



Issue 42

Summer 2022

DACORUM AND CHILTERN POTTERS GUILD



In this issue:

Sabine Nemet at POD

Hamada Leach Centenary

Tudor Clay Build St Albans

Activities at COAM

'Great Rebuilding' of St Peters

www.dcpvg.org.uk



Walter Brayford's

Acme Batt Co.

Specialist in manufacture and supply of kiln furniture to studio potters, hobby potters, colleges and schools.

- No minimum order
- Fast, friendly and efficient service
- Large stock of best quality refractories
 - Immediate collection
 - Overnight delivery if required
- Batts cut to any size, shape and thickness, perforated or plain
- Kiln shelves, props, tile cranks, stilts, pins, cements, batt washes etc

Contact Walter Brayford

Tel: 01782 505 405

Mobile: 07817 040971

email: walter@claylake.com



DCPG Social Media



For updates and current events always look out for your emails, or the website at

www.dcp.org.uk

and also our facebook account and on instagram at

<https://www.instagram.com/thedcp>

DCPG would like to thank our advertisers for their continued support.

If you would like to advertise in our publication, enquire on advertising rates or other information, please contact David Evans at evansdjal@aol.com.

5% member discount

POTCLAYS LIMITED Since 1932

Committed to supporting makers at every stage of their ceramic practice



Clockwise: Geoffrey Swindell, Sue Pryke, Illyria Pottery

potclays.co.uk



visit our new online potters shop at
www.claymansupplies.co.uk

Enter dacorum10 at the checkout to get 10% off your complete order

Distributors for

**Valantines Spencrofts Potclays
Pottery Craft St Gobain Formula Plasters
Chrysanthos Brush-on Glazes & Colours
Ferro Gladstone Shippo Northstar
Kilns & Furnaces Northern Kilns
Pyerotec Rohde**

CLAYMAN

Morells Barn Park Lane Lower Bognor Road
Lagness, Chichester PO20 1LR
Phone: 01243 265845 info@claymansupplies.co.uk

Cover picture: Pot by Philip Leach



In this issue



- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>3 Editorial</p> <p>4 Chair's Report</p> <p>5 Sabine Nemet demonstration at POD</p> <p>8 How to Make a Chicken - with Carol Read and Richard Ballantyne</p> <p>10 Hamada Leach Centenary Celebration</p> <p>14 Sculpture, not modelling . . .
Course with Brendan Hesmondhalgh,</p> <p>16 Latest news from the kiln site at COAM</p> | <p>16 Janice and Mel's Bring and Buy sale</p> <p>17 Terrific Tuesdays</p> <p>18 Tudor Clay Build and the St Albans Pilgrimage</p> <p>22 DCPG Socials
- August to November</p> <p>22 DCPG Kingsbury Barn Exhibition</p> <p>23 Returning to Earth</p> |
|---|---|



Editorial Summer 2022



Ros McGuirk

We kept back this issue till after the centenary event with Philip Leach and Tomoo Hamada and it was well worth the wait. The two year wait! It became apparent that these potters have a real friendship and both talked, often quite frankly, about their inheritance and how they have developed their own identity as potters. It was also apparent that family traits including knowledge, skills, creativity, friendships and fun can continue down the generations. Philip and Tomoo were both delighted to be there and were enjoying the day. Koi completed the team with his easy going manner and interpreting skills. This was truly a celebration.

Many members supported. Jackie organise

this event at short notice and on the day the technical team ensured that those on zoom could join in with a little patience.

Many thanks are also due to all who have contributed to this issue with articles, photos, and by organising and joining in so many activities. Please keep the articles coming in and do think of making use of your newsletter to advertise your own ceramic events.



The next copy date will be 14th Sept.



Notes from the Chair



Jackie Harraop



We have had an amazing few months with some spectacular events and achievements most of which you will have a chance to read about in this edition.

After months of lockdown, members were finally able to gather face to face in Kings Langley in May to enjoy a face to face hands-on workshop led by Richard Ballantyne and Carol Read. It was lovely to have over 30 potters able to work together to construct and compare their chickens, ready for a Raku firing later in the summer.

The fantastic kiln group have been working tirelessly at COAM, levelling the ground and laying the foundations and slabs in preparation for the test raku firing later this month. Members will also be able to join firings later in the summer and in the autumn work will begin building the wood firing kiln. We have already stacked the woodpile so keep an eye on social media if you want to volunteer to take part in any of these ventures. We will also welcome additional volunteers to help with the popular Tuesday hands on events at COAM throughout the summer school holidays.

Through the generosity of the Kingsbury Barn owners in St Albans, we now have a base from which a team of incredible volunteers constructed the formers for the highly successful Tudor build as part of the Alban Festival in June. An amazing number of the public engaged in this community event including the Dean of the cathedral who was very enthusiastic that we continue to be involved in their future events.

Some of our members collaborated a few days later with the Berkhamsted Arts Society and Open Door in yet another beautifully fashioned model, this time of St Peter's Church.

