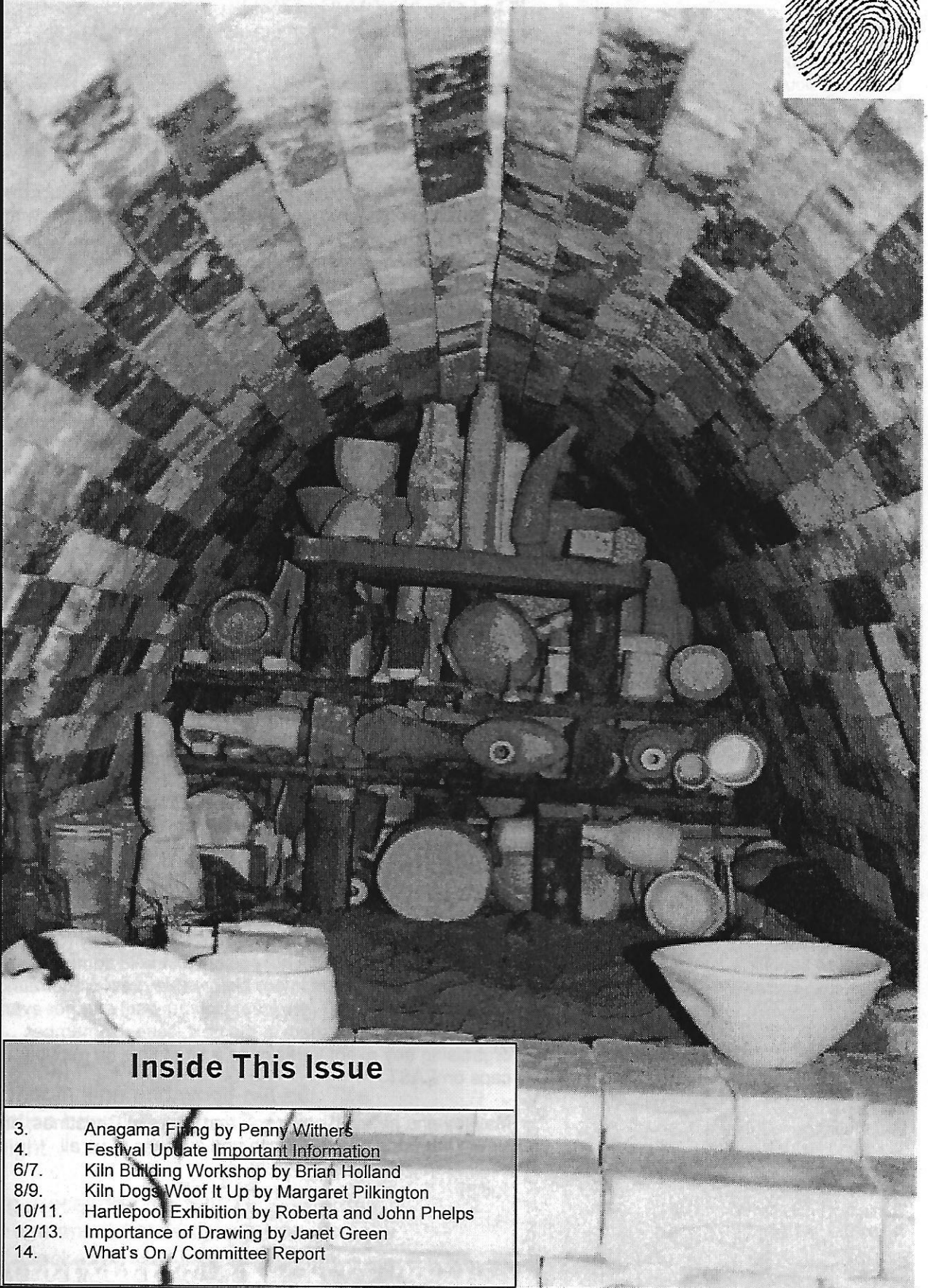


Northern Potters Association



Inside This Issue

- 3. Anagama Firing by Penny Withers
- 4. Festival Update [Important Information](#)
- 6/7. Kiln Building Workshop by Brian Holland
- 8/9. Kiln Dogs: Woof It Up by Margaret Pilkington
- 10/11. Hartlepool Exhibition by Roberta and John Phelps
- 12/13. Importance of Drawing by Janet Green
- 14. What's On / Committee Report

Issue December 01 - January 02

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Chat from the Chair:

As I sit to write this I am conscious that there has been a load of water under the bridge in the last month within the NPA

My separate article explains what has happened to the festival planning, and how we appear to have overcome what could have been a major problem for our event. Read on!! As you will realise this has had to take precedence over much else.

The Hartlepool show is open and I have been told looks very good with some good quality work on show, and also with work from new members which is encouraging. My thanks to Julie who struggled with a broken toe to organise this, and especially to all the members who turned out at selection and the private view to assist. I wasn't able to attend as my number 2 son decided to get married at last on selection day. Bad planning on his part!!!!

Other than that I hope that your Christmas sales are better than expected, and we can all look forward to an exciting, productive educational and financially sorted pukka new year. (too much Jamie Oliver!!)

Happy Christmas to you all from myself and your committee,

Pete Clough

Editors Comment:

Once again I have to thank everyone who sent in very interesting articles for inclusion in this issue, and send out yet another plea for you ALL to keep them coming. I cannot do my job unless you send in the material. At the beginning of my second year as editor I have been amazed by the support from you all which makes the job so much more worth while when you know that other people get pleasure from the work you do.

In this our Silver Jubilee Year I have chosen to reproduce old articles as a way of reflecting back on our achievements. We are also holding a Silver Jubilee Potters Camp in July (See page 4). If you have any ideas on how else we should commemorate this important achievement in our history (Maybe a dinner dance in December next year? *my idea*) Do you want another event?) I will gladly reproduce them in the next issue. Remember organising any event takes quite a bit of time so get your thinking caps on FAST.

May joy and peace be with you and yours at Christmas; and the New Year bring health, wealth and success to us all.

Judith

**Deadline for the next issue is
January 20th 2002**

Anagama Firing

The October firing of Rufford's Anagama kiln was a long awaited treat. The 20 foot kiln built by Jon Fellows had been idly dozing in the Nottinghamshire woods for a year since it's last public firing. This forced somnolence had been the result of foot and mouth fears which closed the park earlier this year and led to the subsequent cancellation of a spring firing. As a consequence, people had stored pots for the kiln and now presented an awesome amount of ware to be stacked and fired.

