

Northern Potters Association



Member's profile

Linda Caswell



I had set up a studio in the wash cellar of my home in Harrogate, and during the last year of my course I had worked almost exclusively at home (to the extent that I think my tutors were quite anxious about seeing my show to find out what I had been doing). I was already working with colour in the clay itself, and on leaving college did a workshop with Dorothy Feibleman. My small kiln and confined working space limited what I could make, but I have always been drawn to small and intricate things, so that was not a problem. I ended up spending most of my time making wind chimes, buttons and jewellery from porcelain. These sold quite well, and I attended the British Craft Trade Fair in Harrogate most years with the mobiles. Meanwhile I made other work for exhibitions: some of it incorporating my own silk braid.

That awful day has come. There I was, sitting peacefully in the garden enjoying a well deserved break from hard-landscaping in the vegetable garden, when I answered the phone to hear a request for me to write a profile for the NPA Newsletter. I had thought I would be safe in Wales - next time I shall move further away!

I started off as a librarian. I trained at library school in Aberystwyth, returning to my home town of Kingston upon Thames afterwards, because I was offered a job at the Polytechnic there. I stayed, progressing through a number of different posts and completing a part-time degree, until my job was all management and no fun. Time for a change.

I had always had a creative urge, but was (and still am) tied up in knots about drawing and painting. Pick up a pen or pencil and I go rigid. In 1985 I had signed up for an evening class in pottery, and another in calligraphy. After two weeks I had swapped the calligraphy for a second pottery class, and I was away. Very basic stuff, but I was excited by it and wanted more. I applied to Harrogate College of Art for a place on their studio ceramics course and moved to Yorkshire in 1986. Two years later I left with a certificate in design (ceramics) - and I still hate drawing.

A desire to live in a rural setting and to have a garden larger than a pocket handkerchief led to an extended period of house hunting which finally resulted in moving to Wales at the end of 1996, and into Gilfach Wen in February 1997. This is an old farmhouse, with about an acre of land. I use part of the outbuildings as my studio - the remainder houses weaving equipment. What with serious gardening - trying to create a garden at 900 foot with no shelter at all - and a lot of work to make the outbuildings watertight and usable, making was fairly spasmodic at first.

In 2000 I decided that it was time to make a concerted effort to sell the work I really wanted to make. I took the plunge and booked a place in the Design Edge section of the British Craft Trade Fair and developed a range of work that I could list in a catalogue. I sent out a newsletter and invitations to the show to existing customers I thought might like the new work, and to specially targeted galleries and shops in reasonable traveling distance of Harrogate. It was a great success: I took a satisfactory number of orders at the show, and with repeat orders and new orders received throughout the year things were looking up. I was making, AND SELLING the work that I wanted to make.

Continued on Page 8 and 9

Chat from the Chair

Well here we are, and summer has finally arrived I think, fingers crossed for no late frost on our allotment!!!

It's funny how life seems to go in a pattern, everything trundles along quietly for a while, and then suddenly everything happens at once. I'm racing to get a kiln through before a short break in Northumberland, the garden has gone ballistic, the cat has had five kittens, and we've got a little Border Collie called Bridie, 7 years old and terrified of cats. War in our house!!!!

On the NPA front we've have a beautiful show at North Light Gallery with lots of sales so I hear, and full marks for a fantastic effort by your committee and assistants in pulling this together, it really was a phenomenal effort by all concerned.

We will need to focus soon on the festival, so suggestions for demonstrators from you the members would be appreciated.

I have discussed with other members of your committee the production of a questionnaire to give us as your representatives a clearer idea about what you want from our organisation. It will come to you in the newsletter after this so please help us by filling it in and returning. As I have said before your committee is here to reflect your interests, so please feel free to get involved.

Finally Sue Hudson is organising a One-Day Event in Manchester after the summer which will coincide with the AGM. Book the date in your diary.

Have a good summer and keep on top of those drying pots!!.

Yours

Pete Clough

"WANTED" - ARTISTS TO SPREAD 'FEVA'

In a daring attempt to change the face of Knaresborough by combining it's historic visual drama and monuments with evocative new shapes and structures by artists of today, I am introducing a summer sculpture trail along the wooded riverside. This is just one of the exciting art activities which will be a major feature of the 2001 new-look Knaresborough Festival of Entertainment and Visual Arts - FEVA! Rather than Susan I am desperately seeking' artists with existing large scale work, or land artists who like to work with the specific terrain, or other appropriate crafts people - even topiarists too. Not called the long walk for nothing, there is scope for many impactive sitings and different themes eg; animal, railway, viaduct, water, natural, historical. In such a famously picturesque setting, the trail is intended to attract much publicity and art-awareness, gradually taking in more and more interesting sites around the town. Additionally there are ongoing opportunities for the artists to show smaller works in a gorgeous gallery and courtyard garden. To catch the FEVA, please ring or send info, CV, pics and S.A.E. a.s.a.p. (contact deadline 30th June 2001)

Alison Breeze
FEVA Visual Arts Director
Art Apartment @ The Mill
Green Dragon Yard
Castlegate
Knaresborough
HG5 8AU
Tel: 01423 867606

Deadline for the
next issue is
July 24th 2001

Editors Note

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue. Again it's a bumper issue of 16 pages, you have sent in so much, but 'KEEP IT COMING' I live in fear of not having enough!!!

You will also have found your new membership list at last. There are one or two changes since it was printed!

I am always aware that not everyone in NPA is a professional potter so I was thinking of starting up a 'Potter's Tips' column as I for one have got one or two tips I will gladly pass on. What do you think? Ring me (with your tips) or if you think it's a bad idea.

This issue has been hard to fit in around all my other activities as I am getting ready for Potfest Perth so things have been rather frantic, but I have managed to fit it all in and got this issue off on time. I could do with the hours in a day being extended to 30!!!

Regards

Judith

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Review—NPA Exhibition at North Light Gallery

I visited the Northern Potters exhibition at North Light Gallery, Armitage Bridge near Huddersfield on the day of the opening. It was a hot day & fortunately I was not thrown out for turning up in a scruffy old pair of shorts. What an interesting place the old mill looks like its going to become.