The Hamada Leach centenary celebration was the culmination of 2 years effort to bring together Philip Leach and Tomoo Hamada grandsons of Shoji Hamada and Bernard Leach. Their fascinating demonstrations and presentations were unique to us and an incredible honour for us all. The opportunity to buy their pots and to talk informally with them was an absolute joy and they were both extremely grateful to us for facilitating the first joint event in England for 60 years. They said their grandfathers would have been very happy and proud that this had been made possible. The dedication and tenacity of the team behind this event was truly humbling.

We are now looking forward to another exciting event as over 30 members, including several new to the guild, will be exhibiting their work at Kingsbury Barn in September. We aim to have a private view/members social on Friday 9th Sept, so save the date.

As always we need more helpers. It is the same core group of dedicated (and older) members who plan, prepare and deliver these events for all of you. Its your guild, and we need more active participants to keep it going. We need more of you to step up and help, to join as trustees, committee members or just to share the load. Without active participants, we can't do any of these wonderful events which keep the guild moving forward, and it would be a shame to lose out on this fantastic momentum.

I look forward to seeing more of you at COAM in the summer and at the exhibition in September.

Best wishes

Jackie

Sabine Nemet demonstration at POD

Margaret Tatton Brown

It's always a treat to watch a good demonstration by a young talented potter who was so enthusiastic about her work. Sabine is a wood fired soda potter who built her own kiln similar to an Olsen fast fire kiln. She mixes her own clay from dry powder:

50KG of hyplas 71 ball clay

5lbs of soda feldspar

4 1/4 lbs of grogleg

She adds water to the above recipe and mixes to gain the right consistency. This is then left for two weeks before using. Sabine is originally from East Germany and did an apprenticeship for three years there before coming to England to work with Nic Collins (now her partner) twenty years ago.

She is very precise with her work and weighs all of the clay before making the pots. The first pot that she demonstrated was a butter dish, which took 1lb 8oz of clay. When she first started making this form she put a pack of butter on a sheet of clay and added on the shrinkage all round. Everything is made to a pattern which she cuts out of waxed paper. She makes all of her own tools to suit the shape of her work. Her pieces have sensuality about them and are finished beautifully and always have a smooth rounded finish. Sometimes she decorates with tiny homemade stamps, which are carved from porcelain with floral designs. She next made an oval bowl which was thrown on the wheel from 1lb 12oz of clay. She cut a leaf shape



out of the bottom and pushed in either side to join. This made the rim undulate. Two pulled handles were made and added to either side and smoothed in.

Sabine also makes a range of drawer or door knobs and weighs each piece separately:

Small 25g

Medium 65g

Large 120g



Each one is thrown individually on a batt; using a metal profile to get the exact shape and size. When leather hard a hole is drilled into the base.

When packing the kiln each piece is wadded individually to stop the pots sticking to the kiln shelves.

It takes three days to pack the kiln and the wadding is made from 80% alumina and 20% China clay mixed with water until dough like consistency is reached. Small balls are then attached to the bottom of the pots and in between the lid and base to prevent sticking: lids are always fired on the pots.

Sabine gave a slideshow and talked about how she made her work and built her Olsen kiln and the firing sequences. The kiln is fired over two days in six hour shifts with the help of Nic and her apprentice Erica. She lights one fire box first at 10:00am with small pieces of wood bringing the temperature up to 250 degrees centigrade before bringing the temperature up to 750 degrees centigrade with larger pieces of wood, firing overnight, finishing at cone 9. Over the course of the firing she sprays in 4 ½ lbs of soda but this changes over time as the kiln bricks absorb and give off

soda to the pots over the firing. She washes the inside of the kiln with silica and clay before firing & the props are washed with batt wash to stop them sticking to the shelf. The kiln has approximately six firings a year.