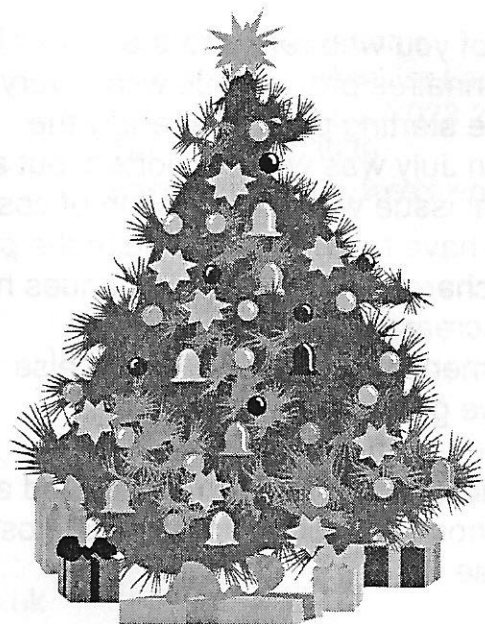
Brian Holland, kiln master on this occasion, rose to the challenge and thoughtfully sited most of the pieces leaving out only a few. It appeared that many people, myself included, having seen the size of the kiln chamber had thought it a good opportunity to make work on a large scale. In response to this the front of the kiln was tumble stacked with larger jars and platters interspersed with Holland's own work which fitting ideally into the negative spaces between bulbous forms. The back of the kiln held shelves of smaller ware. The introduction of a grate above the ash bed in the firebox proved to be an effective innovation inspired by Nic Collin's kiln building workshop.

The weekend weather was dreary but suited reduction. There was a dramatic thunderstorm overhead on warm up night which we took to be a good omen. A large number of people were involved over the weekend with some travelling from surprisingly far a field to take part. We worked hard in teams to bring the temperature up to cone 12—13 before supplies of both time and wood ran out. The final reduction began at around 7 pm on Sunday night.

Unpacking proceeded the following Saturday. We could see immediately the effects of heavy reduction; blackened clay with smoke fume effects billowed throughout. There was evidence that fly ash had also been drawn right to the back of the chamber. There was some stunning individual pieces, particularly

those that had gone in raw. There was also the casualties, pots immediately in front of the firebox had cracked during the rapid heating and there was a distinct lack of lustre throughout (I.e. not a lot of fluxed ash glaze). Both problems indicate that longer heating and soaking periods are desirable. There was consensus of opinion that a greater amount of group consultation over firing cycles and stacking would exercise individual control and progress to a deeper understanding of anagama effects.

As a local education resource the firing was used by students at Rufford workshop programmes, Rother Valley College and Shirebrook Secondary School, the later being granted Education Action Zone funding towards year 10 ceramics workshops led by Peter Marshall. Pupils were fully involved in all the making and firing processes. The benefits of which, actual hands on experience demonstrating method and context, far outstrips classroom resources. In conjunction with practical experience there was an excellent opportunity to see examples of the finest ceramics by Japanese masters in the Gallery.



Festival 2002 Update and Changes.

At the end of October I was informed by the Conference Office at Bretton Hall that the provisional booking made for our festival next July could not be honored due to building work on the Theatre commencing in May.

As you all might imagine this was a major upset for your committee, and at our next meeting early in November we were faced with some fairly stark choices.

1. To cancel the event.
2. To look for another college which might be able to accommodate us at short notice.
3. To rethink totally the nature of the event.

There was extensive and positive discussion around this problem. The first idea of canceling the event was put to one side in the search for alternatives. I made contacts with a number of alternative campus venues to no avail. They were either fully booked, too expensive, or could not give us the spaces and backup resources which our type of event requires.

This left us with the third possibility.

Those of you who returned the questionnaires provided us with a very valuable starting point. Generally the timing in July was well supported, but a constant issue was the question of cost. In this we have been constrained in the past by the charges which college venues have been increasingly imposing due to government cut backs. So where else could we go?

Brian Holland suggested Rufford and a quick phone call received an initial positive response.

As this is our Silver Jubilee Year I then suggested that we return to our roots and have an informal potters camp, which is where NPA started 25 years ago.

Brian has had extensive discussions with Rufford, and they have agreed a bi-annual event starting this next year.

Accommodation will be under canvas, or caravan, self catering, which is cheap, or local B & B . Marquees will be erected for exhibitions and demonstrators, and there will be a firing of the Large Anagama on the site, plus hopefully others.

As you can imagine planning will now have to proceed apace for a totally different event, and as the time frame is tight we will need your support to make it a success. I need at least 4-6 members to join the committee as co-optees to help spread the workload a little, if only for the run up to the event. Telephone me on 01423 567716

NOW

Please, please get involved to help us out. We will struggle to organise this without your support.!!!

As for the title, I've suggested:

**'BACK TO THE FUTURE'
a traditional informal Potters Camp**

Finally could I as Chair praise the imagination and enthusiasm of your committee in this situation. We are all very excited at the potential of this new event, and hope that you all will share that when we meet in July.

Yours

Pete Clough



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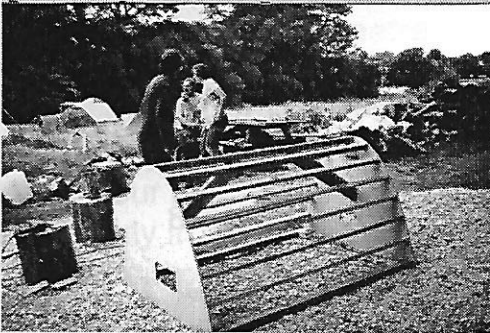
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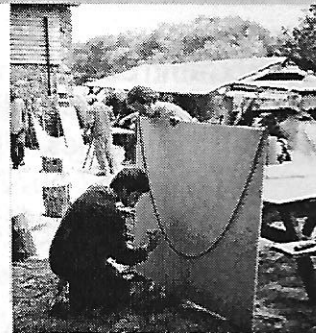
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KILN BUILDING WORKSHOP 2001 with Nic Collins

One week of building, stacking, firing, and unpacking an Anagama type tunnel kiln at Moretonhampstead, Devon.



Picture 1



Picture 2

This really was a special holiday. A week immersed in the joys of wood firing, and the camaraderie of equally enthusiastic people.