Northern Potters were exhibiting along side some fabulous paintings by Anthony Green RA. The paintings were figurative, colourful, personal and full of interest. Just what I like. So a good reason to visit even if you don't like pots.

The exhibition continues till July and there are plenty of very reasonably priced pots. I bought two lovely little cylindrical pots made by Simon Hall. Isn't the cylinder a fascinating shape when made of ceramics, especially of the blunt, rustic & crude variety? Volcanic Glaze - reminds me of my mother in law.

I very nearly bought one of the smaller pots of Alan Pickersgill. Also a bargain especially if you like cylinders. But Alan does make things other than cylinders!

I think my "star of the show award" will go to Julie Blackman. She was showing three jugs each around 18" high which she described as "coiled/scraped & refined in leather hard stage". The *scraped, refined and perfectly controlled* I can understand, but the *coiled* must have disappeared very early on in their production. I hope she did not cost them according to the hours she spends making them because she'll be paying herself way below the minimum wage?

My runner-up award goes to David Abbey for the form, detail, variety, interest & professionalism of his work.

Other work that caught my interest. I have a particular interest in things graphical and I liked the roughly spherical vessels of Peter Clough entitled "landscape" with lines and gaping cracks.

The vases of Jim Robinson were very eye catching. Or should I say that the extruded tripods that supported the vases were eye catching, more eye catching in fact than the vases themselves.

I liked the rather inelegant but very tall pot by Michael Beecher, except for the bits of wire sticking out of it, which I thought spoiled it. His other pots were much more *elegant*.

The only other names I wrote down in my notes were Paul Hood and Ailsa Josland. Paul's "Bridge" was not for sale - the idea passed through my head once - wished I'd done it now, maybe I will one day, now I've seen how good it looks.

Ailsa Josland did I think the largish Henry Moore eggs. Very professional high class products exhibiting form, finish and colour of a very high standard.

That's it, my first gallery review. Probably my last too. Sorry I missed so many out. I can only give a personal opinion.

Bob Parry

"THANK YOU"

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of all Northern Potters to give a BIG 'thank-you' to Janina Emery, who has, among other things, stored the Npa plinths for many years. She has put up with our plinths in her buildings and taken valuable time in arranging transport of the plinths to and from many of our festivals and exhibitions, as well as trying to keep track of 'roaming' plinths. Her patience and time have given many potters work a plinth upon which to stand and this is something we all appreciate. I know that Janina will find plenty of things to fill the space in her life and buildings that the Npa plinths have left!

After some searching the NPA plinths have now found another good home with GHS CERAMICS, thank you to GHS for re-homing them.

Alison Boothroyd

Members Ads

For Sale

9 x 25 kg bags
Buff Stoneware Clay £20
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Brian
Holland
Ceramics

Throughout March and April Brian Holland (ceramics) and Bernard Culshaw (paintings) were Artist's in residence at Bolsover Castle. Work produced by these two artists during the residency and by visitors to the workshops has now been installed at the castle.



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Tel: 01909 724 781
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Dexterity

Diary Dates

Earth & Fire VII

23rd & 24th June
Rufford Country Park, Notts.
(Please note that the park is at present closed due to Foot and Mouth and therefore there is a question mark as to whether this event will take place)

International Ceramics Festival Aberystwyth

Fri 29th, Sat 30th June & Sun 1st July 2001
For list of Artists see last newsletter
Cost: £68 for NWP/SWP members,
£78 non-members,
£50 students and children in full-time education over 14 years old,
Free to accompanying children under 14 years old.
Camping Adults £4, Children £3 per person per night. For Application Forms contact:
Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 2DE
Tel: 01970 623 232
Website: internationalceramicsfestival.co.uk

25th Art in Action

19th to 22nd July
Waterperry Gardens,
Wheatley, Oxford

7th National Pottery & Ceramics Festival

3/4/5 August
Hatfield House,
Hertfordshire

Cumbria Ceramica

Potfest in the Park
July 27 / 28 / 29th
Potfest in the Pens
August 3 / 4 / 5th
Plus a whole load of events going on in between
For details of Potfest 2001 check out the website:-
<http://www.potfest.co.uk>

Chelsea Crafts Fair

16th-21st and 23rd-28th October

COMMENT THE COLLECTOR'S LOT

These two articles have been reproduced with the kind permission of Ceramics in Society and Sebastian Blackie

"The most profound enchantment for the collector is the locking of individual items within a magic circle in which they are fixed as the final thrill, the thrill of acquisition, passes over them. Everything remembered and thought, everything conscious, becomes the pedestal, the frame, the base, the lock of his property. The period, the region, the craftsmanship, the former ownership - for a true collector the whole background of an item adds up to a magic encyclopedia whose quintessence is the fate of his object."

from Unpacking My Library, a talk about book-collecting:
Walter Benjamin (1892-1940)

The death of W A Ismay in January is a loss that will be felt by very many studio potters in Britain. If Bill Ismay came to an exhibition opening, both gallery and potter felt honoured. Why? Perhaps because they felt that this shuffling old man in a beret (as he was easily identified in later years) gave at least as much to studio ceramics as he took away in the form of his purchases. There is many a potter whose CV mentions 'work in the collection of W A Ismay'. His purchase enhanced reputations - even if he couldn't afford to spend much.

He would go to extraordinary lengths to be the first to arrive at a distant provincial venue if he was interested in a young potter's progress, and yet would buy what he thought best represented the character of the maker, rather than selecting a star piece. He had no thought for the idea of the work 'appreciating' in value, nor did he even have the opportunity to display the work to full effect.