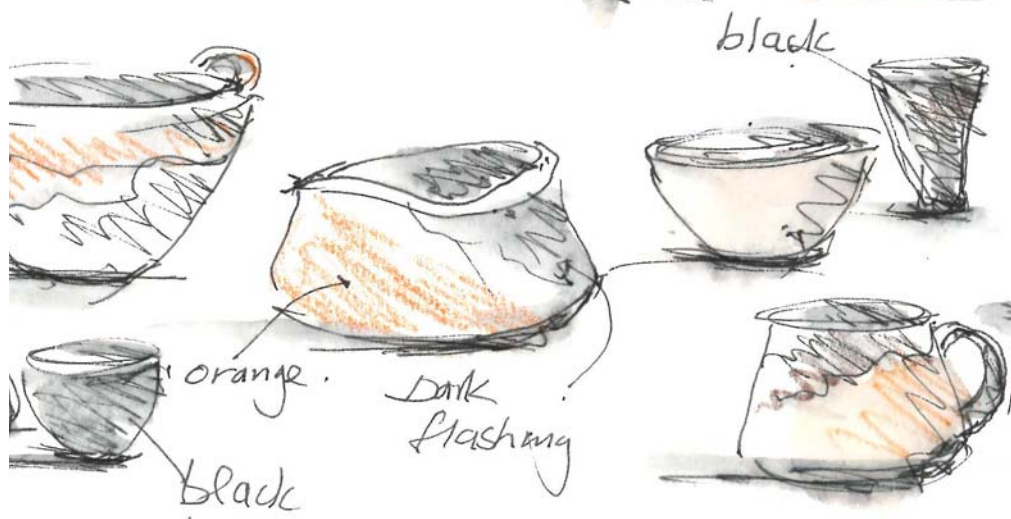
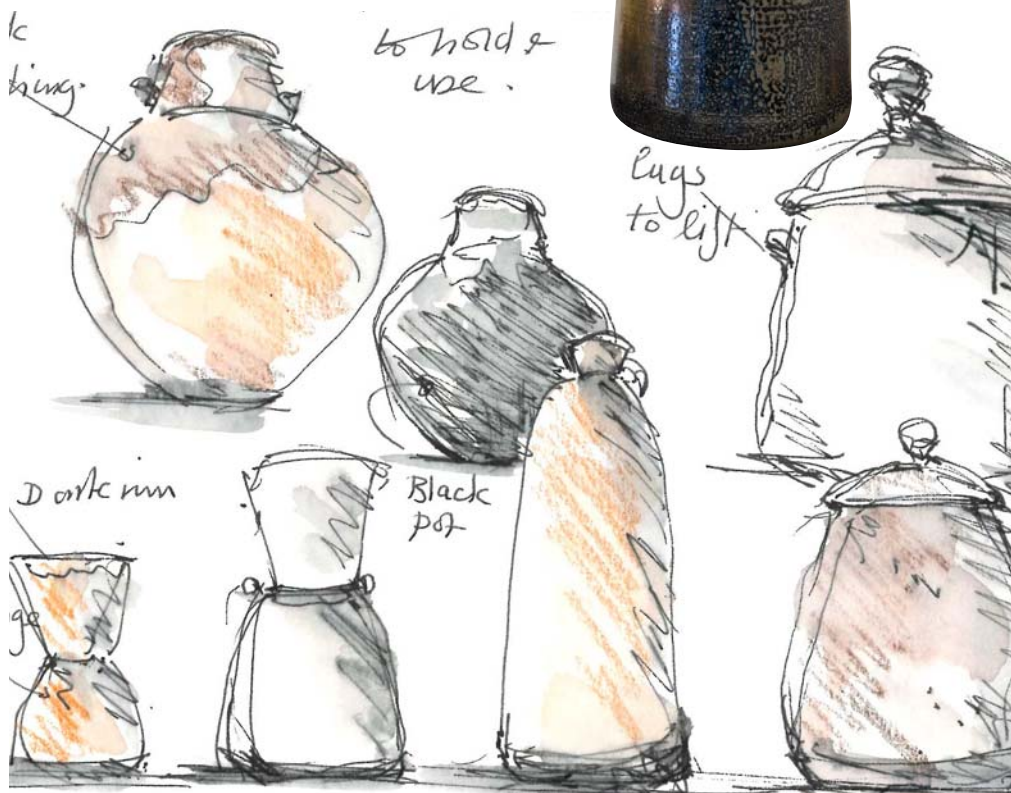
The kiln took two

days to cool before unpacking.

Sabine's demonstration was extremely thorough and she shared all of her techniques & knowledge with us and patterns that she used and tools that she made.



A thoroughly enjoyable and enriching experience; a joy to watch.





How to Make a Chicken - with Carol Read and Richard Ballantyne -

R&B Ceramics

Nicole Lyster

DCPG Demonstration and Hands on Members event, May 2022

1. If you can, throw yourself a closed sphere of clay and let it go leather hard. If not, have a wonderful friend like our President John Higgins, to throw one for you, or hand make it with coils or two pinch pots joined together.



2. Slap your sphere into a better chicken body shape.



3. Cut a cross in its bottom and open it out.

4. Cut a rainbow/fan shape of clay and present it to your cross cut hole, smoothing the cut flaps and the rainbow/fan together - to form your chicken tail.



5. Close up the rainbow/fan and add some small 'feathers' of clay to the tail to give it more texture.

6. Make a small pinch pot dome for the head - not too thin.



7. Cut a hole where you want the head to be and cap it with the pinch pot dome. Smooth the edges together and pinch the tip of the dome into a chicken beak shape.



8. Make a tiny carrot shape of clay and place that under your top beak, to form the bottom beak - smooth it into the neck to attach it firmly.



9. Make two disc shapes, and two smaller disc shapes. Stick the larger ones onto the side of the head as chicken cheeks, and the smaller ones on top of the cheeks for the eyes.



10. Make two tear drop shapes and stick these below the cheeks, either side of the beak (the Wattles).

11. Roll two sausage shapes and two balls.

12. Attach the sausage shapes to the side of the chicken body by scoring the clay and using slip or water - these are the wing shoulders

13. Flatten the balls slightly and attach them along from the shoulders, to form the primary flight feathers.

14. Roll a small sausage and flatten it for the comb - attach this to the top of the chicken's head.



15. You can add expressive eyebrows for extra character.

16. You can add texture by making marks with tools, adding 'feathers' of clay



onto the tail or wings - but if you are going to raku them, the more texture the more difficult to clean them.



