All those salt glazes and many of these stoneware type glazes are fired by West Coast coal, an indigenous fuel which will become of great importance to NZ potters in years to come.

Vol. 9 No. 1
Aug. 1966

New Zealand
POTTER
5/-

NEW ZEALAND POTTER

Vol. 9 No. 1
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Contents

EDITORIAL

As we grow towards maturity as a nation we are beginning to realise the significance of our unique position in the Pacific, geographically and ethnically.

Researchers today are uncovering the pathways of the early people round the Pacific through their potsherds and their methods of pot making still existing in sheltered corners.

The roots of civilisation contain the roots of pottery making, and pottery today is still a vital means of communication.

As with increasing sureness we put ourselves and our own peculiar vision into our pots we find through them a means of communication with the rest of the world. Such communication transcends barriers of nationality and of language.

New Zealanders have the knack of making friends easily and of being able to work together which stems from our fierce belief in the dignity and equality of man.

In a world desperately seeking ways of understanding what better means can be find to say what we are and what we believe in than by the work of our hands. H.M.

Cover.
Detail of salt-glaze ware and of manifesto of B. Brickell from his July exhibition at the Wellington Centre Gallery.

(Photo Roy Cowan)

In our last issue the cover photographs of pots by Len Castle was taken by Neil Grant, to whom we apologise for this inaccuracy.

GWYN HANSSEN

Otago Daily Times photo.

A short account of Gwyn Hanssen's experience as a potter was given in the previous issue, but prior to mid-June of this year her name probably meant little to most New Zealand potters. Yet, in a bare month of hurried weekend schools, slide evenings and discussions, we became aware of a potter of rare personality, possessing an ability to widen our horizons and extend our appreciation. A grant from the Q.E.II Arts Council, to the N.Z. Society of Potters, enabled her to visit N.Z. on her return journey to Europe, where she plans to live and work in France.

Gwyn Hanssen is mainly interested in pots for use — domestic and kitchen wares. She says that people often first come to appreciate pottery by acquiring a mug or casserole. They start using the piece, and soon want more for use in the kitchen or on the table. Here, she pointed out the responsibility of the potter towards the buyer of his wares — 'It should please by the way it looks and feels, and how easy it is to use. And should not scratch the table —!'

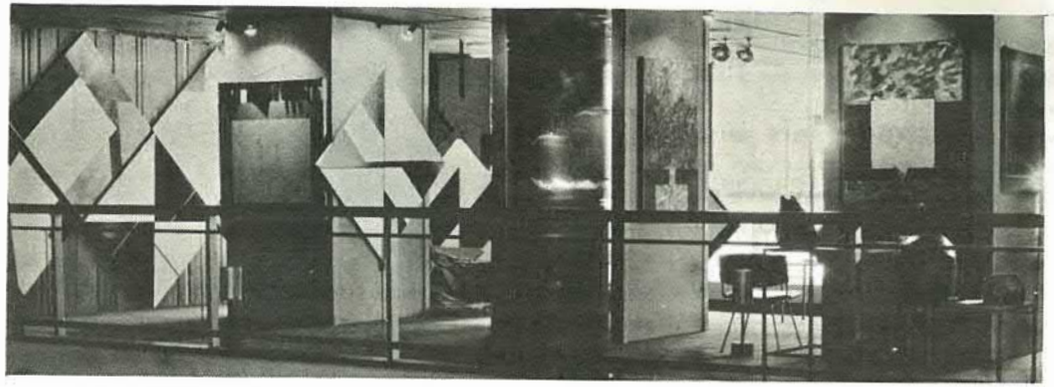
Gwyn said that there is no definite design for 'a good pot'. Except that a good pot invites use and gives pleasure in use. 'Pots need to be honest and not ashamed of themselves — honest to their materials, and the way they are made and fired. Simplicity is one of the things that make a good pot'.

In her slide evenings, Gwyn revealed the work of a whole new younger generation of potters, making domestic ware, mostly in Britain. She showed first how the older generation of studio potters first provided a point of departure or reaction for the younger ones. She gave perhaps the first really clear picture of the methods of the Leach pottery we have received — in particular, how the system of a division between the standard and the exhibition pieces has prompted others towards a declaration of the unity of all wares made by the potter. We saw how the Leach Pottery represents possibly the last of the training potteries — as distinct from art schools, and that the new generation, working much like the potters here, carries on all aspects of the craft single handed, working with large kilns.

The range of styles shown was wide, but Gwyn showed a most rare ability to explain the differing philosophies clearly and with sympathy. She indicated possibilities, particularly in the field of salt-glazing and

wood firing, which could well be followed up here. The slides were magnificent, in such quantity as to make almost a difficulty of assimilitation, but perhaps the visual climax lay in the group of the firing of the traditional type wood-fired kiln at La Borne — majestic spectacle, but like the gates of the Inferno.

All who had the privilege of meeting Gwyn Hanssen will hope that her first visit to New Zealand will not be her last.



View of the exhibition

3 Painters plus 4 potters at New Zealand House, London, 16 May–15 July, 1966.

The group were, painters: Louise Henderson, Milan Mrkusich, John Perry, the potters; Len Castle, Barry Brickell, Helen Mason, and Doreen Blumhardt.

' ARTS REVIEW ' 23 July 1966

Three Painters plus Four Potters.

These antipodean artists joined hands to prove once again that, if the One World ideal of 1945 visionaries is still eluding the second half of our century. One World Art is well on the way to achievement. These seven artists provide a microcosm of the unity which nowadays links aesthetic waves and tendencies in every part of our planet barring a few centres of resistance beyond the iron and bamboo curtains. Louise Henderson was a pupil of Metzinger in Paris in 1952 settled in New Zealand after her marriage and has deeply influenced abstract painting there. A large Triptych, The Lake, floods surfaces with colours that parallel the movement of blue waters and the reflection of shores elsewhere, reds and yellows spread from the jaws of roughened darks.
Milan Mrkusich (of Yugoslav extraction) presents in his Embiems some geometrically accurate squares and circles as though enveloped in flames or rising dust. One of the emblems grows into the glow of a setting sun.
John Perry favours hard edged patterns on pictures frequently hung at an angle. Decorative long-distance effects would perhaps find their best emplacement on the outside of tall buildings if they were carried out in hard as well as hard-edged materials.
Two of the potters, Doreen Blumhardt and Len Castle, have fallen under the spell of Japanese 'rough beauty' ceramics. The first visited Japan in 1962 on a Japanese Government grant. The second worked ten years ago at St. Ives, Cornwall, under Bernard Leach, himself a celebrated exponent of Japanese methods. Barry Brickell's jars and jugs also offer gritty surfaces and tough shapes, but they come closer to European earthenware of the 17th century and before. Much the same could be said of Helen Mason's pots.
And so, currents from Europe, America and Asia fertilise the art fields of New Zealand The resulting crop is at once an achievement and a promise.

Pierre Jeannerat

Boera. The rim is formed while turning on broken pot neck.