Bill Ismay lived in a very small terraced house in Wakefield, North Yorkshire, in the company of more than 3,000 studio pots

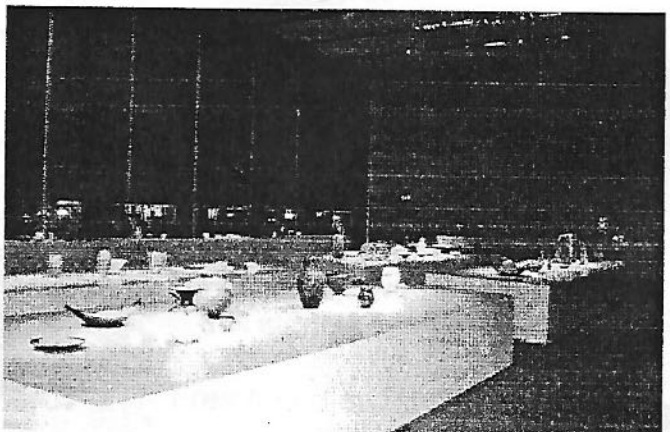
amassed over 50 years. Possession of them, one might imagine, was an inconvenient side-effect of purchase: he had scarcely space to eat and sleep, nor presumably much money to live on, having spent his working life as a district librarian.

But he died in the knowledge that his collection, never yet seen by the public, will be held safely by York City Museums Trust, with the value of his remaining assets, home included, provided to help store and look after the pots for posterity. York should be happy too: within Ismay's collection is a unique story of British studio pottery, as experienced by a dedicated patron - whose motives were utterly above suspicion.

Ismay's collection will be valuable in future as a visual resource, relating the history of studio pottery during the last half-century - but the experiences, the emotions, the anecdotes and the sheer pleasure of the collector's activity, these important associations are no longer with the pots.

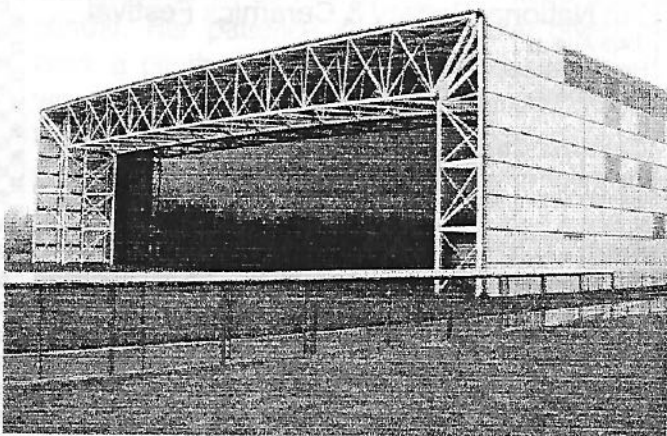
How might the collection have differed if Ismay had been rich? Another collector of studio pots, Lisa Sainsbury, is indeed rich - indeed so wealthy that she presented the University of East Anglia at Norwich with a huge and spacious museum, designed by Norman Foster, within which her remarkable collection of primitive ethnic carvings and modern studio pots are housed. To such a person, the cost of the most expensive piece of contemporary ceramics is no more than a commemorative mug would be to the average man in the street.

A different challenge becomes apparent. There is a clear thread running through the Sainsbury collection, a refined self-imposed restraint, her acquisitions representing a highly cultured statement, and a model of modest, even austere, visual taste. An abundance of money requires a particular sort of discipline.



Above: *Modern Pots, The Lisa Sainsbury Collection on display*

Left: *Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich, designed by Norman Foster*



A Memorial Tribute to Bill Ismay.

Following a meeting between the Trustees and representatives of NPA a Tribute to Bill has been arranged for Saturday 8th Sept at the Yorkshire Museum, York.

There will be a series of lectures, and the opening of an exhibition of a selection of important works from his collection. Admission will be by ticket only.

More information to follow.

There is nothing here that even hints at decadence or frivolity of any kind.

While Ismay's collection embraced pots by around 500 different potters, Sainsbury owns the work of less than 30, but she has used her resources to make a significant contribution to the careers of the potters concerned. The exhibition (plus book) called *Modern Pots* covers only a small section of the greater field of studio pottery, but has a stylistic and conceptual rationale behind it. Coper and Rie stand as the principle figures represented (in very large numbers) supported by a younger generation of potters sharing a similar 'modern' approach and often from London art schools where Coper and Rie's influence was prominent. Whereas Ismay searched for quality in how the potter's hand worked the clay, and admired evidence of risks undertaken, Sainsbury looks for visual clarity in the finished piece and delights in the subtle evolution of form as the potter's work develops. And yet, poles apart in so many ways, both collectors have found the world of studio pots immensely rewarding, and despite their very different characters and resources, their collections overlap in terms of the makers represented.

The golden age of studio pottery collecting is probably now over. The field has simply become too diverse, the range of expression too wide, the prices too varied. The knowledge and commitment of modest connoisseurs up and down the country has been replaced by hordes of rampaging consumers, pump-primed by features in *Elle Decoration*, seeking out the next celebrity potter, while many a former collector, retiring from the fray, can often say with some justification: "I had to stop, there is no more room on my shelves". As Ismay and Sainsbury demonstrate, though, this problem can be overcome: pots can be stacked 10 deep all over the house, or you can build your own public gallery for them. PV

*W A Ismay surrounded by studio pots,
picture: courtesy Sebastian Blackie*



W A ISMAY (1910 - 2001)

An appreciation by Sebastian Blackie

No-one who visited Bill Ismay in Wakefield could forget the experience. His extraordinary collection of pots, the passion of this inquisitive, humorous but intensely shy man, could only be fully appreciated in his home, with Bill as guide.

