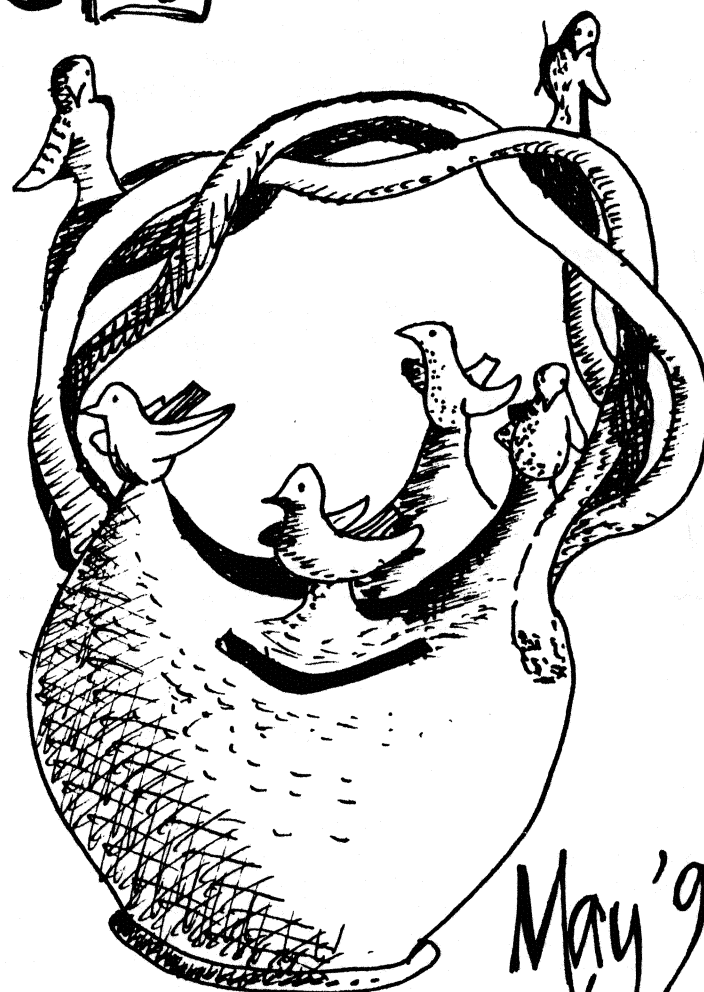


DCPG



May '91

### THREE MORE VISITS WITH PAM TAMES

#### The Great Pavement

Given the opportunity, who could resist going to see something only revealed for a few hours in 60 years? 700 years old yet said to predict the future, the Great Pavement in front of the High Altar in Westminster Abbey is not just an intricate geometric design in coloured marble (it could have been similar in clay tiles). According to its Latin inscription it is:

"The perfectly rounded sphere which reveals the eternal pattern of the universe"

To the mediaeval observer, no geometric pattern, natural or manmade was neutral. Everything, however accidental, had a higher meaning. The fixed rules of geometry gave it an incorruptability which enabled it to be seen as a vehicle for expressing eternal truths. A hedge was thought to last 3 years, a dog as long as 3 hedges, a horse out-lived 3 dogs and so forth to the World which out-lived 3 sea monsters, thus fixing the date for the end of the World as 19,683 years.

My friend and I gazed at this very shiny, mostly purple and green, chain-effect floor as they were beginning to cover it from view with a large carpet. Only a few feet away, choir boys practised their unaccompanied singing for an evensong to celebrate the end of the Gulf War.

#### 'Art in the Making - Impressionism'

This exhibition at the National Gallery is fascinating, free and on until April 21st. It had not occurred to me that the inventions of metal tubes for oil paint (instead of messy animal bladders, ugh!), of transportable equipment and flat ended paint brushes had had a tremendous effect on painting. Artists were then able to go outdoors and maybe paint the whole picture outside. Monet painted his wife on a very windy beach at Trouville. There are actual patches of sand and bits of seashell on the painting.