POTTERY IN NEW GUINEA

Margaret Tuckson

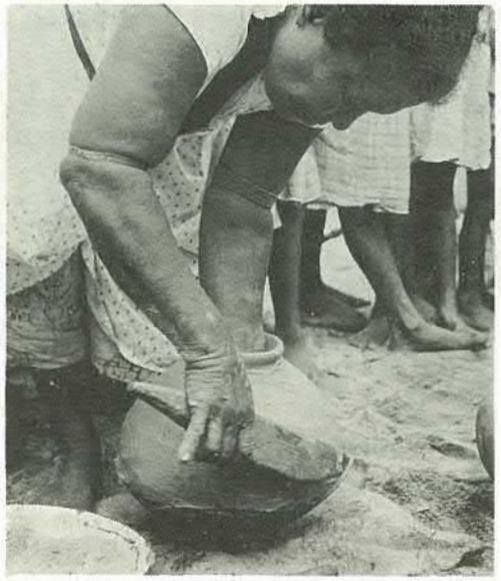
After having opportunity to observe potters at work in New Guinea in November, 1965, Margaret Tuckson wrote an article for the magazine, 'Pottery in Australia'. It appeared in Vol. 5, No. 1, with a series of photographs showing techniques used. For the purpose of comparing these techniques with those used in Fiji an abridged version is given here.

In coastal villages, on off-shore islands, in the Markham Valley and especially in the Sepik River district many potters are still at work today in New Guinea. Mostly, pot-making is exclusively women's work. But in a few cases pots are made by men as in a group of villages in the Eastern Highlands and in the Markham Valley. Many different hand building techniques are used, no type of potter's wheel having been recorded.

Clay is loosened from the pits with pointed sticks or bush knives and after being carried to the village, usually by the women, in bilum bags around their heads it is cleaned of stones, roots, shells, etc., and kneaded often with the addition of sand as temper.

At Boera and other villages on the coast north-west of Port Moresby water pots and cooking pots are formed by a rapid method, using the broken neck section of a pot as the means of rotating a soft lump of clay while it is scraped and pushed up, from a

depression in the centre, into a thick-walled cylinder. A smooth, flared rim is formed, turning the pot with wet hands before it is put under the house to become firmer. Next the rounded belly of the pot is beaten out with the paddle and anvil technique, starting with a paddle with an incised surface and finishing with a smooth one. During the final beating and smoothing stage the pot is held in the potter's lap. A shell is used for some of the smoothing and for simple incised decoration.



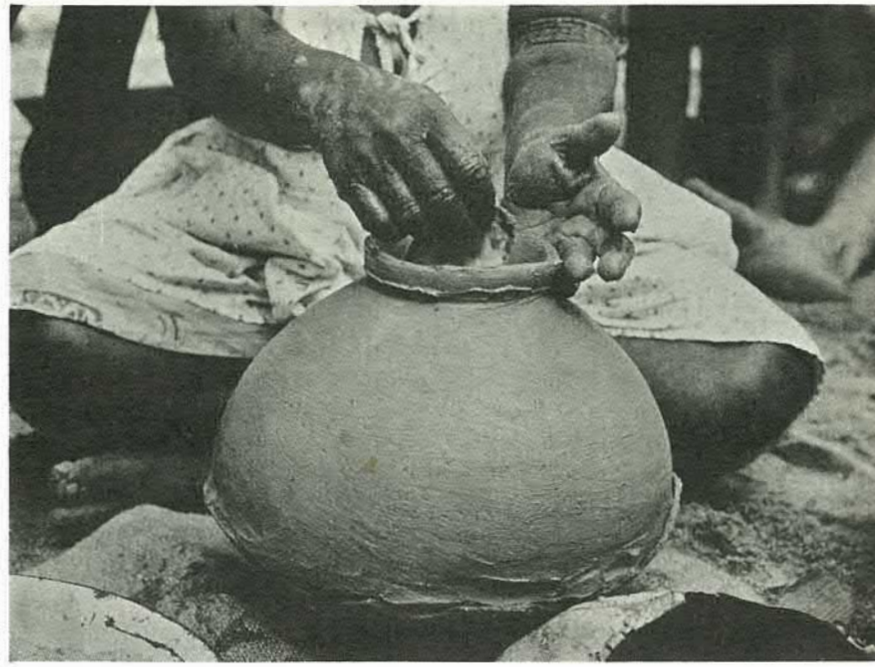
Porobada. Shaping and smoothing with paddle and anvil.

For firing, the pots are stacked on a layer of coconut fronds or wood, with more wood leaning upright against them. A pair of long sticks is used by the women to move the fuel over the gaps while the firing is taking place. After about 20 minutes of fierce heat the pots are lifted off with a long stick and often coated with a dye made from mangrove bark to colour them. Water pots only are waterproofed by rubbing with leaves of the papaw tree or of a passiflora vine.

A different method of arriving at the basic shape, an extraordinary method, is used at Yabob, near Madang. Also an unusual way of preparing the clay is employed. It is dug only when wet and after stones, roots, etc., are picked out with the fingers the clay is pounded with a smooth, heavy stone on a board into $\frac{1}{8}$" thick sheets which are soaked in water. When ready for use it is kneaded with sand.

Water and cooking pots are formed from a 4" diam. ball of soft clay, the thumb being pushed down in the centre, and the ball then rapidly turned in the wet hands to open it out. A smooth, symmetrical, flared rim is then produced, still turning in the hand, after which, surprisingly, the centre hole is completely pugged up and more soft clay is plastered on the outside, evidently with the purpose of achieving a greater bulk of clay than could have been handled for the first opening stage. This solid shape is now put down onto another soft lump of clay and more clay still built upon the outside, then left with several others at this stage under the house to become firmer. Now a round, smooth stone is thumped into the centre of this shape and as soon as a depression is formed it is sometimes also thrown in. When a rounding pot is growing, the inner edge of the rim is gently beaten with the stone while the pot is turned on the potter's lap. The beautifully symmetrical shape with swelling belly is finished then with a similar paddle and anvil method to that used at Boera.

The pots are coated with a fine clay slip before firing. After preheating on a small smokey fire they are stacked into a box-shaped nest of wood, resting on coconut ribs, covered with kunai grass, and as at Boera fired for 20–30 minutes, lifted hot from the fire, then sometimes coated with



Porobada. A shell is used for smoothing.

sago solution for water-proofing. Cooking pots are supported over the cooking fire on three upturned broken pots.

In the Sepik River area the coiling technique, with two or three variations, is used. A most exciting range of imaginative pots

Yabob. Covering the pots with Kunai grass as the firing starts.

Aibom. Cooking pot, collected at Aibom by M.T.

is made in about ten different villages or groups of villages in this area. The most productive village seems to be Aibom on Chambri Lake, where huge sago storage jars, 2 ft. 6 in. wide fire bowls, "frying pans", cooking pots in varying forms and house decoration pots with the modelled figure of a man on top, are made. The base for all these shapes is formed by the woman potter from a lump of soft clay squeezed out, held in her hands, into a shallow dish, which is then bashed into a second one, thus producing a larger base. It is now worked and smoothed resting in a grass ring on the ground, then left aside to become firmer.