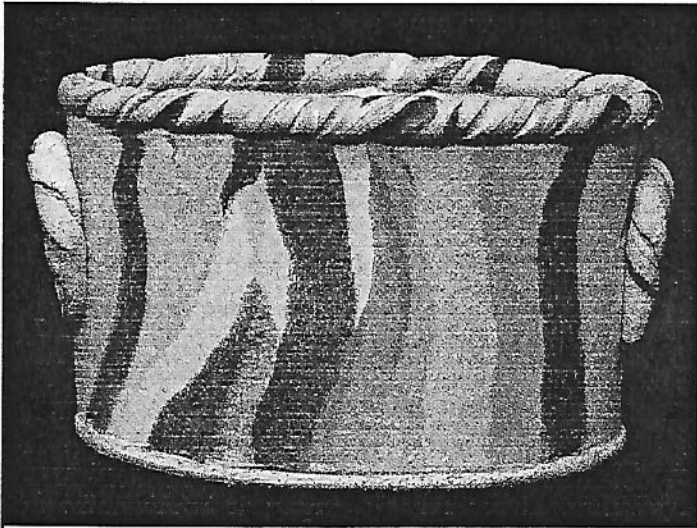
The Victorian terrace, its curtains permanently drawn against inquisitive eyes, gave no clue. Nor the hall - just raincoats and berets accumulated over the years. But to enter the kitchen was staggering. Dimly lit by a single bare light were hundreds, perhaps thousands of pots. Shelves lining the walls carried the detailed post-war history of British studio ceramics, the famous next to the forgotten. His table was covered in a multitude of ceramic boxes, save for a small corner where Bill wrote and ate. The floor was a sea of pots with little causeways to allow passage to the doors and stone sink. On the draining board there was a tiny stove where Bill prepared coffee. He clearly delighted in giving his guests the opportunity to choose their drinking vessel, which would receive a perfunctory wipe from a rag before being returned to its place, marked out by the dust.

Each room was overwhelming; yet somehow Bill always seemed able to reach any pot we discussed; balancing like a dancer and, with typical stubbornness, refusing all offers of assistance to reach a Hamada above the fireplace. I remember returning exhausted to the kitchen, thinking our tour was complete, only to be introduced to the cellar.

Bill travelled mostly by train and had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the railway system. In the sixties he always seemed to be at the opening (and first in the queue) of every ceramic exhibition and was present at events where potters gathered, discreetly offering support through his presence. It was rumoured that he would sleep at railway stations so as to be able to make a purchase. Certainly his home showed no evidence that he spent any of his modest income as a librarian (and subsequently his pension) on anything other than the collection, which he was determined should remain intact.

With Bill's passing, others must decide how he is represented. People who have not met Bill speak of obsession and eccentricity. Others see the collection as flawed or indiscriminate due to the mix of the humble with the great. In his home, however, such observations seemed irrelevant. The collection was Bill. It showed his love for pots and the world of potters - both his singular commitment and generosity. Like a proud father, who values his children equally, he delighted in telling their individual stories. The collection perhaps reflects Bill's scholarly inclinations: as a young man he secured a place at Oxford but his parents were unable to give him the necessary support. Did this disappointment provide the stimulus for his unique, self-directed study? He had extraordinary knowledge of his subject and had accumulated a wealth of anecdotes yet, although deeply observant, he avoided negative comment.

Although Bill possessed outstanding examples of some of the most celebrated British potters, it is the totality of the collection that makes it both remarkable and unique. One man's vision: perhaps obsession, but certainly love.



Jo Connell

ONE DAY MASTERCLASS

Plus
A.G.M.

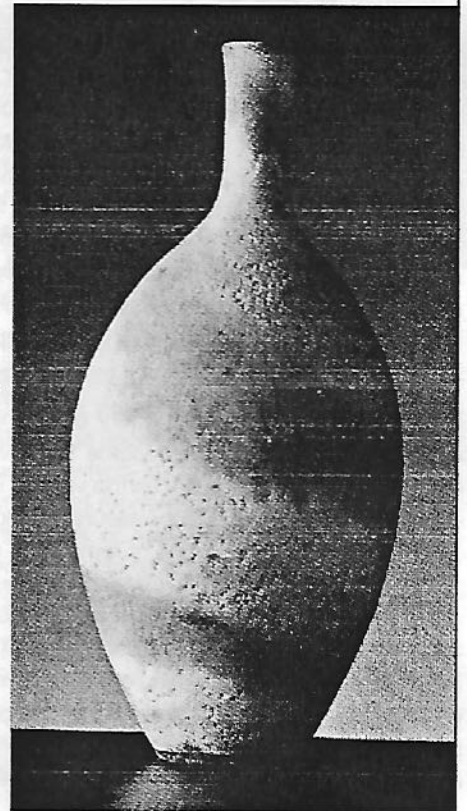
Saturday October 20th 2001
10 am to 4 pm
At Manchester Metropolitan University

The day will celebrate and promote the use of coloured clays.

Jo Connell will be demonstrating her appliquéd, inlaid and moulded stoneware and Andrew Davidson will be throwing his beautiful bowls and bottle forms. Our slide lecturer has still to be confirmed.

Information and tickets will be available from Su Hudson in July.

It will be a day not to be missed so book early to guarantee a seat



Jo Connell

Continued from Page 1

I had a few hiccups - the porcelain I have always used suddenly stopped working for me and I started to get an 80 - 90% failure rate through cracking, and my 2.6 cubic foot kiln was too small - being repacked and fired as soon as it cooled down. The worst thing was only being able to get 3 of the large bowls in at a time when I had an order for 24 in one go!

I obtained and tested samples of various porcelains and finally chose one - Audrey Blackman Porcelain from Valentine Clay Products. The