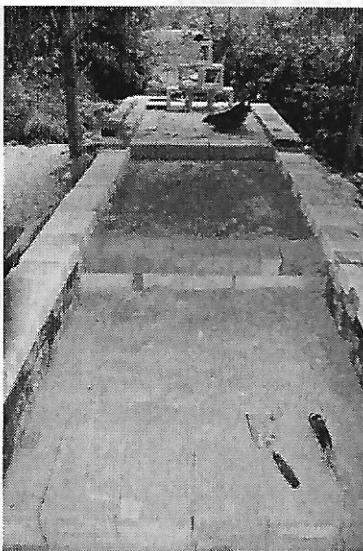
I arrived at Nic's place late Sat. evening, just in time for a slide show of Nic's previous adventures with kilns, and examples of work fired in them. There was another 8 people



Picture 3

already in the room, and after the slides and answered questions we were all stoked up and could not wait for the next morning. We were supplied with copies of drawings of the kiln we were going to build. But first I received help with my tent, then off to a local pub for a meal.

The next day we began making the formers (pics 1/2/3) to support the bricks. These were based on a catenary arch, and were made in chip board and timber. The importance of getting strong, and rigid formers was stressed. Extra bracing being added where necessary. After all the success of the building depended on the formers remaining in place during the building process.



Picture 4

The base of the kiln was filled with a high silica sand, (pic 4) tamped and levelled with a spirit level. This proved to be a better surface to set pots and kiln props on, and would be easier to replace.

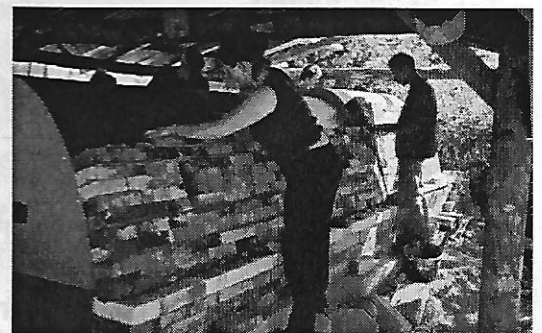
The formers were positioned on this base (pic 5). Bricklaying could commence.

But first lunch. Magnificent lunches were prepared for us throughout the week.

Laying the firebricks, proceeded carefully but quickly (Pic 6), a mortar of fireclay and sand only being used to wedge the angles. The top key bricks had to be carefully cut from HTI bricks. Also stoking and observation ports had to be built in.



Picture 5



Picture 6



Picture 7

The formers were then removed (Pic 7).

The flue and chimney section were built (Pic 8) whilst several of us draped the kiln with a layer of ceramic fibre insulation. Stacking of the kiln commenced (Pic 9) whilst the chimney was being fitted. At the rear of the kiln stacking was conventional (pic 10), as we



Picture 8

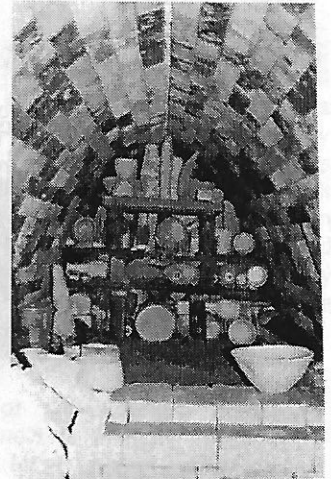
near the front of the kiln tumble stacking was employed separating the work with clam shells.



Picture 9

After stacking a fire grate was made using stainless steel tube, supported by firebrick. This was intended to increase the efficiency of the kiln by allowing air to pull through the burning timber. (This I later applied to the kiln at Rufford and was able to reach temperature in two days).

The door was bricked up allowing for three blockable stoking ports. A fire was lit outside the lower stoking holes; firing had commenced.



Picture 10

The kiln had taken two days to build. And we spent the following three days and nights tending the flames. Initially warming the kiln slowly, then stoking quick burning wood to build up the temperature, then larger blocks to allow the temperature to even out throughout the kiln. This was followed by periods of heavy stoking providing reducing conditions, and creating wood ash to flux the surface of the ceramics.

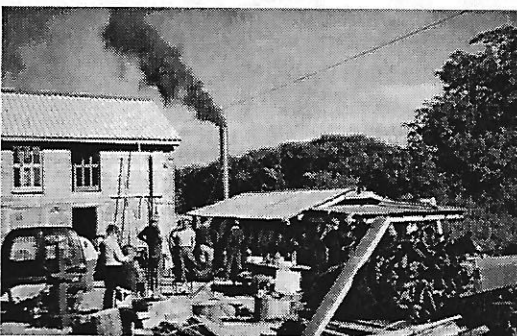


Picture 11

Looking into the top front stoke port (Pic 11) with the flame pulling efficiently through.

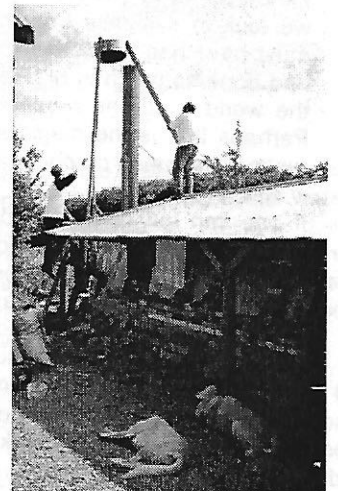
A good reduction is clearly in evidence (Pic 12).

At the end of the firing we needed to cap off the chimney (Pic 13, having forgot to build in a damper. Capping-off was followed by heavy stoking, doing one's best not to catch fire then sealing all portholes tightly with fire-clay mortar and covering with more fibre blanket.



Picture 12

The next two days were spent on trips around Devon, visiting other potters studios. We went to Chuck Schwarz' paradisiacal hide-away. Here we saw, besides Chuck's regular kiln, a kiln built by a visiting Japanese potter, which was built in four hours. We later saw a video of this being built. Chuck very generously invited us all to chose something from his reject pile. We went on to Sven Bayers and saw his enormous kiln, and then to Clive Bowen's place and saw his twin bottle type kiln. The following day we visited a local gallery displaying Nic's work, then onto the Devon guild galleries.



Picture 13

The opening of the kiln was dramatic, embers were still glowing as we carefully passed pots along the chain to be placed in the same pattern that they had been stacked in. This was Saturday evening and it was already getting dark. Unfortunately I had to drive back that evening so I missed the analysis of the firing, next day.

It had been a wonderful experience, a big learning curve. Throughout the event Nic had given demonstrations and had made us all a bottle, which were fired in the kiln.