Next 1" diam. rolls of clay are formed between the palms of her hands, dangling in the air and worked on to the dampened top edge with rhythmical movement of her thumb outside and fingers inside, two rolls of clay completing the circle. Each roll added raises the walls approximately 2" or 3". After smoothing the joins and working the walls to even thickness, the pot is left to become firmer several times in the making of the bigger pots. To complete a firebowl (hearth) a peaked portion is built up on one side and the face of the culture hero, Aibom Tagwe, is formed from thin rolls of clay applied on the inside of the peak.

After drying in the sun the pots are stacked for firing on a raised platform of sago leaf ribs, supported 2 inches or so off the ground on corner stones or shards, and covered with any wood available and with grass cut from the village. Fired for about 30 minutes, they are lifted off hot and coated with sago solution, which gives them quite a shiny, glazed surface at the time but eventually wears off.

Building up the peak.

Aibom. A Fire-bowl, smaller fire-bowl, and frying pans drying.

At Serakum, Maprik villages, and at Kamangowi in the Sepik River district, thick rolls of clay are first rolled thinner on a lumbun board with the float of fingers and palms and then coiled on themselves, starting from the point of the base. The coils are then joined and smoothed. The fine textured clay at Kamangowi develops a polished surface when leather-hard. In some Maprik villages the top four or five coils are often left unsmoothed, or sometime partly so in a triangular pattern. At Kamangowi and Serakum elaborate patterns are carved by the men into the leather-hard clay and after firing the pots are often decorated with earth pigments. In the Grass Country villages women make cooking and storage pots in similar manner to Aibom and the men make fascinating clay male figures and pot and hearth supports.

Yet another variation on the coiling technique is employed in the Markham Valley where the men roll thick coils on a board and, starting from the base, coil them up, holding the pot in the hand, gaining enough clay for the whole cooking pot from about two coils.

The preliminary joining of coils is done holding the thick shape between the feet. For final smoothing it is placed in a thick grass ring.

Still more different methods are used in some of the islands and other parts of New Guinea. These will have to wait for further articles.

Photograph sources. Plates 1, 5, 6, , 7, 8, Margaret Tuckson; plates 2, 3, 4 Administration of Papua and New Guinea;

Wossera (Serakum) in Aust. Museum, Sydney, collected in 1938. Very different from recent Wossera pots.

Aibom. Cooking pot, collected at Aibom by M.T.

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Wossera (Serakum) in Aust. Museum, Sydney, collected in 1938. Very different from recent Wossera pots.

QUEEN ELIZABETH II ARTS COUNCIL

Interview with the Director, Mr. David Peters, by Julia Mason.

"We have our own country — let's use it," said Barry Brickell recently. "Fire with coal from the West Coast; use salt from Lake Grassmere; look around ourselves and realise that these rocks, trees and mosses are ours, part of us and part of the Pacific, linking us with countries such as Japan. This is where we live and it is only from our New Zealand that our own art will come. I haven't been overseas and I don't want to go."

An interesting comment, considered in the light of the attitude of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council; a body set up by one of our innumerable Acts of Parliament to officially "encourage, foster and promote the practice and appreciation of the arts in New Zealand". It would seem at first sight that these objectives and the expressed desires of some of our indigenous artists coincide.

The new Director of the Council, Mr. David Peters, is a Welshman who has been here for six months. Naturally, he is not so emotionally involved as a native of New Zealand. The opinions of an outsider, of a Western civilisation, are rather interesting especially when it is remembered that he is the head of the body which controls the money.

"You must beware of trying too hard. New Zealand is a remarkable country — you have **everything** here. But it is a difficult country to capture; for a painter, for instance, the clarity of the light poses considerable problems. The judge of the 1966 Kelliher Art Prize made a plea for softening of the sharp edges. And the older painters had the right idea — they didn't **try** to portray the land in all its brilliance, but drank in the pub till the mists came down and the outlines were blurred.

"But the west is receding back behind its ramparts, back to whence it came. What will happen to those islands of descendants that it leaves behind? New Zealand is after all composed of a majority of people of western culture living in an eastern area; an area where the influence of Asia is growing every day."

What will be result of this? New Zealand must inevitably go through a period of turmoil, both political and social, as the changing pressures make themselves felt. And it is well known that the establishment is the last to abandon its established ideas. The artists, on the other hand, who depend for their sustenance on these people, are often more sensitive and amenable to the prevailing winds.

"The amateur movement in New Zealand is extraordinarily strong; I have often been surprised by the enthusiasm. But there is the difficulty of the jump between the amateur and the professional. New Zealand being what it is, from the Sunday painter or potter or actor will come the person who finally risks trying to survive by his work. But professionalism is also an attitude of mind; and appreciation that the artist has just as much of a commodity to market as man who retails drainpipes. And professionalism must be encouraged."

How?

"One of the greatest tasks of the Arts Council is to educate the public. To make the ordinary person realise that a thing of beauty which hangs on the wall can be as functional and as much part of the house as the kitchen sink. And to do this he must be taught to discriminate, both by being

subjected to education in the arts, by touring exhibitions and artists; pictures in the schools and so forth; and thus by realising that New Zealand people can produce works as aesthetically pleasing as those of the great masters which they have been told are good."

Could there not be a danger that the artist will lose his integrity? It could be difficult for an artist, having acquired the desired professional attitude, not to give the public what it wants, rather than what it should want.

And who is to set the trends — the public or the artist?

"The public will learn to reject the slick approach if it has been educated enough in the recognition of true worth. Yet at the same time it must appreciate and learn that a visit to, for example, an art gallery can be a pleasurable experience, not an educational interlude to be endured. And here the administration must do something — they must also cultivate the proper approach. There is no point in presenting good indigenous work for sale in a poor manner; though I think the potters seem to have realised this somewhat more than other branches of the visual arts."

It appears that the Arts Council has two main objectives: to educate the public in appreciation and the artist in his attitude. What will be the main source of stimulation?

"The best way it seems at the moment is in the import of works from overseas. It is inevitable that these will lead to a certain amount of imitation, but it is only by sorting out, through imitation, development, and rejection, both by the artist and the public, that anything will emerge. There is the difficulty of obtaining a balance of influence of course: European works are easily accessible, but Eastern are harder to obtain and are often Western in derivation anyway. There seems less point in bring in exhibitions from the western-style Pacific lands such as the United States and Australia; after all they are struggling in the same way as New Zealand in the development of their own identity. And there is a certain amount of commercialism in some quarters which it is preferable not to introduce as an influence.

"There are also of course the study grants to individuals for work both in New Zealand and overseas. The potters are not so much at fault here — they usually do return, or elect to work in their own land — but there has been criticism that we are paying for people to perform and give the benefits of their studies to people in other countries."