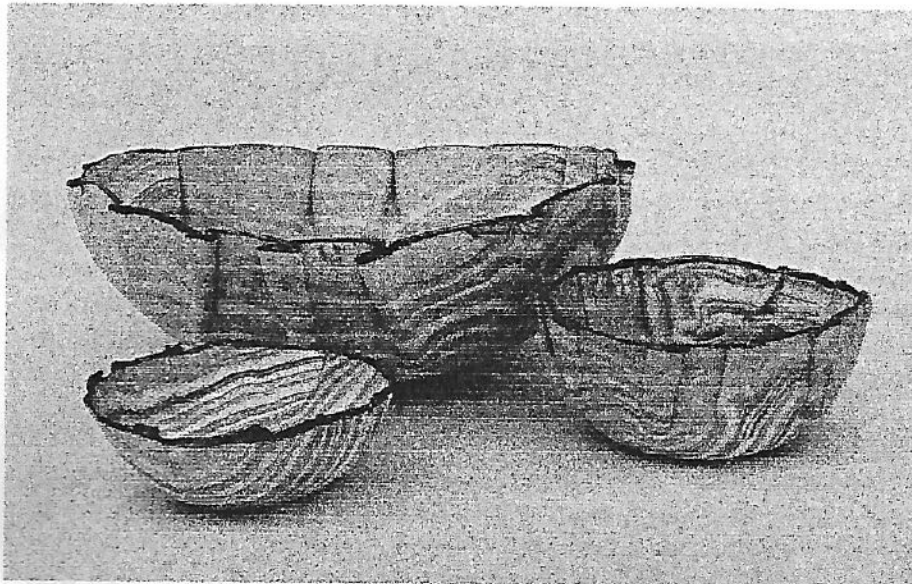
plastic properties are quite something, and it is very white and translucent: but it moves quite differently with the colour in the clay, and has led me to change some of my making methods. The most significant effect it has had is



that I am being tempted to work with thinner and thinner sheets of clay, and to make larger pots. This does not make life easy.

I finally bought myself a new kiln and

controller, with the help of an interest-free loan courtesy of the Arts Council of Wales. It was a long,



smooth finish, which I find gives a pleasing tactile quality.

Because my work is very fine, the pots have to be supported in the kiln - each one is fired in it's own bed of silica sand. Even so, the stresses of the firing can distort the shape beyond what I find acceptable. I enjoy the mixture of part control and part serendipity of this making method: I control what colors I use, what proportions, the patterning - and then a random element comes in and every pot will be individual.

I recently put up for selection to the Makers' Guild in Wales (which I am pleased to say was successful, and I hope to have work available at Craft in the Bay, Cardiff in the near future). One of the things we were asked was what our philosophies were. I hadn't really thought about it before, but I found my reply quite interesting, and would like to share it with you. "Philosophies: do I have any? I'm not really sure that I do. What I do have is a need to create. I like the challenge of mastering a technique and making it my own, and the challenge of designing within the limitations of that technique; particularly within my chosen limitations of a sheet of patterned

hard slog trying to decide what to get, and who from. I have limited electrical voltage, and wanted to make sure that the size and shape would allow me to have the best flexibility for the future. I now have a Potclays Silver 4.3 cu.ft kiln with a Firemaster 4 controller which I can also use to fire the old kiln. I hope that I have made the right decision. I have fired it five times so far, and can't believe how small my old kiln is and that I managed with it for fourteen years.

I thought that I had considered every aspect, but of course I hadn't. I knew that this new generation of kiln controllers work by raising the temperature of the kiln at your specified rate, but I had no idea how noisy that would be. The kiln switches on and off with a terrific clunk throughout the firing, rather than humming gently as before. But the joy of not having to go out on a cold wet night to switch up the regulators is something else. I also knew that the lid of a kiln with a larger diameter would be heavier to manage - I'm not stupid, after all. But no-one ever mentioned the weight of the kiln shelves!

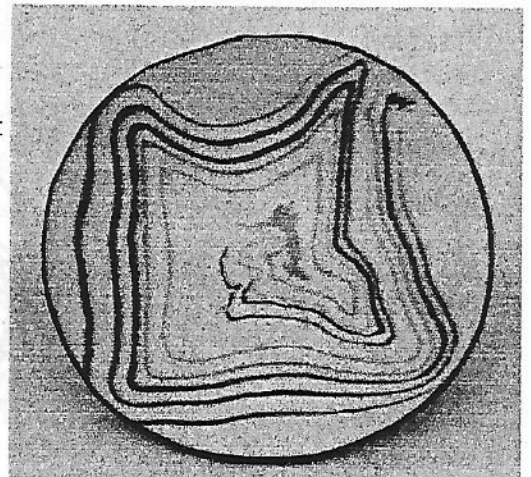
Deliveries in the country are another thing to be borne in mind. When I had the clay delivered I knew it came in a large lorry, and made arrangements that I would meet the driver at the bottom of our track and transfer the bags to my car to get it up the hill. I had thought we would make more journeys than the driver did - I was right, we should have. When I ordered the kiln I checked

that it would come in a Transit van (they can get up our track), but when it arrived it was in a very large lorry (which cannot). The kiln had to be dismantled to get it in my car and took 3 journeys. I cannot fault the helpfulness and good humor of the drivers in both instances.

I bought my new kiln to cope with the volume of orders that I had in 2000..... and then there was foot and mouth. I took something like one sixth the orders at Harrogate this April that I took last year. Many of the people that I sell to are from areas that are directly or indirectly affected by F&M. I'm having to investigate other methods of finding outlets - and more of these than I would like are on a sale or return basis. It is not just the farmers and the tourist trade who have been hit by F&M, as I am sure many of you must be aware. Oh well, at least I can get on with the garden.

So what do I actually make? I call it porcelain agateware. I introduce colour into the clay itself to produce a range of decorative agateware.

Basically, I colour some of the porcelain using stains and oxides, and then incorporate this colored clay into the white body to produce the patterns that I want. I cut a slice from the block of patterned clay and roll it carefully before moulding it: currently to make a bowl or dish. I glaze only the rims, using a bronze-gold glaze applied to the dry pot before a single firing. I wet-sand the resultant work to achieve a satin



clay. And I have a desire to give others the opportunity to enjoy the work that I have enjoyed making. I am always glad to pass on any knowledge that I have, so that others can build on my techniques and develop them in their own way." Hope that doesn't sound too pompous!

Linda

Gordon Cooke Seminar at Henshaws, Knarsborough.

30th March 2001

Every ceramics seminar offers something new to be learned about the business of clay. The Gordon Cooke slide presentation and demonstration at Henshaws, Knarsborough, offered much to inform and for one whose work is wheel based another perspective on handbuilding, slab construction and press moulding.