From the start Nic had made us all feel very welcome. If you are at all interested in wood firing then going on Nic's course is a must. Contact Nic Collins, The Barn Pottery, Pound St., Moretonhampstead, Devon.-Tel: 016747-441198

KILN DOGS WOOF IT UP DOWN IN DEVON

"The confectioner's dream is to be able to make water stand on end." I knew what my colleague meant as he concluded our lunchtime chat all those years ago. He had been giving me the benefit of his experience and time spent in that trade, to me he was process-cameraman to the printing apprenticeship courses at Bradford College. My own route to that place of employment had also encompassed a variety of jobs and interests. No doubt our conversation had taken this sweet-toothed turn because I'd mentioned something about having an edible sculpture to complete.

Watching and listening to Ian Gregory working in his improvised 'kitchen' at Kenton Village Hall on the day of Westcountry Potters AGM had many of these kinds of memories and tit-bits of accumulated wisdom come to my mind. If anyone has successfully found ways of 'making water stand on end', it is surely Ian Gregory with his paper clay fired in a flat-pack kiln. As a self-taught ceramist, Ian had no rules about working with clay. He jumped in, all guns blazing, out of acting and procreating (7 children ~ did he say? Between shows!)

NO RULES! What a wonderful world for a lateral thinker! A world of WD40, biscuit-tin lids, broom handles, bicycle-wheel spokes, and kebab sticks, of bubblewrap, polystyrene, and clay rice crispies, (first introduced as loft insulation, now used as weed suppressant, did Ian mean 'Vermiculite'?) Add to these, new technological inventions for our guest demonstrator to adapt and adopt, and this human whirlwind took us all by storm.

I know he joked about being a case for 'Help the Aged' but as we took in evidence from his slide show it was obvious he must have had more hours in each day than most of us. He had done so much in his life, both in this country and around the world ~ still he retained a youthful twinkle in his eyes. Perhaps that is the magic and illusion of someone who can *make water stand on end* ~ literally and metaphorically.

If one can cut down on some of the hassles of life, shave minutes off time taken to do a task, achieve maximum result for minimum effort, then one can seem to have more than a regular 24-hour day. I wasn't particularly taking notes on Saturday 19th May, I wanted to get the feel of the whole event since it had many facets; social, business, educational, fundraising, introducing members to each other and such like. On reflection, the main point emerging seemed to be, that the application of lateral thinking can achieve this wonderful 'maximum result for minimum effort or expenditure'. I try to do this as much as possible in my own life and work. Ian's slide talk and demonstration illustrated so graphically how this can become the reality of a potter's life.

The AGM, too, an example of this principle in action, with each officer reporting on their own particular job done on behalf of the whole membership. For this type of organisation to work well though, it is very important that the *membership* never takes the committee for granted. As individuals we all have a responsibility to make our voices heard, either by constructive feedback to relevant committee members, or by physical help as, when and where needed. I know things don't always run smoothly or to plan, but with enough 'give', problems can usually be overcome.

'Give', there, meaning ~ material and/or manpower needs to be flexible yet strong in support. At which phrase, I am nicely positioned to mention clay modelling and armatures. I thought Elizabeth Hadley showed a great degree of flexible support with her armatures, until Ian Gregory gave us his magical performance, using a variety of the afore mentioned materials. He hypnotised us such that we all checked our eyebrows for singeing after his description of dissolving away a polystyrene support with petrol and his forgetting to take account of the residual fumes as he lit the kiln! (Beware, some lateral thinking can endanger your health!)

Ian's demonstration began after the delicious buffet lunch. He opened by giving us the technical details of how paper clay works, extolling its virtues of lightness, strength and ease of working. Its finished lightness is caused by the paper fibres burning away during firing, so less actual clay is used. Its strength is created as a result of the paper fibres coming between the platelets of clay and causing them to lay every which way instead of in neat layers. This fact also causes the clay not to have a memory, so eliminating some of the problems which can occur with thrown teapot spouts and such. Each minute paper fibre is as a tiny straw and by capillary action can draw water very quickly into the body. This characteristic means that wet clay can be joined to dry work without the normal problems of later cracking and without any real need for scoring and slipping of both surfaces to be joined. These 'paper straws' soon equalise the water content of the body around the join.

Paper pulp was not the only organic material Ian had experimented with. His description of throwing in handfuls of such things as rice, lentils, chopped straw and so on, gave me a wonderful picture, complete with soundtrack, of him as the Swedish chef from the 'Muppet Show' (for those who remember that bit of TV history!) One warning though was that organic additions to clay soon go rotten and start to decay, so it is necessary to use the mixed body within a short time. The work created can then dry out, the decaying process is avoided along with the bad smells and waste that goes with it. Paper clay is slightly different from *lentil clay* types because of its capillary action qualities. Ian explained how he does mix up a large batch, but stores it as dry sheets, only wetting down what he needs at the time of making ~ layering the dry paper clay between wet towels beneath polythene for 10 minutes or so prior to use. (Those attending Aberystwyth this year will see this wetting down technique used by Jerry Caplan for his pipe sculpting, though in this case the extruded sewer-pipe sections are not paper clay but heavily grogged clay formed by industrial processes which can compact the clay in a much dryer state than any studio potter can. The wetting down also takes more than 10 minutes.)

Lots of questions were asked from the audience as Ian demonstrated and many times he was led on to a winding path of his other experiences. Some wanted to know exact recipes and quantities but my interpretation of the day was, no hard and fast rules ... (I think he suggested good proportions were 25% paper pulp to 75% own clay i.e. one's own regular brand or mix of clay body). To make a batch, simply mix up a bucket each of, clay slip from dry clay, then paper slip from dry paper pulp, both to the consistency of thin cream. Using

the proportions given, ladle out some of each into a third container and blend thoroughly. Set aside to settle, siphon off surplus water then spread the resultant mix on to plaster bats or cloths to make dry sheets. Store for later use.

Once a basic principle is understood then it is time to explore and experiment. Logically, there will be a point where too great an addition of paper turns the mix into papier-mâché and the whole piece of work burns away in the kiln, leaving a very light-weight finished product indeed!

Lots of sources for paper pulp were discussed, from macerated egg boxes to 'ready made' from a supplier. Having listened to Ian tell of his first experiments with the medium, I would advise learning from his experience, save a lot of time and frustration, buy from a supplier. Metro-sales, he recommended, have now developed a product so fine that it is more suited to throwing than previous grades (which caused a poor finish on turning unless a very sharp turning tool was used). One source for small quantities of paper fibre was from older type Jiffy padded envelopes. The more modern ones could be cannibalised for their bubblewrap, which material Ian favoured for his small armatures.