However, the work of the Council according to its Director ceases at a certain point. If their actions are successful, the place of the arts in the community will be established and accepted, and the community will take over direct support, by purchase and patronage. The professional will come into his own. It will take a long time, as it has in England. The Welfare State too can play its part; it has been accused of engendering a uniform mediocity, but at the same time it does care for the physical needs of its members. The incidence of starving unrecognised geniuses in garrets in New Zealand must be fairly low. The general public subsidises the creative worker both directly and indirectly, and the amount per head of population available to the Arts Council compares reasonably well with other western nations. Let us hope therefore that the administrators of the financial side have been subjected to some of the cultural conditioning in order that they disburse the money wisely.

MINIKILN

Roy Cowan

This kiln is for those who have not the space or resources for the larger models, and is also designed to be potentially movable as are electric kilns. The basic design and operation have been kept as simple as possible, but the behaviour is just like that of the larger types, and all the science and art which is required to produce the best work from them is also required here.

The kiln is best suited to smaller wares, and has the advantage for the learner or experimenter of permitting trial firings in quick succession. Large kilns are more economical, and tend towards the stabilisation of methods. Like the small home workshop type of power tool with its range of attachments, this kiln can have a low basic cost, and a range of developments, some into fields which would require expense into the thousands in larger sizes. Some of these are:

1. Use of supergrade refractories allowing very high temperature/time/reduction values.
2. Adoption of modern lightweight refractories and castables producing low weight and high thermal insulation.
3. The fitting of heat return devices, permitting heat advance beyond the levels possible when burning fuel in cool air.

The prototype has been built in the traditional heavy materials, and according to methods described in earlier articles, this to limit the cost of possible changes, and to ensure that the kiln would work without the need for special materials. Necessary references in earlier articles are; Vol. 6 No. 1 (pot burners), Vol. 6 No. 2 (jet burners), Vol. 7 No. 2 (construction methods), and Vol. 8 No. 1 (firing).

The system is being developed as one project within the terms of a Q.E. II Arts Council Fellowship.

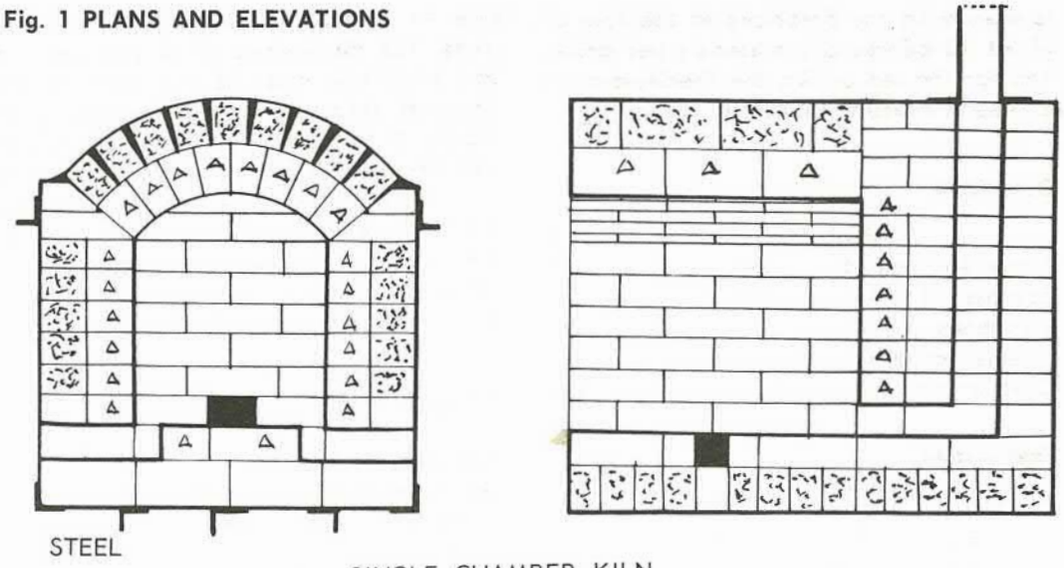
Construction

The steel framing should be in 2" × 3/16" angle, with 2" bore water or steam pipe for the legs if fitted, and leg bracing in 1½" × 3/16" angle or ¾" water pipe. The drawing of this frame is annotated to show the portions needed according to the pattern adopted. The quantities for the full frame for the free-standing kiln with two chambers are; 2" angle, 60 feet; legs, 10 feet; leg bracing, 21 feet. The prototype frame was built first, then filled with the bricks, a sheet of flat galvanised iron being first laid down to gas seal under the bottom course, which was of perforated red bricks laid on side, loose, with 50/50 fireclay/cement-sand mortar to seal on the outside bricks only. Materials for this steelwork cost £5-10-0.

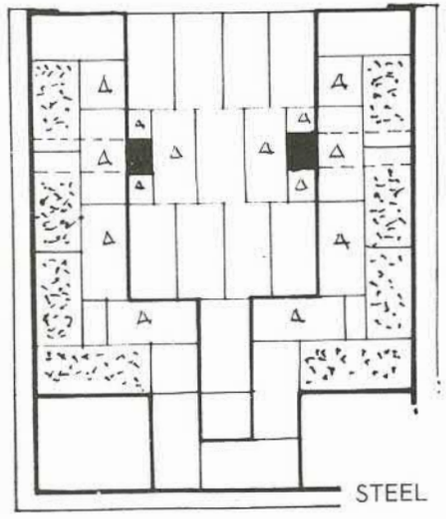
The kiln could be built on brick or concrete block piers, without the under floor framing.

Super Alumina grade bricks, such as Huntly HA40 or Kamo Hilume are advised for the glost chamber walls and arch on the flame side, while H30 or similar grades may be used for the inner floors, biscuit chamber walls and 'doors'. Red bricks may be used on the outer sides, preferably dressed with lime wash, white concrete paint or aluminium paint to reduce radiation loss. Fireclay/grog mortar

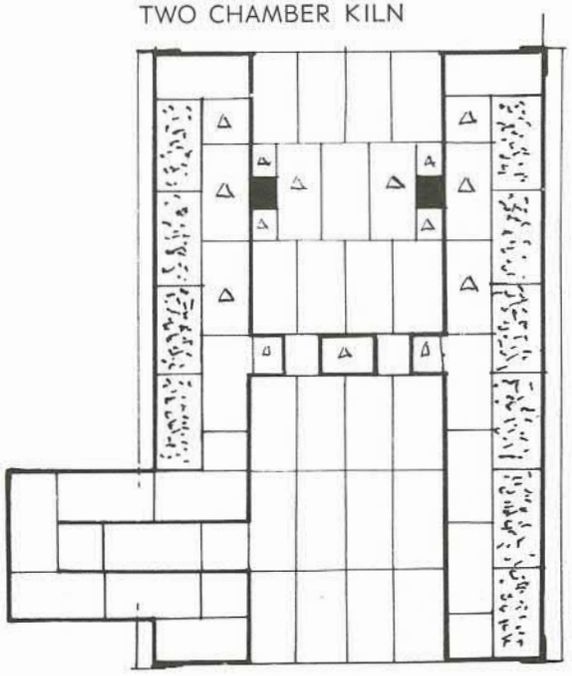
Fig. 1 PLANS AND ELEVATIONS



SINGLE CHAMBER KILN



TWO CHAMBER KILN



RED BRICK
STANDARD F.B.
SUPER AL. F.B.

is used with the firebricks at the rate of about 10 ounces dry materials per brick, and for the red cricks, the fireclay-cement and sand mixture mentioned above.