Gordon is a farmer's son who in his youth was more interested in horticulture than agriculture. He worked as a landscape gardener until an art school course gave him the opportunity to work with clay. In 1976 he began potting full time. His slab work from the late 70's and early 80's can be seen in Peter Lane's books on porcelain.

The morning slide presentation introduced us to his wonderful garden (open under the National Gardens Scheme) superbly and creatively planned and planted. Water, mirror and many pieces of

ceramic sculpture of abstract and minimal form surprised and pleased the senses. A grotto has been decorated with tiles and ledges built to display ceramic pieces.

Planters are hand built, sometimes press moulded in craft crank and decorated with porcelain slips and agate, then fired in reduction with ash glaze. The forms are more organic and much larger than his precise porcelain pieces.

Gordon visited Japan to study Japanese gardens. The visit resulted in a series of slab planters inspired by the patterns of various types of woven light fencing. Many of the planters are sold complete with plants, often succulents which perfectly complement the form and colour of the piece.

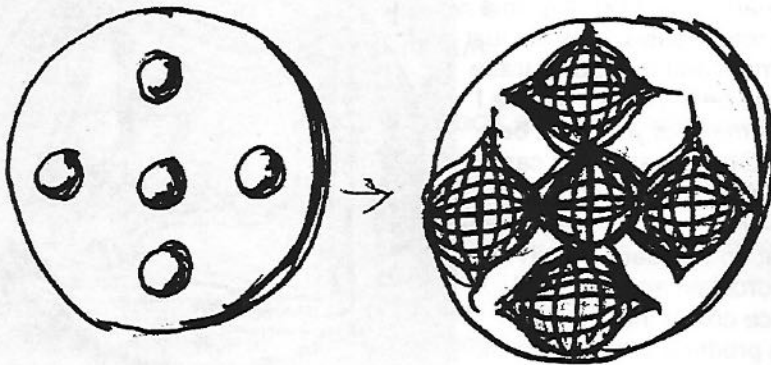
The artists Friderich Huntewasser and Gustav Klimt

have been rich sources of inspiration for much of the surface decoration on the small porcelain boxes. Other influences include patterns and surfaces found on tiles, architecture and city plans, particularly Venice.

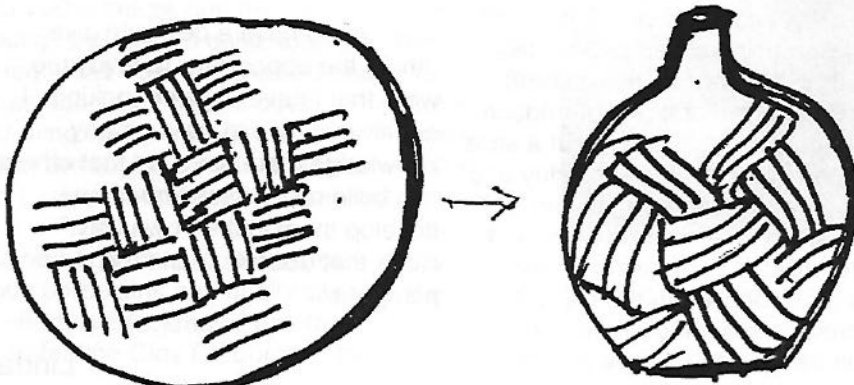
The afternoon demonstration began with a virtuoso display of the construction and decoration of both the porcelain boxes and the flattened bottle forms. The clay is Harry Fraser porcelain.

First Gordon rolled two identical discs of clay between the roller guides at the same time (why have we never thought of that?). This provides discs of identical thickness and stiffness for the bottle forms. A fine net was rolled onto the surface for texture.

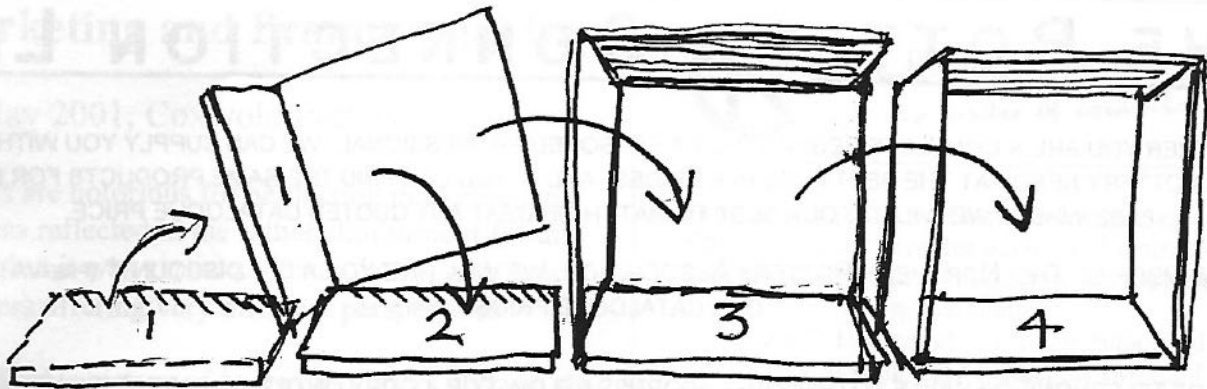
The rolling out was done on a strong plastic sheet to which the clay stuck, leaving it finger print free as it was flipped over to drop the clay onto a plaster bat to stiffen.



Clay balls rolled into the clay creating a pattern of splits in the painted surface.



Blocks of fine scalpel cut lines, splitting when rolled, creating rhythmic blocks of lines for a bottle form.



Cartwheel motion of box base across the side pieces

The surface was brushed Keuper Red and stained the joining edges were roughed vigorously with slips, oxides and porcelain and rolled layers and slipped with the slip trailer. body stains in a thick layer then together to a total thickness of The base of the box cartwheeled dried with a hair dryer till the 1cm. The agate slabs are on its edge along the side pieces surface went matt. The clay was wrapped in plastic and remain in picking them up as it went, gently stretched and slapped working condition for several creating a box. months.