Bubblewrap, as we saw, through Ian's continuing demonstration, is not a material to collapse as screwed-up newspaper does when wet, but it is strong and flexible enough to support throughout the making and drying process with 'give' to accommodate shrinkage. Paper clay, however, has less shrinkage than ordinary clay. All this information was flowing forth as Ian rolled out his clay and proceeded to make a 'bubblewrap pasty' sealing in the filling completely without air holes in the 'crust'.

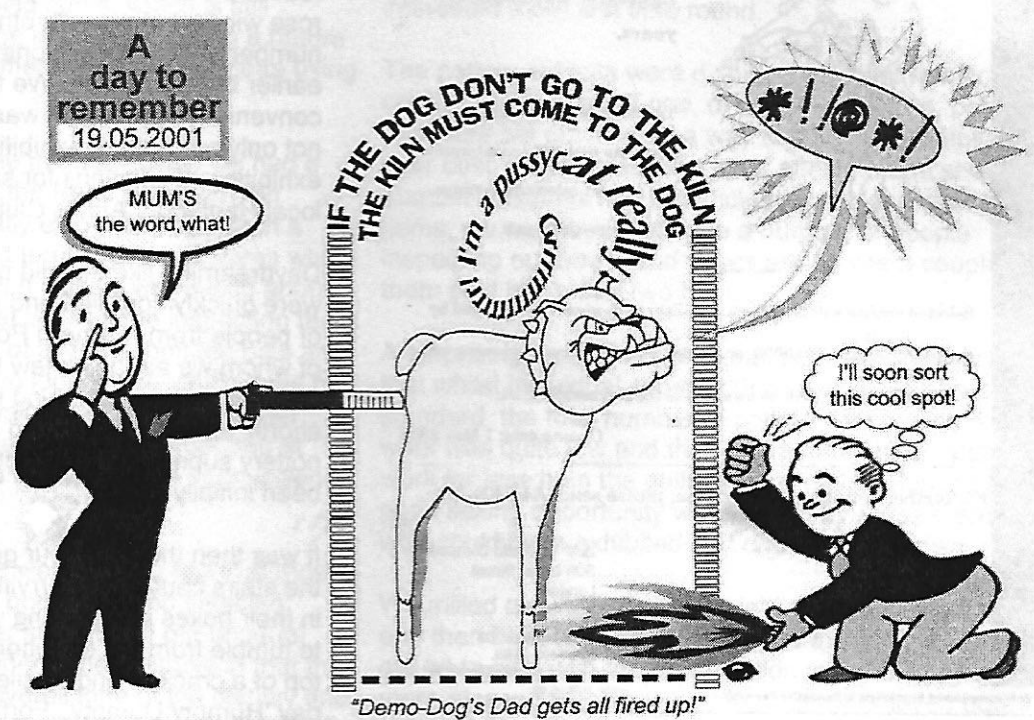
He continued manipulating the 'pasty' until it resembled the body of a dog, (using his own modelling shorthand to give the *feel of dog* rather than a particular dog.) Shorthand limbs, head and tail were added to the altered pasty and there was a small dog, ready for firing when dry.

Of course *Demo-Dog* was dainty enough to go to the kiln! But as we had learnt from Ian's morning slide show, not all his dogs are dainty, some are very large and very fierce, bulky bodies balance on thin spindly legs. Bone, muscle and sinew may look too thin in proportion to body bulk in real life, nevertheless, they are purpose-built for the job, but what of their paper clay counterparts? Yes, paper clay can visually mimic such extremes of form, and can stand up for itself after vitrification, but before then, it needs a bit of mollycoddling hence, "the kiln must come to the dog!"

Another of Ian's inventions, a flat-pack kiln, was devised for this very situation. In theory, anyone could make one of these for themselves, using ceramic blanket, anchored by a fired clay button and wire tie to a strong grid of metal wire sheet, (bought from a builder's merchant). Any number of these can be erected around a delicate sculpture, modelled in situ on a pre-prepared kiln floor. Using only car jump-lead clips for

holding the kiln structure together, this method of kiln construction is adaptable enough even to allow gas burners to be 'poked through' if an added boost is needed in a cool spot during firing. Easy, too, adjustments to regulate reduction atmosphere and so on. *Poke-through* temperature taking, again, does no harm to the kiln's ceramic-blanket walls.

Ian dispelled many myths about technical aspects of firing and building armatures, explaining how his lateral thinking methodology could be backed up by scientific facts and reason. For instance, most of the material used in his armatures amounted to, "a load of fluffed up nowt!" to use my own pet phrase. So little substance, that any fumes created as an armature burnt away were of negligible quantity. Salt glazing, too, had been found to create more water vapour than harmful vapour, and this after many potters had exchanged salt for soda, thinking they were doing the environmentally friendly thing. Soda, he told us has since been proved to be the more damaging of the two.



He even explained the 'trapped air' rule that we've all worked around for years, claiming trapped steam from colloidal water was the real culprit of an exploding pot drama. I think he said the solution was in the drying out of the work, slowly and thoroughly, before firing. Soil-warming cables were mentioned at this point, rather than blowtorches! But ... An exploded pot is still an exploded pot what ever the cause.

All this quick thinking, fast kiln building has even led Ian to experiment with cardboard-box kilns, and ones made from MDF ~ that material given fame by smiley Carol and her chums on the home make-over TV show! Box or MDF to be painted with Furnace-coat or similar (again ref. Metro-sales new improved variation) was fireproofed enough to use for one low temperature, fast firing.

Not only does Ian have days longer than 24 hours, but he must have brain cells made of very stretchy elastic! ... And a very generous nature to take enough of that elastic to construct his theatrical catapult, a device designed especially to deliver all those seeds of provocation and stimulation directly to each of our minds. How many, I wonder, will nurture and grow them on into exotic blooms of personal invention?

Opportuni-

ZELLI PORCELAIN AWARD

MELODY IN PORCELAIN



Drawing by Bruce Lee

Zelli have been promoting figurative porcelain for 50 years.

To celebrate, we are inviting all porcelain artists to re-interpret one of eight selected paintings, with a musical theme.

Selected entries will be exhibited in Zelli to be viewed and judged by the public. A prize of £5000, or the opportunity to make winning piece at Nymphenburg, will be awarded to the successful artist.