Material for the next Newsletter should be with me by May 16th. Please don't be late, and please make it a lot!

Pauline O'Dell, 35 Pondfield Crescent,  
St Albans AL4 9PE  
(telephone: 0727-869383)

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#### GUILD EVENTS

##### Coil built pottery.

Friday May 10th at Northchurch Social Centre  
8 pm Northchurch, Berkhamsted

Kate Malone will give a demonstration

##### Pot Crawl in Yorkshire

June 8th - 9th

A weekend visit to various potters in the area

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An x-ray of another of his paintings shows that he turned the canvas upside down after an initial false start in 1869. An infra- red reflectogram reveals that Pissarro painted a single figure that he didn't like in a landscape and so he painted in a group instead - the original standing like a ghost. Personally, I like to hear human details of great artists: other people might be more interested in the highly technical detective work. There were about 20 gorgeous famous paintings on display, including Renoir's 'The Umbrella' and 'Boating on the Seine' and Monet's 'The Gare, Saint - Lazare'.

#### Early English Pottery

I went to an exhibition and sale of Early English Pottery in Kensington Church Street in which there were many museum standard pieces and a great many blue and white tiles like individual miniature pictures. There were even three thick mediaeval floor tiles from Winchester Cathedral!

I particularly liked a press-moulded slipware dish by Simon Malkin of Staffordshire 1725 showing an upright, fat St. George astride a spirited horse, thrusting his spear towards the mouth of a little dragon. Piped walls contained the dark brown and red slips and the whole dish was bathed in a golden honey glaze. There were also a couple of bears hugging dogs to death.

Downstairs there was a whole room full of marvellous tin-glazed ware, some of it suggesting in just a few strokes a Chinese scene - presumably copied from Chinese ware in a free-handed manner. There was a large dish similarly copying an Isnik tulip design. A magnificent charger showed an English king standing in a vaguely suggested landscape with quite the brightest orange glaze I have ever seen.

Upstairs were some rare Staffordshire figures, often in pairs such as a ram and a ewe, a bull and a cow. In one, a small shepherd leant against an enormous sheep. The potter had found it convenient to fix the crook to the sheep, probably so quickly that it bent along every contour of the sheep.

They also had a 17th century stoneware witches' bottle which still contained the ritualistic remnants of an anti-witchcraft charm: pins, nail clippings and paper hearts. The bottle would be buried under the hearth or threshold to protect the household against witches, a practice which apparently continues right up to this century.

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#### NEWS FROM FULHAM POTTERY

Fulham Pottery gives the following discount terms to all members of the Guild:

Basic Materials, Clays*, Glazes, Tools, etc. FP101-5531	-5%
Workroom Equipment and Books FP6001-6546	-5%
Kiln Furniture and Cones FP 9002-9115	-5%
Wheels, Machinery, Pugmills etc. FP 7001-7157	-2.5%
Sculpting Materials FP 8002-8433	-5%
Kilns and Accessories (Delivery Extra)	-2.5%

\* excluding 1 tonne lots.

- Discounts are applicable to the nett cost of goods excluding carriage and VAT.

- Members are requested to write their membership number on all mail orders or produce their membership card when making purchases from our shop.

- Catalogues and price lists are available to all members free of charge on request.

Fulham Pottery will be exhibiting at a number of exhibitions this year:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| June 20-23                                | Fine Art Materials Exhibition, at Business Design Centre, Islington, London W1.  |
| July 12-14                                | International Potters' Festival, Arts Centre, University of Wales, Aberystwyth.  |
| September 6-8                             | Northern Potters' Association Potters' Camp, College of Ripon and York St. John, Ripon, North Yorkshire.   |
| September 14 or 21st<br>(to be confirmed) | Fulham Pottery Open Day featuring Sophie McCarthy - Pottery demonstration, Raku firings, Kiln Demonstrations. Special discounts, etc. FREE ADMITTANCE! |

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#### THE NEW NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE CRAFTS

This Crafts Council centre is to open on September 20, 1991 and will include a Gallery, Picture Library, Reference Library, and National Register of 3,000 Craftspeople amongst other services. The address is:

Crafts Council,  
44a Pentonville Road,  
Islington, London N1 9HF.