We were intrigued by the next technique. The back of the disc was covered with a pattern of clay balls the size of maltesers, they were pressed in place then the clay was turned right side up. A rolling pin was rolled over the bumps in several directions causing a distortion and splitting in the painted surface. The process was repeated and the crisp surface pattern that appeared was reminiscent of paintings by Bridget Riley and Victor Vasserey in the 60's.

Two more painted discs were surface cut with fine parallel lines created by three scalpel blades nipped between a bulldog clip. The clay was gently handled, stiffened and rolled and the fine lines became wider producing blocks of parallel white lines on the surface.

Both sets of clay were cut into bottle silhouettes and assembled as flattened bottle forms.

Gordon often used pieces of agate clay in both his stoneware planters and porcelain boxes. He makes sheets of clay from

Much of Gordon's recent output has been the small porcelain boxes. (while I write this Ceramic Review Issue No. 189 has been issued containing an article documenting the great detail with photographs and the making and decoration of a box Gordon style). Gordon has developed a system to construct a box.

Important factors are the correct leather hardness and even thickness of the clay, slip ready in a slip trailer for joining pieces and a long clear plastic roller to accurately cut the slide pieces.

The lid and base were cut and decorated before construction and decoration was applied with a dressmaker's marking wheel, a pastry crimper wheel and a scalpel for fine lines. Windows are cut out then filled from behind with pieces of textured clay sprigs or agate. The flange sheet is cut to match the flanges on the lid. The box side pieces are cut at a 45 degree angle on the corner joints, then the method of assembling the box had us all spellbound.

The sides were laid in a row and

The flanged rim is fixed on the top of the box ready to receive the flange cut lid. The piece is wrapped and dried slowly to equalize drying.

The boxes are fired on their lids on sand very slowly to cone 8. Then a second firing to 1100 degrees has areas of clear earthenware glaze to give areas of shine where needed. A third firing uses lustres painted on some unglazed areas. Finally the boxes are finished with wet and dry abrasive.

Gordon's way of working is very different to anything I have seen before. He was a relaxed and confident demonstrator with a high skill and entertainment factor. Spontaneous applause broke out during the demonstration and similar enthusiasm was shown at the end of the workshop. Perhaps Gordon Cooke would be an interesting choice for demonstrator at an NPA festival or seminar.

Brenda Wright

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Craft Showcase: Millennium Galleries, Autumn 2001

The Millennium Galleries recently opened in the centre of Sheffield as an important cultural centre for the north of England.

The Craft and Design Gallery will feature a changing exhibition programme of contemporary, regional, national and international craftsmanship and design. Within the programme, a regular themed showcase will highlight local and regional makers who particularly demonstrate innovation and excellence in their chosen media.

For consideration for selection for the first of these showcases, which is looking specifically at ceramics, please send images of recent examples of your work to the address below.

Rachel Woodruff
Assistant Curator of Decorative Art
Sheffield Galleries & Museums Trust
Graves Art Gallery
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S1 1XZ
Tel: 0114 278 2618
Fax: 0114 273 4705
rachel.woodruff@sheffieldgalleries.org.uk

Marketing and Promotional Day

12 May 2001, Coxwold Pottery

Potters are notorious for neglecting marketing and this was reflected in the rather slim turnout for this event, but it was varied and stimulating with four speakers offering very different perspectives.

Peter Dick's history of Coxwold Pottery showed that in 1965 producing earthenware was virtually a unique selling point. A good write-up in a local paper and supplying Elizabeth David stimulated sales, which were also helped by idealistically low prices. Organisational pressures eventually led to raised prices and choosing local markets over national. Now 85% of sales are from the pottery.

Brigid Howarth's arts consultant tips included spending time every week telling people that you exist, getting good quality slides, focusing press releases and asking friends to describe your work to help you write your "artist's statement". She pointed out that media coverage often depends on presenting interesting personal information..

Peter Dworok was keen on displaying sketches or photos to complement pots on plinths at Rufford Ceramic Centre. He agreed that a "purchase and swap unsold work" policy would improve on the dreaded sale and return and plugged opportunities at Rufford, including Earth and Fire and the residency programme.

Sophie Hamilton endured 7 years of the worst spot at York market before a prime position brought a 60% sales jump. She emphasized the importance of using every opportunity and was disappointed that only six potters made it to the spring York open air fair. She obviously loves selling directly to the public and is exemplary with her high quality flyers, mailing lists before Potfest and her understanding of customers personal space at a stall. She embodies the message of the event: be professional, organised and use your common sense.

Thanks to Isa Denyer for organising the event, to Jill and Peter Dick for their hospitality, and to the speakers.

Ian Howie,
Coxwold Pottery Apprentice



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Exhibitions

Copper Reds and Celedons Exhibition

26th May to 8th July
Pitchers, Jugs and Bowls in Stoneware and Porcelain by Eddie and Margaret Curtis

Family Connection

14th July to 2nd September
A range of elegant thrown pieces in soft greys and blues by Alan Ball together with handbuilt forms enhanced with colourful imagery by his daughter Laura Hancock
Stokoe House Ceramics Gallery, Market Place, Alston, Cumbria. CA9 3HS Tel: 01434 382 137 open 10 am to 5 pm Daily.

International Exhibition of Ceramics

31st July to 2nd September
In association with Galerie Marianne Heller, Heidelberg, Germany at the Rufford Craft Centre, Rufford Country Park, Ollerton, Near Newark, Notts. NG22 9DF Open daily 10-30am to 5-00pm Tel: 01623 822 944

Also from 11th September to 28th October **JAPAN** a major exhibition of ceramics and textiles celebrating Japan Year.

