibitions of pots for sale, and we spent an enjoyable time browsing in several of these before setting off for a meal and a rest at La Chene Vert at La Chapelle d'Angillon where we were

staying.

In the morning, refreshed, we set off to look at the firing at the Boisbelle Pottery near Henrichmont. As I discovered later, they were firing a three chamber Japanese cross-draught kiln of the Noborigama type. At the time we arrived the first chambers had been fired already, and two potters were firing the main chamber, feeding split logs through firing holes on both sides of the kiln whenever the flames burning through firing control holes in the roof of the main chamber died down - very hot work. The firing had already been going on for two days.

We then returned to La Borne and were in time to see Suzanne Daigeler bricking up and cementing the front of her Anagama kiln. The last brick to close the front of the kiln was just being machined until it would fit perfectly, whilst three of the firing team were already cementing the front of the kiln shut with red clay. The firing was toasted with schnapps by the potters and the spectators alike, and the fire was started in front of the kiln and left to build up before it was pushed into the fire box itself.

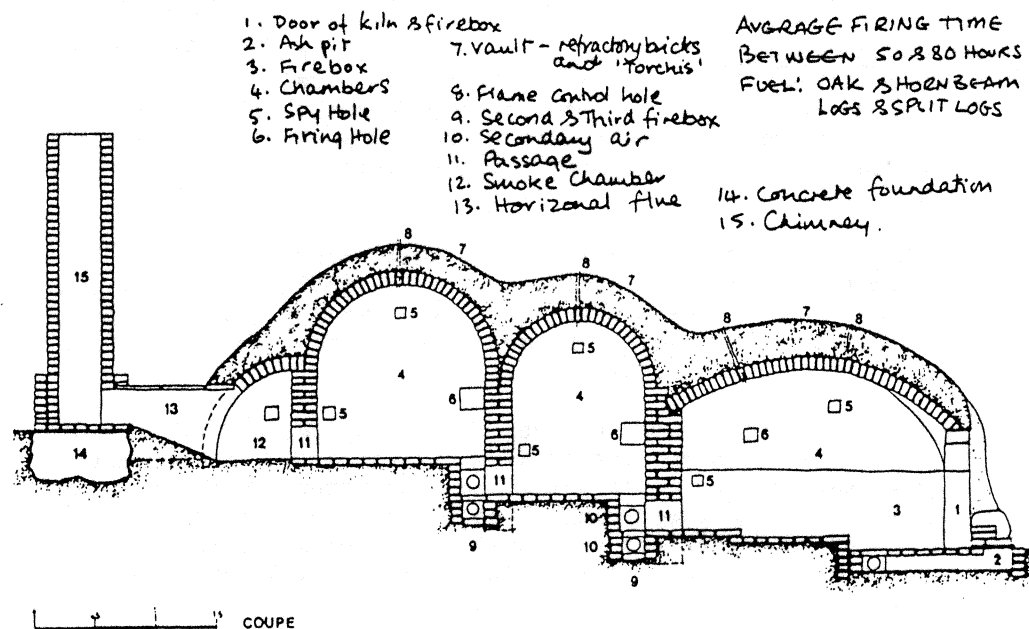
We left this firing, and wandered off to have a look at some of the other exhibitions around the town. At the Poterie Quincy, the pots were displayed in what seemed to be a large cave. It was only when I looked up at the ceiling and saw it was covered in a layer of glaze that I realised I was standing in an old kiln. Further down the same lane, one of these huge old kilns was being fired. It apparently has a capacity of 25 cubic metres, and an average length of firing of 100 - 120 hours. We saw it in the evening when it was smouldering peacefully, attended only by the two people in charge of the firing.

All around La Borne the air was full of the delicious aroma of woodsmoke, and it seemed that in every garden and field there were huge piles of wood cut and stacked, waiting to be used in firings. For ten miles around La Borne the area is studded with potteries, all of whom it seemed had planned firings to take place during the week. The scale of the

exhibition was amazing - as one potter said, the whole area had gone mad!

In the local museum there was an exhibition giving a brief history of the pottery in the area since the 12th Century. Next door were photos and diagrams of several of the local kilns being built. I was, of course, particularly interested to see that of Suzanne Daigeler and of Josette Miguel and Herve Rousseau at Boisbelle - I had not realised before how recently their kilns had been constructed.

Unfortunately we had to continue our trip the following day, although not without buying a pot to remind us of our visit, leaving the week in full swing. I look forward to returning another year, and would like to thank the DCPG newsletter for letting us know about it, and Murray Fieldhouse for his help and directions.