Quantities

	Single Chamber	Two
Super Alumina f.b.	80	80
Standard f.b.	100	220
Commons	200	360
Fireclay/grog.	2 cwt	3 cwt
Cost, approx.	£24	£37

Fuel system

The fuel is fed through ⅜" copper tubing with appropriate brass compression type fittings and Tees to make connections. All permanent joints should be given a sealing compound. The first valve is a Quick Action Gate Valve arranged to close in the event of fire appearing outside the kiln (see Vol. 7 No. 2). The line then divides to two needle valves. These parts will cost about £7-10-0.

The Stack

In the prototype the gases are taken out from beneath the biscuit wicket and the stack is made to lift away after firing. In the drawings a brick flue is shown. This can be continued up the side of the kiln, to be surmounted by a 12' stack (for the natural draft version), in 4" galvanised down pipe, or as required to clear buildings (pressure fired). Alternatively the brick flue can be kept low and the first thirty inches or so of stack could be in the heavy 4" steam pipe which is braced by a link to the kiln steelwork. The upper section, in galvanised down pipe, will slip into the steam pipe. This provides a self-bracing chimney with the stouter steam pipe to withstand the heat in the lower parts. The dimensions of all gas ways in this small kiln must be kept close to the designed measurements to ensure good results. If the draft is too strong, the kiln will fire rapidly but will yield unevenly fired ware. If the draft is weak, the kiln will advance well up to a certain point and then stick, attempts to force on by increasing fuel flow producing a denser atmosphere but no more heat.

Firing methods

The simplest method of firing is by use of the traditional louvre burner, with the higher stack. The louvres for the prototype were made to slide right into the firemouths so that they burnt almost directly upward into the kiln. For this system the firemouth entries are kept to the six inch width.

The first alternative to this introduces a vacuum cleaner to blow oil, as in the Ardmore kiln, described in Vol. 8 No. 2. The outer firemouth opening should be masked down with brick wedges so that the actual entry port is just sufficient to admit the spray. For this small kiln the air blast should come from much less than the usual nozzle found on vacuum cleaner attachments, but the actual setting will require determination according to the machine used. Super Alumina bricks should be used all round the inner firemouth as this system produces severe local conditions.

For the two foregoing methods the kiln should be fitted with two needle valves, one to control each side.
The pot burner used in the pressure system consists of a short length of 2" square tubing or the same made up from light

angle steel. A short piece of 2" × 3/16" angle, drilled with air holes and fitted with an oil pipe, is set across the end of the tube, and the ends are closed with small plates to form the burner trough. At the outer end is the oil level fitting described in earlier articles.

The jet burner is similar to the example described earlier but reduced in size. The oil line is brought through within the air pipe and is fastened by a small weld at the jet end, the other end being left free as a slight differential movement occurs between the cool oil pipe and the very hot air pipe.

The fan should be capable of raising 2½" water gauge with two burners connected. Regulation may be needed to avoid overblowing the pot burner.

There is a choice of layouts. If two pot burners are made, they will be quite capable of raising to kiln to bright red heat. One valve only will be needed on each side and the firemouths can be reduced to 2½" width as the jet burners can be brought in by substitution. With one pot burner only one firemouth must be five inches wide to take two burners together at the change over. The single pot burner is started on one side and when the kiln is warm enough to secure ignition of oil spray, a jet is added, and the jet on the far side is added when the spray will ignite safely. For this system, a second control valve will be needed one side, a simple turncock as used for gas control being perhaps adequate for the brief period of use. When the pot burners are in use, there is, in addition to the general heating, a zone of radiation just above the firemouths. This is lessened when the jets are brought into action, but a second radiant zone develops under the crown where some drops from the fuel spray strike. Any tendency of the fuel spray to strike either the kiln walls or the shelves should be corrected by a check on the alignment of the jets.

The glost chamber shelves should be of Silicon Carbide and those in the biscuit, Alumina or Sillimanite. The 16" × 12" size which has been standard in the earlier kilns can be used, the prototype firing well with two shelves, superimposed, in each chamber. The shelves run along the glost leaving space for the flame zone to the sides, and cross the biscuit chamber.

The natural draft version is sensitive to wind in the early stages and would be best placed in shelter or in a building. The blown version will fire happily in the open, in a gale, but a sheet iron canopy should be fitted to avoid rain soakage between firings. As the heated volume is relatively small, in this size, in relation to the brickwork volume, steaming the kiln dry absorbs more of the total heat developed than in larger kilns.

The Drawings

Figure 1, Plans and Elevations, provides three aspects of the single chamber kiln and the plan view of the two-chamber version. The drawings are for the steel frame supported version, and they show the positions of the steel beams needed to carry the kiln, and a bottom course of bricks on edge. If the kiln is built on a solid base, this course should be replaced by two courses of red bricks laid normally.

In the single-chamber version, the stack is shown partially bonded to the end wall, and the arch bracing steel beams are car-

ried out so that the crosspiece passes outside the stack. In the two-chamber plan, the dividing wall is one brick thick only and the stack is taken one brick width further out. This construction ends below the level of the arch bracing steel beam.

The drawings are dimensioned in actual bricks. The plans allow for a 9" door thickness and note that the firemouths are placed towards the door.

Fig. 2 BURNERS

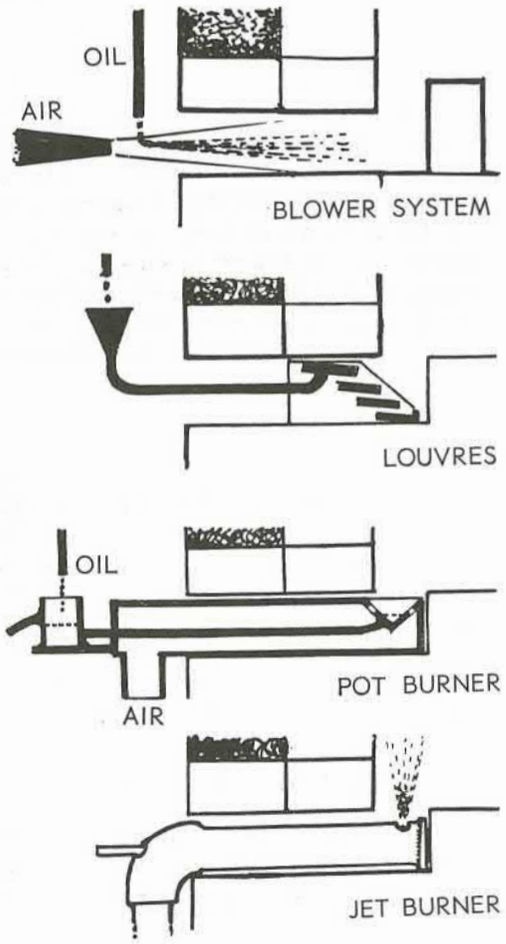
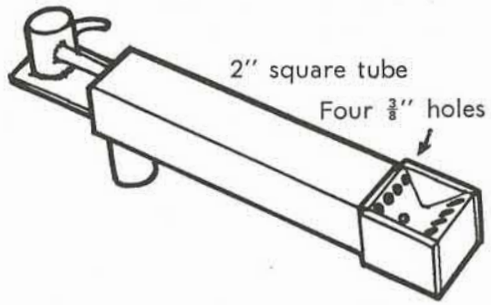