17. MAKE A HOLE IN THE BOTTOM OF YOUR CHICKEN (or it could explode in the kiln, or crack open when drying)

The chickens are made with Ashraf Hanna Super White Raku Body (PF 520) from Scarva. It is a heavily grogged clay that can withstand the sudden temperature changes of raku firing. Crank clay will work, but its colour and texture is 'rougher'.

To prepare the chickens for Raku, bisque fire them to about 980C.

Raku Glaze is thick and will cover tiny imperfections and details. The bisque and glazed chickens are heated in a raku kiln to about 1000C - or until they glow a 'tangerine orange' colour - over about an hour. They are removed when they are still glowing and placed in a container with combustible material. The lid is put on tightly and the chickens cool down in the black smoke. When they are cool enough to handle the black carbon is washed off, leaving black crackle marks in the glaze.



When we set up our Raku Kilns at COAM, we can bring our bisque chickens for glazing and firing.





Hamada Leach Centenary Celebration, 3rd July 2022

 Nicole Lyster

The connection between the DCPG and Hamada and Leach goes back to just after WW2 when our founder Murray Fieldhouse applied for a job with Bernard at his pottery in St Ives. That was not to be, but Murray did present Hamada with a signed copy of his book "Pottery" at the International Conference of Craftsmen in Pottery and Textiles at Dartington in 1952. Murray's book, published by Foyles, was the second ever pottery handbook after Bernard Leach's.

The connection was renewed on 3rd July 2022 with this special talk and demonstration by two of their grandsons who are both successful potters in their own right, Philip Leach and Tomoo Hamada. They were invited to come together for a centenary celebration of the work started by Bernard Leach and Hamada Shoji in setting up the Leach Pottery and reviving the Mingei folk craft traditions of Japanese functional ware, English slipware and German salt glaze. In short, together they founded the studio pottery movement.

Philip Leach began with a demonstration of his slipware technique. White slip made from ball clay (with a little nepheline syenite added) dug from the clay pits of Devon is applied to tiles of leather-hard earthenware red clay. Local Fremington red earthenware clay is still widely used among slipware makers in Devon and throws well. Philip prefers Spencroft's (from Stoke-on-Trent) for tiles as it is easier to fire.



Philip dipped each tile with precision and without leaving finger marks on the edges. He noted that the tile needs to be firm leatherhard but not too dry or the creamy slip will soak in and cause it to crumble. He uses a rubber kidney that he has cut to a pattern of his choosing, to score lines in the slip, showing the red clay underneath. He decorated several



tiles with a variety of patterns drawing through the slip with ease. English slipware developed because the red earthenware clay was too dark and overpowering for the traditional iron and copper glazes used in the middle ages, and so a lighter slip was applied to highlight the glaze and give a depth to the pottery once fired. He has a special drying room for his tiles which is draft free so the tiles can dry slowly and consistently and not crack or warp. Work is

fired to bisque initially before being glaze fired to 1080C in a gas kiln.

To add more interest to the patterns created, black slip can be painted on to the tiles and white slip is then trailed over it as a drawn design. Philip often uses this on his plates and jugs, and demonstrated an owl plate for us. He had to make such a plate for the Leach Museum as the one made by Bernard Leach that resided over the fireplace was stolen and needed to be replaced. Slip trailing is a delicate and detailed decorating technique that takes as long to do as the creation of the plate or jug to which it is being applied. However, Philip finds the energy created by the pouring of the slip and the free flowing patters made with his rubber rib, or fingers, exciting. He also draws through slip in the sgraffito style.



Philip explained that he is not restricted by his family history, he is inspired by them. They encouraged his love of drawing and travel and that is the main inspiration for his work. "I am still energised by what I do, if I've learned one thing in the 40 years of running my pottery gallery and studio (established in 1979), is that the moment your work makes you feel dull and uninterested is the moment it stops selling, and that is the moment to stop making it". Philip feels that creative crafts that use hands are an important part of our future and that the reduction of this in our education needs to be reversed.



Philip first went to Japan in 1996 with an exhibition of his work at the St Ives Gallery in Tokyo. It was then that he met Tomoo Hamada for the first time and was entertained by Tomoo's mother whom, he was pleased to tell us, made him Cornish pasties.

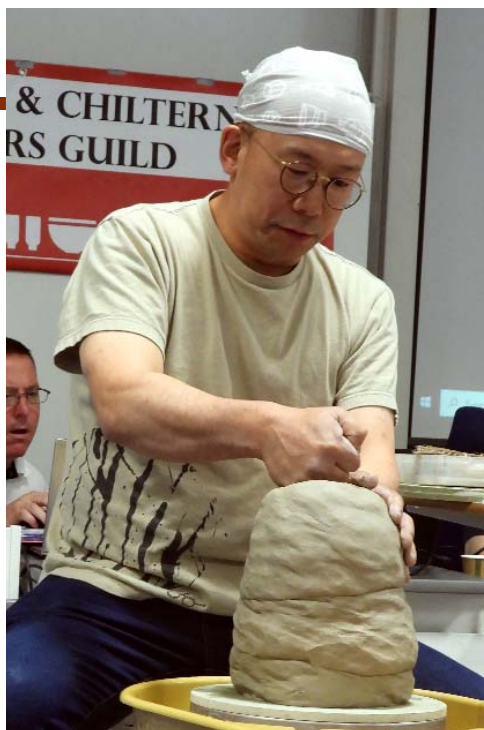
Tomoo Hamada is the grandson of Hamada Shoji, who was instrumental in the Mingei Movement in Japan, along with Yanagi Soetsu and Kawai Kanjiro. This was the conscious effort to celebrate Folk Craft, as an important part of Japanese culture that should be preserved, revered and encouraged. With Bernard Leach working to revive English Slipware, and the German technique of salt glaze it was a fitting joint venture that saw the setting up of the Leach Pottery and the working together of these two formidable potters.