'NOBORIGAMA' KILN OF JOSETTE MIGUEL AND HERVE ROUSSEAU  
SEE COVER PHOTOGRAPH

GIFTS FOR VALENTINES  
An Exhibition at the V&A.

Pam Tames

The V&A shop had an interesting and varied exhibition and sale of objects suitable for Valentine gifts, many of which were ceramics;-

Helen Smythe had made delicately decorated heart shaped porcelain vases from £9.70

Carol McNicoll produced Special Editions (of ten dishes in each design) for Valentines Day. Four slab hearts overlapping one another (rather like a hand of playing cards) were mounted on a small slab base and decorated in pleasing colours. These could be used like a bowl and cost £46 each.

Joanna Veevers presented very thin 4"x2" framed unglazed tiles costing £90 each and subtly incorporating heart shapes in the design. Viewing them through glass they appeared to have a black stain with sgraffito through to white porcelain. Patterns had been painted onto the white in soft blues, pinks and yellow stains.

Mike Levy's witty thrown vessels were decorated in very bright, glossy glazes. His winged wine goblet cost £39, small winged teapot with a heart for a knob was £97, and the jug he called 'The Italian Lover' was painted with great verve and was £184.

Frank Egerton showed humorous wooden painted caricatures of male cats, rams and snakes with cynical grins. A ram carrying his heart in his mouth was titled 'An Offer You Can't Refuse?' A snake carrying a red apple was entitled 'Temptation'. Various small cats carrying a red rose in their grinning mouths were called 'Lust'. There was also a passion fruit box.

Jon Mills who works in grey forged steel, produced a 'Fickle Heart' lidded box on a wheel; a 'Heart Attack' and a 'Mute Heart'.

Lucy Casson works in recycled tin plate painted in bright enamel colours. Her pieces are often mobile (you turn a small handle), great fun and very reasonably priced. There was 'Sick Heart' - a lovesick patient on a hospital trolley, a couple on a magic flying carpet and another couple on a swing.

As Harrods are open until 8pm. on Wednesdays, I walked from the V&A to their Food Halls (to buy my Valentine a chocolate heart). The brilliantly coloured tiles on their walls are really worth a visit by tile enthusiasts. Designed and erected in 1902 by W.J. Neatby, they were produced at the Royal Doulton Factory in Lambeth, London. Have you ever seen what used to be the show rooms for Royal Doulton? The exterior of the corner building has not an inch that is not covered by terracotta tiles, figures or patterns.

I also went to a pottery exhibition at the Contemporary Ceramic Shop by members of the Northern Potters Association. (I wondered how John Leach of Somerset had managed to get his name in the catalogue) The ceramics I liked best were the small, square brooches by Kate Greaves which had tiny, colourful patterns of fish on them.

A bottle and plate by Martin Hearne decorated with jolly, Bacchus-like dancing figures was also appealing. Martin works in E.W. press moulding plates and bowls and slab building vases. His figures are drawn with a slip trailer and decorated with coloured slips and bright glazes.

Paul Scott showed four bottle forms. He uses porcelain or T material employing relief, glaze, underglazes, lustres and ceramic transfers in his decoration. His bottle forms were flat and white with black transfers of rows of pots. There were six black, metallic lustre straps which seemed to 'sew' the shoulders of the bottles together. They were unusual and interesting and probably horribly difficult to make.

ADVANCED NOTICE - 1991 POT CRAWL - EVENT OF THE YEAR1

This year's Pot Crawl will be on JUNE 8-9 and will be based in Yorkshire. Those of you who came to the Open Day will be delighted to learn that Jim Robison has invited us to visit his studio. We shall also be descending on Dave Roberts - the rest has to be decided upon. Make a note on your calendar now!

---

CERAMICS SUMMER SCHOOL JULY 1st-6th 1991.

This takes place at the Royal Forest of Dean College. The emphasis will be on 'Thrown porcelain and stoneware forms, experimenting with the alteration of forms, decoration with coloured slips and glazes and the construction and firing of kilns.' - an action packed course! Jack Doherty, Alistair Young, Ben Casson and Walter Keeler will be demonstrating. Further details from Pauline O'Dell (who also has a 'Where to Stay' booklet) or from:

Alistair Young  
Royal Forest of Dean College  
Five Acres Campus, Coleford  
Gloucestershire GL16 7JT.

---

FOR SALE

1000 KILN BRICKS - £50  
KILN SHELVES, 17X12 - £2.00 each.  
Contact Roger Winn.  
4 Lycombe Lane, Chesham, Bucks.  
Tel:Chesham 782033