Fig. 3 POT BURNER



Important dimensions are, for the single-chamber kiln: flue to stack, 4½" wide, 3" deep, 9" long; brick section of stack, 4½" square inside; metal stack, 4" pipe, 12' above kiln. For the two-chamber kiln: openings, glost to biscuit, two, 4" by 3"; flue to stack, 4½" wide, 6" deep, 13½" long; stack, as before. The small firemouths for the pressure system are 3" square, extending as a recess in the floor, 2¼" into the kiln.

Fig. 4 THE FRAME

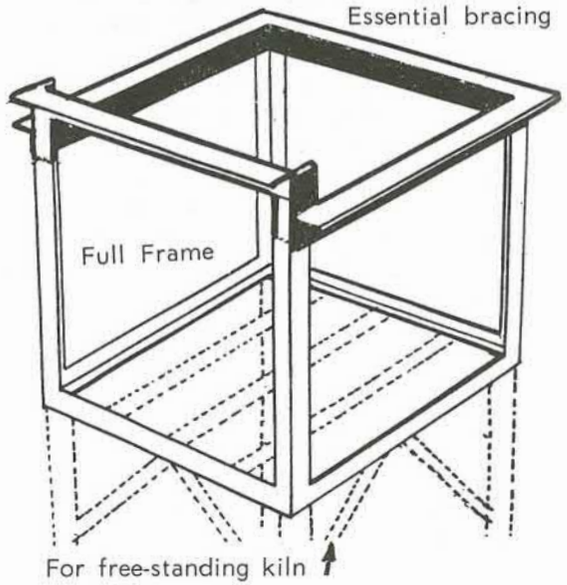


Figure 2, Burners, shows, from the top, the blowing in of fuel, the fitting of louvres and then the two burners used for pressure firing. Note that with the first, the firemouth should be five to six inches wide, partially closed at the outer end, and that the brick facing within the kiln is turned upwards. The louvre system is made to fit closely into a five to six inch firemouth and the oil is fed to an inclined top plate, on which a pattern of weld runs can be made to encourage lateral spreading. The third example shows the pot burner made of square tube and pieces of angle and strip steel, also shown in the perspective sketch. Finally, the jet burner, shown, like the pot burner, arranged for air delivery from below.

Firing on the two pot burners, the kiln will reach bright red heat in three hours, and on changing to jets, stoneware temperature in eight hours, but if this rate is adopted, stoneware glazes will probably be improved by a lengthened soaking period.

The Transistor Kiln next?

Would potters and gallery owners kindly supply details of exhibitions held. Invitations, reports and reviews and photographs are wanted.

EXHIBITIONS

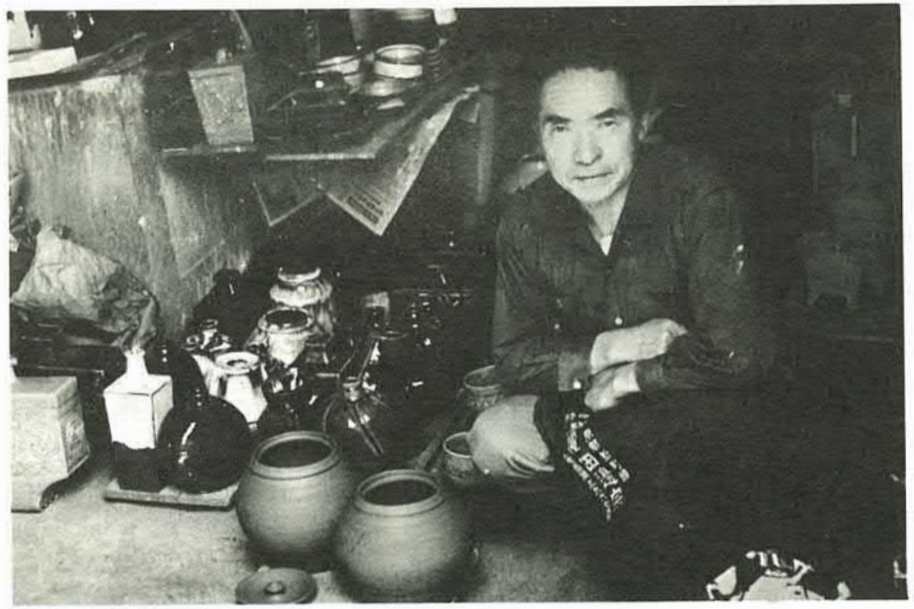
14 New Zealand Potters, organised by Hawke's Bay and East Coast Art Society Pottery Group, 15–26 June at the Art Gallery, Napier.

The Exhibition was very well presented in a layout done by Lou Theakstone (who also did the Third National Exhibition at Napier). The team work of Jim Munro of the Art Gallery and of the Napier Pottery Group resulted in a simulating exhibition which did much to further interest in pottery in this area.

An invitation to exhibit was accepted by fourteen potters, who were Nancy Beck, Martin Beck, Len Castle, Crewenna Pottery, Mary Hardwick-Smith, Doris Holland, Helen Mason, Paul Melser, Margaret Milne, Patricia Perrin, Juliet Peter, Peter Stichbury, Graeme Storm, Lee Thomson.

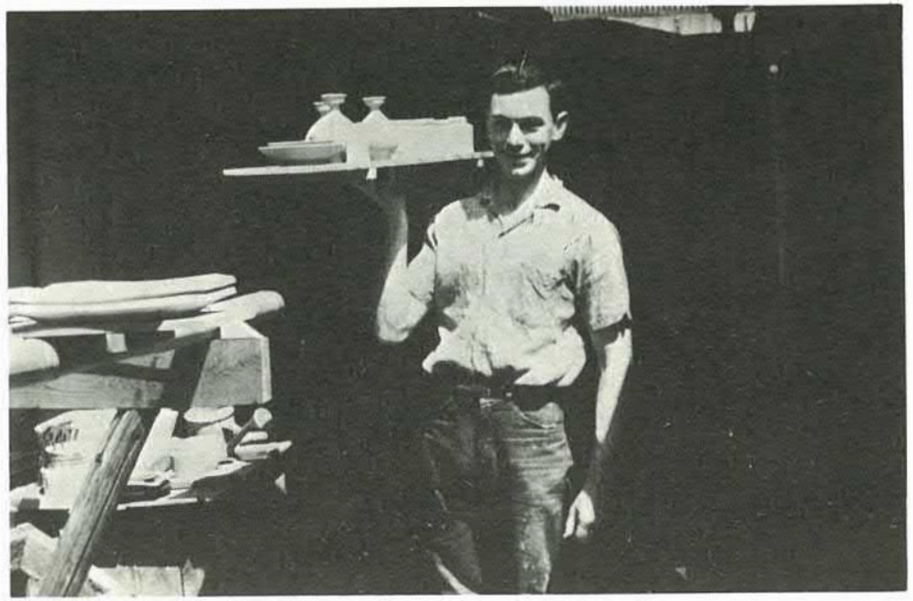
New Zealand and local potters, Community Centre, Hawera, November 29–December 4, 1965, organised by Hawera Pottery Group.