Tomoo Hamada studied sculpture at university and is also interested in flower arranging, and feels that these can enhance his work with functional pottery. He is the third generation to run the Hamada Pottery in Mashiko, with his father, at 93, still working at the pottery in the same way he did when he took over the running of it from his father at the age of 40. They use kick

wheels and throw clockwise (as is the Japanese way) in a very slow rotation, ensuring that the clay can show every finger mark and throwing line - allowing it to show the energy and life that goes into making each piece. "The faster the wheel, the more symmetrical the piece and the less it shows the journey that the clay has been on".

Tomoo demonstrated how he throws his large bowls. He started by stacking three large pieces of clay onto the Shimo wheel to about 12 kg in weight. He punched the centre of the clay down to form a rough cylinder before throwing. The wheel turned slowly and every finger mark was recorded as he manipulated the clay into a coned bowl using such a tiny amount of water as to not leave a drip in the wheel tray nor a spot of clay on his t-shirt. The clay he used for our demonstration was St Patricks clay from Scarva, but he found it very smooth 'like porcelain', as the clay in Mashiko has a high grog content. He explained that the less water used the more the clay keeps its structure and can be manipulated into different shapes more easily. The clay keeps its strength and it is less likely to crack as it dries or in the firing.

As Tomoo threw a large bottle and a set of 'off the hump cups', he told us of the devastation of the earthquake that hit Mashiko, destroying every climbing kiln used by the 400 potteries that call Mashiko home. At first he was devastated by the loss of his family's kiln and the Hamada museum and gallery, and he considered giving up. But thanks to social media and a crowd funding campaign he realised that the whole of Japan and much of the rest of the world wanted to help him restore what was lost. The Leach Pottery in St Ives took part in this effort to



help fund the restoration. Two years later the museum and kiln were restored and Tomoo felt encouraged to concentrate on his making once again. Tomoo is also the director of the museum and will be curating a new exhibition there when he gets back home.

Whilst most of the kilns in Mashiko have been converted to gas the Hamada Kiln is still a five chamber climbing kiln, taking 4000 pieces of work each firing and reaching 1250C peak temperature. It takes 4 people to fire it once a year, feeding the chambers with pine wood. It takes the studio 3 months to make enough pottery to fill the kiln, 1 month to load it, 1 month to fire it and allow it to cool and another month to unpack it. Work is glazed in 7 glazes that are unique to Mashiko, especially the khaki green 'persimmon' glaze, which is made from local materials.

The workforce at Hamada studio is made of apprentices who stay for between 3 to 5



years before moving on to their own studio business. They are supported by long standing staff including an 83 year old who started working there when she was 16 and Shoji was still in charge. (Tomoo relies on her knowledge when he wants to work on his house!)

We can thank Koichiro (Koi) Isaka for enabling us to have such a wonderful conversation with Tomoo during his demonstration. He is the Director of the St Ives



Gallery Tokyo and interpreter and friend to Tomoo and Philip. He was instrumental in bringing these two potters together in



1996 when all three became good friends, and he was also essential to the success of their English trip this year. Together with Minori Thorpe, who funded this centenary demonstration, they have both contributed enormously to our delight and enjoyment in hearing and seeing these two potters at work.



Sculpture, not modelling . . . the essence of the beast.

UCL Course with Brendan Hesmondhalgh, May 2022 **Beverly Benson**

POD 2020. Don't get me wrong: we were very pleased with the voucher from Valentine Clays, but Jackie won a course with Brendan Hesmondhalgh! I really was very envious - to the point that I decided that I really should book the course for myself. Then, of course, we didn't go anywhere for two years.

This May we finally made it to the 'Sculpture Lounge': the converted mill building in the tiny village of Holmbridge, a few miles from Holmfirth, Yorkshire, where Brendan holds his workshops. He has let a lot of the space to other artists, making it a fascinating place to visit.

The workshop is light and airy in one of the upstairs rooms in the mill. I have to admit to being a bit starstruck - I have loved Brendan's work since first seeing him at Art in Clay at Hatfield many years ago. Brendan welcomed us and went off to make us all coffee - he is not 'starry' at all.