The old premises in Piccadilly will close on June 16 and there will be a 'Goodbye Piccadilly' exhibition there from May 22.

The City Steel exhibition of metal furniture, on at present, is worth a visit.

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#### SOMETHING NASTY IN THE CELLAR

Pauline O'Dell

Ruth Karnac sent me a fascinatingly stomach turning cutting from the Independent, regarding archeological research into vast numbers of apparently empty pots found buried in the cellars of houses in South West Germany. They dated from between the 16th and 19th centuries.

The pots were buried in layers, many being broken as new pots were buried on top of old. Nothing was found to suggest what they had contained, although one large vessel contained eleven mouse skeletons. There were no traces of bones, valuables or food - posing an intriguing puzzle.

Archaeologists, delving into the folklore and traditions of the area, came upon two possible answers to the question of the pots' contents. They may have been used to imprison dangerous evil spirits or ghosts in order to protect the homes and occupants. Exorcists would be summoned in by the troubled householders and would bottle up the offending spirits into new pots which were then buried in the cellar. Such contents would leave no trace at all!

The other suggestion had more plausability about it; that the pots had contained human placentas. Mystery and magic surrounded the idea of the placenta and great care was taken that they should be disposed of in a particular, often ritualistic way.

In Wurttemberg, burial of the placentas in the cellar was still common at the turn of the century, in one case, until 1960s, in the belief that the act would help the children to grow up to be strong and healthy. Other reasons for such a method of disposal were in order to prevent the child remaining a bed-wetter or as a peace offering to demons. The umbilical cord buried beneath the placenta ensured the conception of no more children.

However, the main problem for the archeologists was to obtain scientific proof that the jars had contained afterbirth. This task fell to Dietmar Waidelich of the Institute for Prehistory at Tübingen University. He felt that certain constituents stood a good chance of being detected after

Weekend Pot Crawl: Yorkshire / Derbyshire. June 8-9 '91

Itinerary

Sat: - Jim Robison, Dave Roberts, Juliet Beaumont.

Sun: - am. Geoff Fuller - 3 Stags Heads Inn, Wardlow  
Mires, Derbyshire. North of Bakewell.

pm: Sudbury Hall. - south of Ashbourne.

Travel Accommodation

Guild Members to make own arrangements. We suggest Farm/Guest houses in Peak District.

Wt Smith & local libraries have books of addresses.

Accommodation may be available at: New Inns,  
(an H.F Holiday house), Dovedale:- Alsop-en-le-Dale  
S. Bakewell. Derbyshire. Tel: 03352 7391

If you are interested in the Pot Crawl - return the slip and a 1st Class SAE to:

Jenny Templeton, 26 St Leonards Road, Chesham Bois,  
Amersham, Bucks. HP6 6DS. Tel: 0494 727243.

Send by May 17th please.

I/We wish to take part in the Pot Crawl on June 8-9.  
Please send further details & maps. I enclose an SAE.

No. taking part .....

Contact Name .....

Address .....

Telephone.

Telephone .....

surviving the centuries. These included steroid hormones, oestrogens, progesterone and cholesterol.

Sediment from both insides of pots and cellar floors was analysed, revealing animal or human tissue in the pots. The quantities found were felt to be consistent with what would be present in the placenta at the end of pregnancy.

Mr Waidelich believed that such elaborate burial preparations would not be wasted on animal placentas, and so the answer to the mystery of the pots would seem to be solved. I must admit that I would rather find wine jars in any cellar of mine!