This exhibition was an entirely new venture for this area and proved most successful. 70 per cent. of the pots were sold and local potters have come to know potters throughout the country both personally and through their work. It ended up as a community effort with everybody helping to put the show on.



Takeichi Kawai

Photos sent by Peter Knuckey, at present studying with Takeichi Kawai at Kyoto. The master at work, and Peter carrying some of his own work.

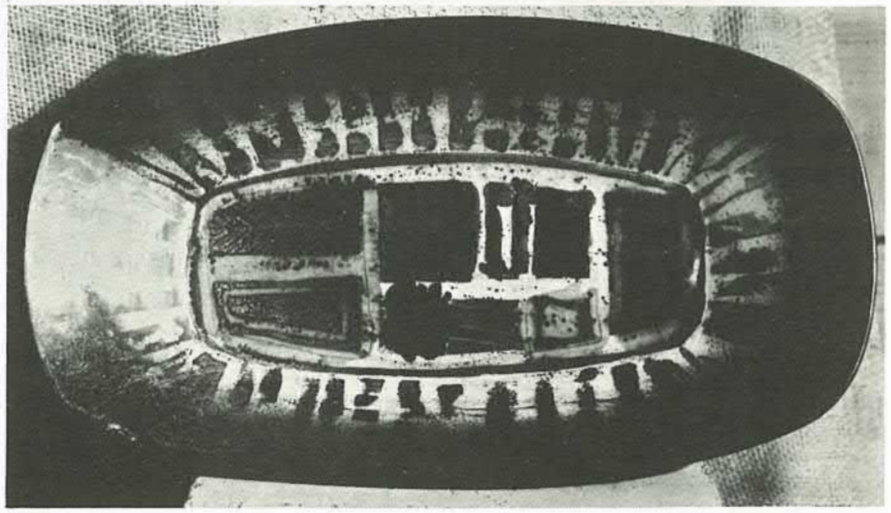


KENNETH CLARK

At the Ninth National Exhibition of the New Zealand Potters' Society there was a special exhibition of pots from the Kenneth Clark Pottery. Subsequently this exhibition toured New Zealand not only because of its interest to potters and public in general, but as a striking demonstration of how rich, vital and alive earthenware pottery can be. At the Wellington viewing there was the opportunity of seeing work of an earlier period, some fourteen years ago.

A comparison of the two styles was fascinating. A mature and able potter, who over the intervening period continues to develop and undergoes a metamorphosis of style. Bold colours, rigid shapes with abrupt changes of direction are in sharp contrast to the muted colours, softer lines and rounded curves of his earlier period. Now there is an economy of movement, at times rich and complex but always in harmony with form.

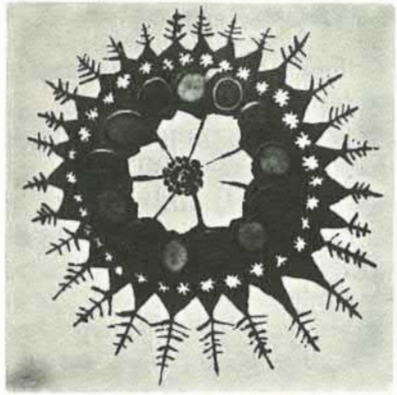
There is a directness and vigorous simplicity in the Kenneth Clark pots. His philosophy, as stated in his book — "Practical Pottery and Ceramics" — is clearly reflected in his work. Here is a potter who knows his clay, and knows how it responds. Understanding his medium thoroughly, he can express his ideas so that the results have a coherence and sense of being. As with clay, so too is it the case with his use of glaze and decoration. These are so integrated with the form itself that one does not disassociate pattern with shape. Kenneth Clark and his wife, Ann Wynn Reeves, collaborate and complement one another. Kenneth leans more to shapes and forms and Ann to decoration. Their decorative techniques, both structural and applied, employ a wide range of visual contrasts. Be it simple or complex, they retain a balance between the various decorative elements used so that an overall unity exists.



Dish, 12" long.

Photos Roy Cowan.

(The photos are of pieces in a collection imported by Stockton's and shown at the Country Gallery, Reikorangi, June, 1966.)



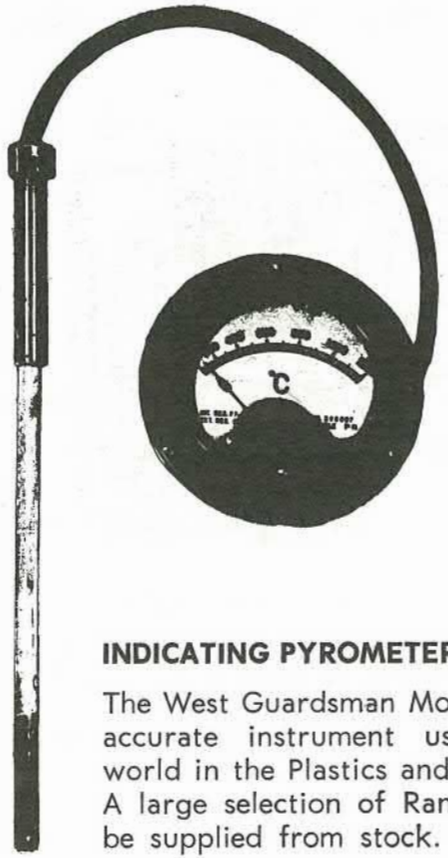
6" wall tile, on glaze decoration.

6" tile, impressed and inlaid with glazes.

A study of the Kenneth Clark pots bears out his principle and philosophy of the potter/artist, and, after seeing his exhibition, one retains a lasting impression that here is a potter with a lively imagination and a natural sympathy and feeling for the materials used.

David Carson-Parker

An original but in fact very practical teapot made recently by Chris du Fresne. Chris seems to have worked out for himself a very satisfactory life of pottery and boat-building at Mapua, Nelson.



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International Exhibition organised by the New Zealand Chapter of the World Crafts Council, Green Room, Wellington Town Hall, 12–22 May 1966.