There were 11 of us in the class. We were each given a bag of Ashraf Hannah (23, from Valentine). The group shared ideas about what they hoped to make. John, who had come with me out of loyalty and was not at all convinced about sculpture, said that he had chosen a rhino, because it looked simple and already had folds in its skin, which might conceal some dodgy workmanship. Brendan looked at him steadily and said, "We'll see about that...". I am sure that you know Brendan's work. He is famous for his visceral animals where the clay evokes rippling muscles and hidden bone structure, even when there are gaps in the surface which are filled by your own imagination. He began by making a maquette which retained the 'clayness' of the clay. He told us about how to put animation into our figures and set us to work.



Brendan is a brilliant teacher. He finds a good balance between demonstration and independent work and is careful about touring the room, sharing his time between the students. He is good at keeping up your enthusiasm without allowing you to set off with unrealistic expectations; developing people's own ideas and gently checking them when they start to take the wrong path. We were there for 3 days, but there are also 4 and 5 day courses, for those who want to work in more detail (and can find the time).

The demonstrations are awe inspiring. He can pick up a piece of clay, poke it a couple of times and create the head of a hare - or the face of a bulldog. He is relaxed and approachable and tells entertaining stories about his journey to where he is today. Everyone more or less achieved what they set out to achieve, all with various levels of previous experience and talent.

Main 'take always' from the course:

Make a solid maquette before you start work. It will give you the opportunity to move your character around and to make sure that it balances and looks realistic.

Turn the head of the character - nothing looks realist staring forwards.

Think about how you are going to present the piece and take time with the plinth or stand.

Make small sections of clay and push muscles and features out from the inside before you attach them.

Use clay topped with a piece of plastic to make supports for the sculpture as you go. You can use solid objects, but it is easier to cut a clay support away and move it around as needed.



Work on more than one sculpture at a time, so that you can leave each one to harden for a while so that it is easier to build on later.

Make sure that you keep the head in proportion to the body - it is easy to focus on the head and allow it to become too big.

When you add a piece of fresh clay, prick it all over with a pin (through to the inside) and then simply smooth the outer surface. Brendan does not use water, nor slip to join.



Practical things:

All this, and Brendan kept us supplied with tea and coffee and provided a simple cooked lunch every day, too.

We stayed at a cottage in nearby Water Lane, run by Kate, who has several cottages



in the area and was very welcoming and helpful. Holmfirth is the village where they filmed lots of 'The Last of the Summer Wine', so there are several good pub/

restaurants in the area. These are very popular and we would recommend booking them the day before. The area around is beautiful and would probably have warranted a longer stay.

<https://hesmondhalghsculpture.co.uk/>

Millrace and Millpond cottages, Holmbridge, through Booking.com

Several of the group were on their second or third courses with Brendan and their pieces were brilliant.



Latest news from the kiln site at COAM



Sandie Taylor

The slabs have been laid out for the raku firing area thanks to Amanda, Tim and William Toms. There will be a test firing of the raku kilns towards the end of July.

We would then be ready to open up to members in August.

Date to be confirmed.



Bring and Buy Sale



Judi Tribe

I would like to say a huge thanks to Janice and Mel for hosting a bring and buy for the Guild on June 18th. Five members came along and we all enjoyed meeting up and chatting about pottery, looking around Janice's Studio, discovering very useful top tips as well as purchasing tools and materials including the most stunning wooden tools made by Mel. We were also treated to plenty of tea, coffee and delicious biscuits. By the end of the afternoon £87.00 was donated to the Guild.

Janice and Mel have also kindly donated to some raku equipment that they are no longer need to our COAM



kiln project. This includes a pair of aluminium tongs, a pair of gauntlets and two gas bottles.

Big thanks again to Janice and Mel for suggesting and hosting this lovely event.



The Chiltern Open Air Museum Craft days are popular with families, and today, at least, everyone seemed to make a beeline for our clay workshop beside the Northolt Barn. For the May half term Terrific Tuesday Judi had organised a theme of Mythical Beasts - lions, unicorns and dragons. She had prepared laminated pictures and made several little beasts to get the thing going with a swing. And swing it did, right from the moment the gates opened children came straight along to play with clay.



The first deluge arrived mid morning and within minutes the whole operation was moved into the old barn. Despite frequent downpours and water running everywhere

outside, people kept coming in all day. By the end well over 100 little beasts had been made and happily carried home. (Thank goodness we also had a good turnout of volunteers!)

We cleared up and went home happy to have been busy in such a beautiful and welcoming place. Better even than all that, we had been together again.

As I drove home the sun shone, steam rose from the fields, and I promised to return for another day.





Tudor Clay Build and the St Albans Pilgrimage



Outside the Cathedral - Sat 25th June 2022

Mandy English

What a wonderful occasion this was! With only a short spritz, the sun shined on the righteous for most of the day. After the procession of giant puppets on their short route from St Peter's church at the other end of the High Street, adults, children and families arrived at the Cathedral, ready to play medieval games on the field and participate in our event. This was the culmination of a lot of preparation, which saw 10 clay buildings ready by midday for the public to get creative and decorate to their hearts' content.