Closing date: 1 May 2002

For further details and entry form, please send A4 SAE to:

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Brookhouse Lane, Denbigh LL16 4RE.
tel: 01745 812805
or visit the website (currently under development) at www.clayart.org.uk

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www.clayart.org.uk
International Ceramics Festival
www.internationalceramicsfestival.co.uk
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It was with a chill, blustery and salty wind buffeting our senses that we somewhat reluctantly left the warmth of our car and scurried in through the heavy creaking oak door of Hartlepool Art Gallery on the Sunday on which we (as Northern Potters Members and Teeside locals) had offered to help with the unpacking and setting out for selection of pottery submitted for the exhibition which is scheduled to last from the 10th of November to the 7th January next year.

Once inside we were impressed with the layout and spacious interior of the Gallery with its high vaulted roof and walls containing a large circular stained glass rose window along with other smaller ones set in a number of ornate locations and surmised that it had earlier been a church. We thought how central and convenient a location it was now as a gallery attracting not only our pottery exhibition but also a large exhibition of paintings for sale over Xmas from the local Hartlepool Artists Club.

Daydreaming like this did not get us anywhere and we were quickly corralled and introduced to friendly group of people from Northern Potters and the gallery (some of whom we already knew from previous exhibitions), who handed out steaming mugs of coffee or tea and shortly afterwards showed us where the boxes of pottery submitted for selection and later display had been initially stored.

It was then the job of our group to pant up and down the stairs cautiously carrying the precious pots down in their boxes and praying we would not be the ones to tumble from top to bottom and finish up sitting on top of a cracked and fragile pottery 'egg' like a latter day 'Humpty Dumpty'. Fortunately our worst fears were not to come to fruition and all the boxes were safely lined up with their attached documentation in the viewing area.

We then opened each box carefully and lined the contents along the wall with each identifying set of papers and labels. It was with great trepidation that we unpacked one or two containers where the contents looked particularly fragile or in one case had a range of unusual shapes that seemed to interlock with each other and not want to leave the security of their box. But in the end it was done and we as foot soldiers could retire to the comfort of the cosy café area and leave the judging to the more expert inspection panel.

It was as we supped tea, chatted and ate some tasty sandwiches, salad and biscuits provided free to us that we thought back to what had started all this a decade or so ago:

After what seemed a lifetime of working in industry for someone else we at that time each had the opportunity following redundancy to take a CNA Art

Hartlepool

and Design course at Middleborough Art College which had, as one of a range of interesting subjects, a short course in Ceramics. Hooked, this led onto several years part time pottery classes at our local college along with a kiln operation seminar in the Potteries.

The next step was the purchase of a large front loading electric kiln and potters wheel along with a range of tools, clays and glazes to enable us to start experimenting in the garage next to our house. Early experiences were of hope, fascination, frustration, surprises, puzzlement and sometimes exciting discovery. All part of the necessary journey along the 'wave' of the potters learning curve, which is still ongoing! Our present range is stoneware with a nature theme and decorative earthenware and terracotta using a range of glazes.

Our greatest moment came this year when we had a shared stand at Potfest in the Pens in Penrith, an experience which we greatly enjoyed, it had such a wonderful atmosphere and terrific range of wares which all began as lumps of clay! It was as we mused about times past and present that we saw the inspection team finish their careful perusal of all the submitted pots and we sneakily moved along to look to see which ones had been selected and which failed. As far as we could make out everyone who had submitted work had at least some selected and a few very good submissions were accepted in totality.

When we came to ours we were glad to see that most of our colour co-ordinated pots had been selected although (as we had earlier suspected) our unusual candle holders were considered not suitable in that they did not sit easily with the overall tone of the display and we noted mentally that we need in future to concentrate on the compatibility of our display for an exhibition sale rather than chose individual items.

Following a further chat amongst us all we then carefully repacked all the items unselected and moved them back into storage for later collection. One collection of large pottery animals and other figures caused some consternation as we tried to remember exactly how they had earlier been packed and placed in their boxes but eventually these too were carefully stored away.

As we had quite enjoyed our visit and lived nearby, we volunteered to come back on preview night the following Friday. On arrival a few minutes before opening time we were amazed to see the gallery surrounded by a mass of milling people and serried ranks of parked cars many full of occupants peering through the gloom towards the nearby gallery building as though about to emerge and fight their way rather like the first day of a Selfridges Sale!

We took what seemed to be the last parking space just as the doors opened and hurried in after the first invasion particularly looking out for a group of formidable looking grannies dressed in black emerging from the next car and clutching umbrellas who seemed about to cut us off.

At last we were in and found surely a couple of hundred people fanning out and inspecting the approximately 100 pots and 200 paintings on display. Rather like a shop sale people were initially moving quickly around in order not to miss a particular bargain and then returning to look more closely at pottery or paintings that interested them first time round.

The pottery exhibits were displayed on plinths which contained the work of one, or occasionally two, potters and were set out in such a way to show the exhibits at their best. They attracted a lot of attention and soon a number of stands had red stickers to indicate sold items, we were thrilled to see a number of people inspecting our bowls and vases and to see a couple of them sold in the first two hours.

A surprising aspect of the overall pottery display was that whilst individual submissions were of a high standard, the total number of potters who had sent in work was quite low and the final range of displayed work far less than the gallery could have exhibited but a good selling opportunity was wasted by those members who could have exhibited and chose not to do so.

We milled around the gallery until nearly closing time and then headed for home satisfied that we had done our bit to help with the organisation of the display but more pleased in that we had thoroughly enjoyed both visits and in particular the one to see all the displayed pots and paintings at an early stage. What made our visit perhaps unique was that despite admiring many of the pots and paintings there, we used our will power to resist blowing the profits on our sales on some other admired exhibit!