Laurence Simon

Until 23rd June
The Harley Gallery, Welbeck, Notts. S80 3LW Tel: 01909 501 700

Precious

Until 24th June
Decorative Art from Chinese Hang Dynasty to Contemporary Design, from the V&A at Millenium Galleries, Arundel Gate, Sheffield. S1 2PP Tel: 0144 287 2600

Painting With Smoke

Until 30th June
New work by David Roberts at Cleveland Craft Centre, 57 Gilkes St., Middlesborough. TS1 5EL Tel: 01642 808 090

Catrin Howell

Until 10th July
At Ruthin Craft Centre, Ruthin, Denbighshire. LL15 1BB Tel: 01824 704 774

A Cluster of Lustres

Until 14th July
At Laburnum Ceramics Gallery, Yanwath, Nr Penrith, Cumbria. CA10 2LF Tel: 01768 864 842

Also Drinking Vessels 28th July to 15th September

The Snake in the Garden

Until 14th July
International Slipware at Aberyswyth Arts Centre, Aberyswyth, Ceredigion, Wales. SY23 3DE Tel: 01970 622 232

Magdalene Odundo

4th July to 23rd September
At Blackwell, Bowness on Windermere, Cumbria. LA23 3JR Tel: 01539 722 464

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EXHIBITIONS SELECTION PROCEDURE

Selection procedure and what happens on selection day has seemed to remain a mystery for most of you - you dutifully send in your work and paperwork and then a few weeks later receive a letter telling you either; all of your work has been selected; some of your work has been selected; or as is sometimes the case, none of your work has been selected. We thought since we have just had a selection day, it might be enlightening for you if we try to give you a brief outline.....

Northern Potters always use 3 selectors: 1 NPA member: 1 Independent artist + the gallery curator. They each receive a copy of NPA selectors guide-lines: (see below)

These are guide-lines and we cannot enforce selectors to adhere to them rigidly, we do invite selectors to the process and in this way we are asking them to use their judgement. Thus selection becomes to some degree subjective, although there are 3 selectors, hence 3 different points of view. The other factors that selectors are looking at is the venue itself; the size and space available, the amount of display space and nature of display, whether the exhibition is shared with another artist/s and how the work will display together as a whole, finally, the type of customer that attends the gallery. The latter is usually the force that drives the criteria of the curator. As you can see from the above, there a lot of variables to take into account in the nature of selection and this is why each selection process differs dramatically every time that it comes around.

This is the reason, that no matter how many questions we ask before hand we cannot give great direction in what we ask you to submit. The physical factors ie; size, wall space, plinths, etc. are the only things that we can give some guidance upon. Subjective factors are always an outside influence and beyond our control.

Selection day starts early and a number of local Npa members very kindly give up their time to help with unpacking all the work (I always think that this is a wonderful job - for anyone who loves ceramics it's like Christmas to a child! All offers for the future are welcome...) Work is placed next to the boxes either around the perimeter of the gallery floor, or onto tables - especially the fragile stuff! Selectors quite often join in with this too. After all work has been unpacked, selectors have a brief look around all the work, looking at the type and quality of work that has been submitted to get a general overview. After which, the selectors visit each artists work in turn, spending 5 - 10 minutes analysing, discussing, handling and finally coming to a decision, Julie and I follow placing stickers on selected pieces, sorting paperwork and taking notes of any specific feedback that might be useful to the artist. Closely following are the packers, who are now repacking any unselected work. This continues until all the work has been seen, after which we are all ready for a well earned lunch.

During selection procedure at the North Light gallery, after selectors had done an initial tour of the work, we were faced with a unique situation - they wanted to select either all one artists work 'in', or all 'out'. This they explained was because work was to be kept in storage to replace work sold, it seemed more fair to the artist to make one collection for work, either all at the preview or all unsold work at the end of the exhibition. We do get quite a number of comments about how many times artists have to visit a gallery to deliver and collect work, so in one way, yes, this did seem fair, however, several of you were very disappointed that this time none of your work was selected. If you were one of the unlucky ones this time, please note that it was a unique situation, in which all 3 selectors vetoed one of the selection guide-lines, but it is a selected exhibition so selection is not guaranteed, and at the end of the day the selectors are there to use their judgement, taking into account all the variables. Please do not let this put anyone off submitting for future exhibitions, different people are invited to be selectors each time and different venues are used, venues may also change their criteria for different exhibitions. At some time in the life of an artist with a career of any length, it is a disappointing fact that we will all face - it just takes strength to pick ourselves up, dust ourselves down and say "there are plenty of other opportunities (and Npa exhibitions) around the corner."

Alison Boothroyd

NPA Exhibitions always use 3 selectors: 1 NPA member: 1 Independent artist + the gallery curator. They each receive a copy

Guidelines for Selectors:

- 1 Selectors should represent the diversity of work produced by NPA membership, (rather than reflecting personal selection taste).
- 2 Work selected should be of the highest possible standard.
- 3 The number of pieces selected per member should not be unbalanced.
- 4 Selectors should take into consideration the size of the venue, with regard to the total number of pots to be exhibited in that particular space.
- 5 Selectors should try and represent as many of the membership as possible and work should only be rejected if there is a majority decision against it.

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Note From Your Editor

I received this e-mail from a friend and thought I should put it in the newsletter. You never know it could save you or someone you know.

"I was approached yesterday afternoon around 3:30pm in a Woolworth's parking lot, by two males, asking what kind of perfume I was wearing. Then they asked if I'd like to sample some fabulous scent they were willing to sell me at a very reasonable rate. I probably would have agreed had I not received an email some weeks ago, warning of a "wanna smell this neat perfume?" scam.

The men continued to stand between parked cars, I guess to wait for someone else to hit on. I stopped a lady going towards them, pointed at them, and told her about how I was sent an e-mail at work about someone walking up to you at the malls or in parking lots, and asking you to SNIFF PERFUME that they are selling at a cheap price.

THIS IS NOT PERFUME!!!!!!

When you sniff it, you'll pass out. And they'll take your wallet, your valuables, and heaven knows what else. If it were not for this e-mail, I probably would have sniffed the "perfume". But thanks to the generosity of an emailing friend, I was spared whatever might have happened to me.

I wanted to do the same for you. PASS THIS ALONG TO ALL YOUR WOMEN FRIENDS, AND PLEASE BE ALERT,AND BEWARE!!!!!!!"

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