The Tudor theme was stretched to include clay dinosaurs, a hippy face, spirals and snails and our visitors enjoyed working together, indulging themselves making our clay city of St Albans in Tudor times. They were encouraged to either add their own contributions or use tools to make marks, inspired by photos of the buildings. Comments such as 'we never do this at

home', 'it's so nice to do something different' and 'such a great idea' were rewarding to hear. We had a visit from the Dean, who already wants us to repeat the successful event next year!

So what of the preparation? Our amazing chair, Jackie, led various teams in the preceding weeks. First there was a meeting with the events team at the cathedral in March. A couple of months later Andrew Gardner led a group of us on an historical tour of the town to seek out the best black and white old buildings. His knowledge is extensive and we were treated to lots of fascinating stories about the people and politics who had a hand in shaping the town. From the photos taken ten buildings were chosen, including the cathedral, which of course is much older and has little to show for the Tudors as, being an abbey church at the time, it was largely abandoned after the Dissolution, but that's another story.



In the run up to the big build a huge collection was made of assorted cardboard (the larger the boxes the better), tape (parcel and duck), Stanley knives, scissors, chunks of polystyrene (to support the roofs), thin plastic (for waterproofing) and photos of Tudor buildings in St Albans to make the structures. Kingsbury Barn in St Albans provided the venue for building the formers and much problem solving and fun was had by all who lent a hand at this stage.

Lots of organising was required to store and transplant the cardboard city in readiness for applying clay slabs on the day before and morning of the event. A slight panic over a possible shortage of clay focused our minds on stretching it as far as possible when 'dressing' the cardboard on the day but we had plenty in the end.

Jackie organised a group to collect all the equipment from Kingsbury Barn on the Saturday at 7.30am, then we worked with the St Albans site team to set up 4 light-weight gazebos (from 8am) and 12 wooden trestle tables on the grass by the side of the Cathedral. One of the gazebos was the DCPG equipment and bags 'station' and included room for the portable slab roller, used to prepare the slabs for our cardboard buildings.



Much smoothing took place! It was a bit of a race to finish covering the final buildings with clay and protect with plastic while the sun was beating down. We set up 6 buckets of water with sponges for cleaning up clay covered hands, taped the buildings' photos to each table, set up hand sprayers, got boxes of tools out and found stones to weigh down our DCPG promotional leaflets. It was a great atmosphere as other activities were also being set up and coffee and croissants were purchased from the Cathedral café to help us all along.



Almost as soon as the procession arrived, we had our first participants and there was a steady flow all afternoon. Using both 'go with the flow' and 'gentle coercion' strategies, we managed to entice passers-by to join in. The easiest way was to target children and the adults followed! If you have a small ball of clay thrust in your hand, you can do little to resist! The clay and the creations lasted, assisted by frequent water spraying during the afternoon. It wasn't so much about the results at the end of the day, but the process of engaging our participants in the art of creating with clay, starting conversations, seeing them lose themselves in making and taking a switch off from digital tech (although there were many photos taken)!



We finally started clearing up at 4pm. Undressing the buildings of their wonderful creations meant removing and storing the clay for recycling in bags, breaking down the cardboard for the Cathedral recycling bins and bagging up any final tape, plastic, other rubbish. It also meant deconstructing the washed tables and gazebos and returning them to the Cathedral store, chucking out the water, collecting the cars and loading up. All equipment was then returned to Kingsbury Barn and unloaded.

So, yes, a mammoth effort by keen leaders and volunteers. The satisfaction, however, was immense. Connecting people with clay and with others by making a group contribution had been one of the main aims. Through the process, we reminded them of the value of their haptic skills, allowing talents to run freely in a psychological safe space (no judgements!) and picking up a few technical tips on the side! You can see from the photos the various stages of the builds and end results. Was it worth it? Will we repeat it? YES, IT WAS AND YES, WE WILL!

Thank you for reading.



The 'Great Rebuilding' of St Peters Church

 Audrey Hammett

Guild member Ian Jones works behind the scenes on our finances, supports Open Door Community Arts Space and is an active member of the Berkhamsted Arts Society. With support from all these groups and Father Stuart, he recently led the big build clay project to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the parish church, St Peters.

The photos show the making of a magnificent clay church, suitably decorated by the creations of those who joined in on the day. Ian is shown with the cardboard formers and Maud is seen wrapping them in plastic. The cardboard was donated by a local packing company and the plastic from a local cleaners. It took two days to build the formers and the event took place on Saturday 3rd July. The finished piece in all its glory was kept overnight to show the parishioners on Sunday morning.



Afterwards the clay was recycled and sent to the Open Door Pottery Shed and the former was kept for the St Peterstide Fair next year.

Ian writes : "We feel proud and privileged to have been invited to participate in the 800th year celebrations of St Peter's Church and to be involved in such a major milestone at the church.

It feels extra special because we have been able to involve the residents of Berkhamsted – a place whose people have had St Peter's Church in their lives since 1222. This exciting clay build project has been a community event to remember."





DCPG Socials - August to November 2022



Judi Tribe

AUGUST - Wednesday 10th -

10.30 - 12.30 - Morning Social

Walk in St Albans Verulamium Park meeting at the Verulamium Car Park - 39, St Michael's Street, St Albans, AL3 4SW next to Verulamium Museum.