By Roberta and John Phelps of Woodlands Pottery



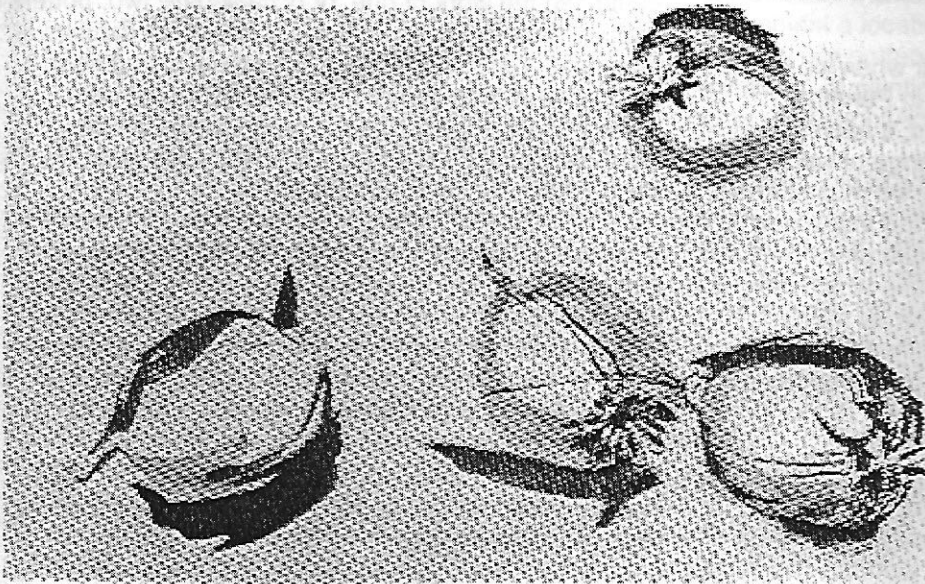
1977-2002 Silver Jubilee Year

Editors Note:

December 1977 saw the formation of the Northern Potters Association. So as we enter our Silver Jubilee year I propose to mark the event with a series of past articles from the archives of the newsletter. In this issue I have chosen an article that appeared in the 1988 Winter Issue (when the news magazine went out twice a year) which was kindly lent to me by member Pat Higginbotham. The archives I have in my possession do not go back to the beginning of the group and I would therefore be very grateful if the longer standing members of the association would have a dig around and see if they have any of the earlier issues (has anyone got a copy of the **first** issue) that I could borrow (to be returned of course). I have tried to trace the author of this article but to no avail and hope that she is not offended at my reproducing her work. There were two other articles on the importance of drawing in the same issue written by Tim Proud and Heather Foster. If no one has any objections I'll print these in the next issue.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DRAWING IN CERAMICS

By Janet Green



Unenlightened as regards the teaching of studio ceramics, I never questioned the relevance of drawing when I began my Vocational Diploma Course. It seemed to me that development of drawing skills was one of the essential requirements for any art-related training so I just accepted the idea that a certain amount of time would be spent doing just that.

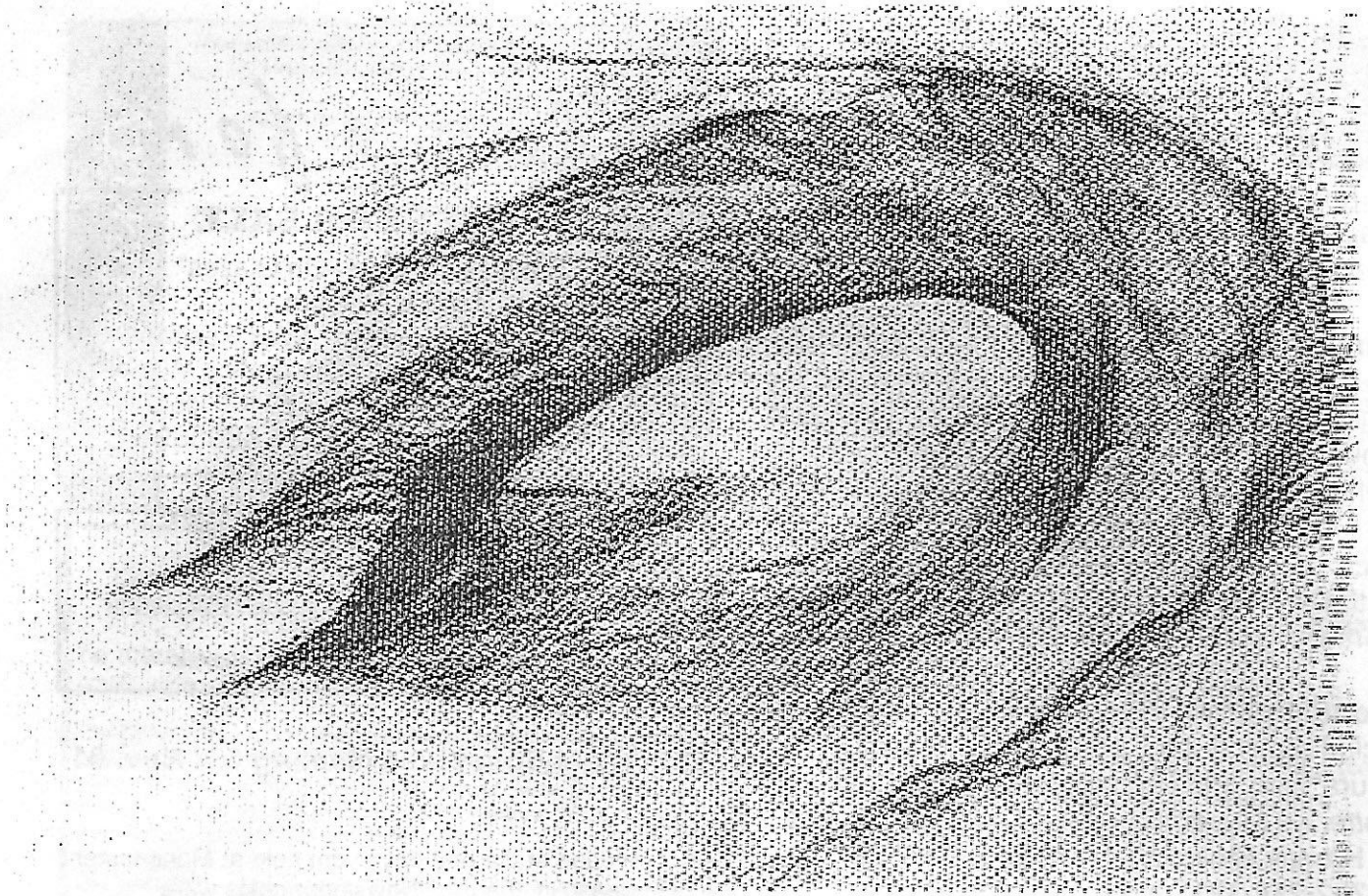
I could see that it would be useful to be able to think creatively on paper through

drawing, e.g. ideas for pot forms or thinking out a creative process such as constructing a slab pot to avoid practical problems when it came to the actual making of it. Then of course there's the decoration: designing patterns, getting textures to work together and perhaps some brushwork for a touch of the 'Caiger-Smith's' if I felt that way inclined.