And then Refreshments at the DCPG studio at Kingsbury Barn or the Inn in the Park Cafe at the Verulamium Park. This will be confirmed nearer the time.

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

<https://www.inn-on-the-park.com>

SEPTEMBER - Monday 26th -

10.30 - 12.30 - Morning Social

Hemel Food Garden Sunnyside Rural Trust, (Sunnyside Cafe) Central Nursery, Two Waters Road, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 9BY

<http://www.sunnysideruraltrust.org.uk/hemel-food-garden>

OCTOBER - Tuesday 18th

10.30 - 12.30 - Morning Social

Walk in Oxhey Park near Watford.

Please meet in the Oxhey Activity Car Park WD18 0HS

And then Refreshments at the Tasty Bean Cafe which is an independent, family owned business proud to be serving great quality, fresh, seasonal food and drink to our local community.

<https://tastybean.co.uk>

NOVEMBER - Wednesday 23rd

10.30 - 12.30 - Morning Social

Refreshments at the Open Door Cafe - 360, High Street, Berkhamsted. HP4 1HU

<https://www.opendoorberkhamsted.co.uk>



DCPG Kingsbury Barn Exhibition



Fri 9th to Sun 11th September

The Fitzwilliam competition entries will be on view there at the same time.

This ancient barn makes a wonderful backdrop the show and the Friday preview is always popular with members, so put the date in your diary and come along. More info soon.

The exhibition coincides with St Albans Heritage week, Herts Open Studios, and the Pub in the Park which this year is on for the same 3 days. All this should ensure another popular and successful show although visitors may have to take a little time to find parking.





Returning to Earth

UIN Ros McGuirk

As we all wonder how we can make a drastic reduction in the global output of greenhouse gases, one item that is worth looking into is our use of building materials. The manufacture of cement and glass, for example, produces large amounts of CO₂. Clay, on the other hand, does not.

Earth and clay are universal and ancient building materials. Wattle and daub, adobe, rammed earth, unfired bricks; mud and clay in countless combinations has been used forever for building houses, food stores, temples, cathedrals. In Korea the traditional cottage is of thatch with mud walls and those still using them claim the walls breathe and the air within is cleaner. It helps insulate in winter and keep cool in summer.

Although it has been superseded by modern materials in all but the poorest areas, architects are re-evaluating clay in the light of climate change and they are appreciating its resilience. After all, large sections of the Great Wall of China are made of rammed earth and are still standing.

In Columbia communities are re-engaging with the old technique of mixing mud with lime to create buildings that resist the effects of the increasingly heavy rainfall.

Earth buildings are also seen to withstand earthquakes where modern concrete and glass structures have failed, as in Kerala, India.



In an effort to find a sustainable, low carbon and cheap building material the Ant Studio of New Delhi is pioneering the use of remarkable house facades apparently made of clay pipes. These pipes act the same way as traditional water pots. The low fired body is porous and allows evaporation and thus cooling. This entirely cuts out the need for expensive, electric guzzling air conditioning systems. See www.coolant.co



At a time of rapid change and challenges to our global support systems it is heartening to find that clay is a reason to be more positive about the future.

Valentine Clays holds the key ingredient...



Emma Rodgers

Valentine Clays Ltd

Manufactured in the Heart of the Potteries...

tel 01782 271200

Valentine Clays Limited. Valentine Way

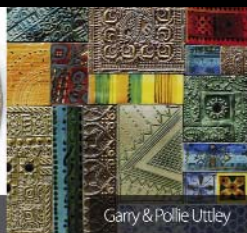
Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2FJ

email: sales@valentineclays.co.uk

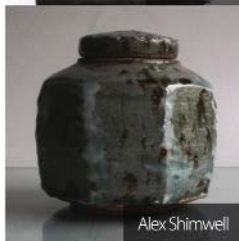
www.valentineclays.co.uk



John Scott



Garry & Pollie Uttley



Alex Shimwell



Chiu-i Wu

POTTERY CRAFTS

"Touching earth through the hands of a potter" LIMITED

Roderveld wheels, equipment & POTTERY CRAFTS kilns are built by our dedicated team to an exceptionally high standard at our warehouse in Stoke-on-Trent, England.



"Our UK-manufactured
Wheels & Kilns"



"For the beginner and expert
in ceramics & pottery"

- Kilns
- Wheels
- Glazes & Stains
- Raw Materials
- Bisque & Moulds
- Extensive Range of Clays
- Helpful & Friendly Advice



PotteryCrafts Ltd

Campbell Road, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 4ET



Tel: 01782 745000

www.pottery crafts.co.uk

Fax: 01782 746000

sales@pottery crafts.co.uk

M & K SPARROW

Kiln Services

Kilns Supplied
Installed • Repaired
Serviced • Safety Checked

Elements and Controls

Commercial & Domestic
Schools • Colleges
Universities • Hospitals

M & K SPARROW

6 Frankland Road
Croxley Green
Rickmansworth

Hertfordshire, WD3 3AU

Tel/Fax: 01923 775059

Mob: 07836 361868

mksparrow@talktalk.net