Surprisingly, many more advantages came to light when I actually got down to drawing. I came to realise that no matter how hard I looked at a subject, I didn't really take it on until I'd drawn it thoroughly. I have learned to use drawing as a way of analyzing things which interest me, these generally being natural objects or pots—what exactly is it that appeals to me? Is it the form. Movement of lines within the form or decoration, certain textures, pattern quality, colour, a combination of these? You can answer these questions by drawing in different ways. This helps you to see more clearly, for example drawing a pot that you like. By doing a purely tonal drawing of the form, you eliminate surface qualities such as texture/pattern etc. to reveal the basic structure of the pot.

A linear drawing may be used to pick out movements of line within the form (or decorating)—how they balance to give that sense of completeness which you feel from a 'good' pot. It may also be used to extract pattern/texture qualities.

Use of different media e.g. pencil, pen and ink, chalks or combinations of these help you to get the qualities that you want into the drawings. You may find that certain qualities can only be expressed in



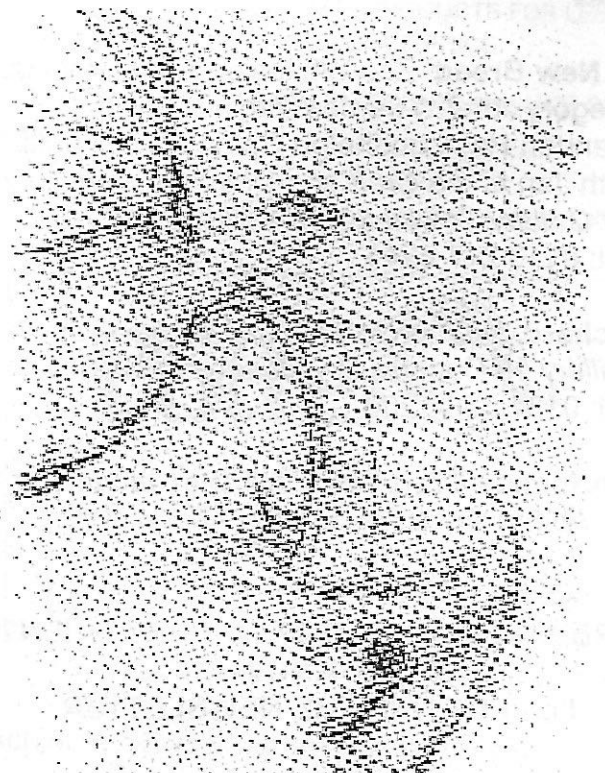
a drawing sense by one particular medium so it is essential to tackle it with as many different media as possible. With experience, you begin to gain more idea as to which medium is likely to be most suitable, but there is always an element of trial and error.

The resulting working drawings with your own personal comments added make essential sources of information for immediate or future use.

It is useful to note particular areas of the drawing that you like (or dislike) and why. The bits that you like are those which have captured the qualities which originally attracted you to the object you've drawn. Also note down ideas which come from the drawings for possible forms, decorative designs etc. to make-a useful by-product of drawing. It tends to be a rather time consuming process so you have lots of time to think!

Through drawing, I feel that I have developed a better perception of form. I have also gained greater awareness to my surroundings. As I continue to draw, I hope to be able to simplify more and more-to capture the essence of feelings and qualities which I find appealing within the marks themselves learn how to use them effectively as decoration.

As a student, I have come to realise how my drawing can be of great help from the teachers' point of view. It gives him an insight into my way of seeing things and the kind of qualities which I like and want to get across in ceramics. He then has more idea as to how to help me overcome the technical problems involved in getting what I want into the clay.



What's On

Kenneth Draper from 31st Dec. at the *Hart Gallery* 113 Upper St Islington
London N1 1QN Tel: 0207 704 1131

'Time for Tea' until 31st Jan. including work by Virginia Graham Steve Woodhead and Linda Fox at the *Workshop Gallery* 13 Lower Church St Chepstow Gwent NP6 5HJ
Tel: 01291 624 836

Nick Lees and Susan Luker until 22nd Dec. at the *Wellbeloved Gallery* 28 Easton St Portland Dorset DT5 1BT Tel: 01305 824 302

'Contemporary Purchases' until 23rd Dec including work by Cecile Johnson Soliz, Laura Ford and Emmanuel Cooper at the *Potteries Museum and Art Gallery* Bethesda St Hanley Stoke-on-Trent ST1 3DW Tel: 01782 232 323

Laurel Keeley until 19th Jan at the *Royal Albert Memorial Museum* Queen St Exeter EX4 3RX Tel: 01392 665 858

'A Christmas Odyssey' including Ruthanne Tudball at *Contemporary Applied Arts 2* Percy St London W1T 1DD Tel: 0207 436 2344

'A New Breed' Zoe Whiteside Anna Moel Ian Gregory Jeremy James Virginia Dowe Brenden Hesmondhalgh Catrin Howell until 12th Jan at the *Craft and Design Centre City Art Gallery* The Headrow Leeds LS1 3AB
Tel: 0113 247 8241

Richard Slee 7th to 30th Jan at the *Scottish Gallery* 16 Dundas St Edinburgh EH3 6HZ
Tel: 0131 558 1200

'Christmas Craft Fair' until 12th January at the Aberystwyth Arts Centre Aberystwyth

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Summary of Committee Meeting 3rd Nov. 01

Finance

Loss of revenue at the one day event held at Manchester due to increase in charges. Newsletter costs were discussed. The Newsletter editor reported that an increase in the size of the newsletter meant that postage was higher. The Newsletter cost £9.79 each year for each member. The student subscription barely covers the cost of the newsletter. The storage of the large number of exhibition plinths at GHS in Morley now costs £200 plus free publicity in the Newsletter.

It was felt that an increase in subscription fees was due, further discussion at next committee meeting.

Festival

New venue being sorted due to Bretton being unable to accommodate the 2001 Festival. The aim is for a traditional potters camp.

Exhibitions

Hartlepool exhibition well under way.

Website

There is still no response to the call for images for publicity purposes on the website.

A.O.B.

A meeting of members who expressed an interest in helping with committee work to be held.

An exhibition of the work of Kate and the late David Greaves to be held at the next Festival.

Winner of the questionnaire draw was Sally Shrimpton.

Next committee meeting will be held on Saturday 26th January 2002. If you have any matter you wish to bring to the attention of the committee please contact the relevant committee member.

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