In this exhibition, the first to be promoted by one of the member countries of the World Crafts Conference, New Zealand crafts were shown alongside those of Norway, Uganda, Western Germany, Canada, Philippines, Italy, Hong Kong, England, Australia, Greece, Japan, The Netherlands, and U.S.A. In a radio criticism of the show John Roberts said: "In contact with these objects that reflect the individual variation of their creators we appreciate values that industrialism alone cannot sustain. Fundamental to our nature is the urge to create with our hands and minds.

Photos Roy Cowan.

Gerard Manley Hopkins lamented in one of his poems that 'not one work wakes mine'. The intense division of labour in industrial and administrative society similarly deprives us of that contact with the creative processes that once were thrust on the majority of people by economic necessity. Hence the vitality and worth of the craft movement in keeping alive the techniques of a pre-industrial society. Since I derive great pleasure from their excellent products, I do not gainsay their argument, but there are dangers. The line dividing a healthy counterpoise to pervading mass production and the creation of a self defeating cult is narrow. The essence of craft is not in the exhibiting and the selling, but in the wide participation by the many ordinary people who lack other creative outlet."

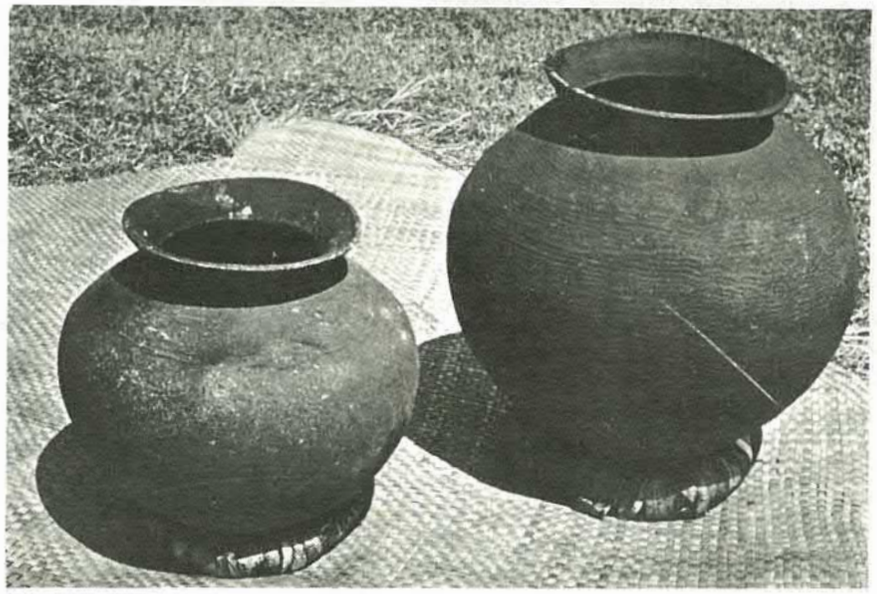
Vases by Martin Beck. New Zealand.
Enamel plate Win Ng California (Japanese-American working in enamels and ceramics)

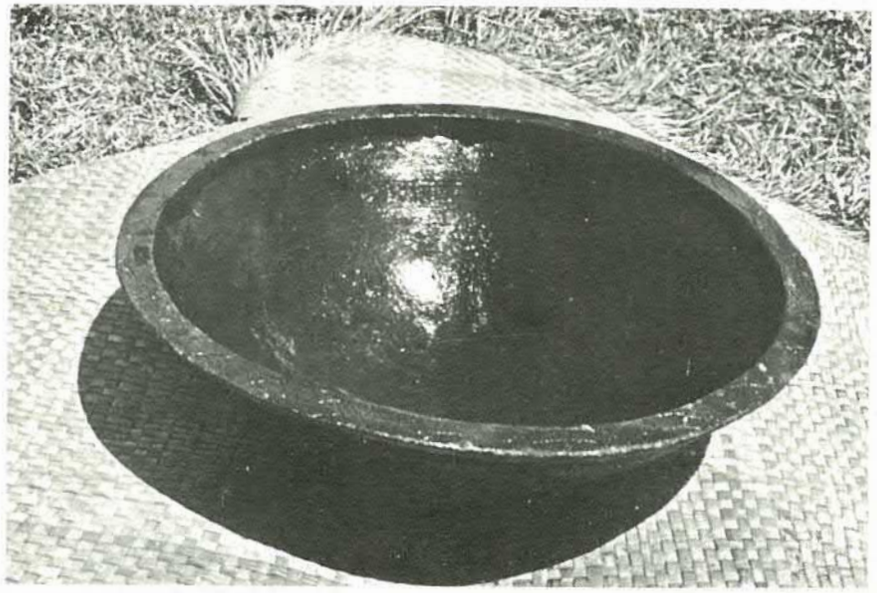
POTTERY IN FIJI

Helen Mason

Fiji is for New Zealanders our most accessible contact point with the rich warm island life of the Pacific. It is therefore exciting to find that primitive methods of pottery making are still surviving there in a natural environment. How much longer this can last is doubtful, but it is fortunate that Bruce Palmer (formerly of Wellington), who is in the key position of Director of the Fiji Museum, is exploring every means of recording and protecting this traditional Fijian art in the hope that it will continue as part of the Fijian heritage for a long time to come. It is his belief that by understanding present-day methods of making pots the researcher can learn to recognise and read the signs on excavated prehistoric potsherds, thus providing some solutions to the problems of population movements in prehistoric times.

In collaboration with the Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Hawaii, and aided by a grant





from the National Science Foundation, Washington, the Fiji Museum has been conducting investigations in the lower Sigatoka Valley, Viti Levu. A report has just been issued by the Museum and from it the following facts have been taken.

So far, observations have been made of the manufacture of 'dari', a basin-shaped pottery vessel for holding yaqona (ceremonial drink); 'kuro', a cooking pot; 'vuluvulu', a small finger bowl; and 'hue', pot-stands made of clay. In every instance, the potters are women, who gather the clay from a special place and transport it in coconut frond baskets to the village. Here it is prepared by picking it over to remove stones and roots, and then trodden out on a sack sprinkled with sand. The treading is done with a sliding motion of the feet, stamping with the heel first until "the feet know when to stop adding sand" and the fingers pronounce it ready for use.

1. A hole is cut in the side of the body to insert a stone anvil prior to use of paddle. The base will be in the space yet to be closed over.

The potter's wheel is unknown in these areas and the pots are shaped by hand with the use of anvil stones and wooden paddles. In the village of Nasama the anvil stones are brought from Keiyasi, some 40 miles up the river, usually by the men, who know what size and shape in stones the women require. The paddles used vary in size and shape and nowadays are made from 'dakua' or Fijian kauri.

In this village, to make the 'dari' (large bowl) two women work together. The first potter begins with a cylinder of stiff clay which is thrown sharply on to the mat several times until it becomes a flat, disc shape. This is handed on to the seconc potter who balances it upright on her left knee, supported from behind with the left hand while the right hand punches into the clay with the anvil stone. The clay shape is turned until the stone has hollowed round the entire circle forming a semi-spherical bowl. This rough bowl is

2. Closing the base. The piece cut from the side is used to finish the closure.

3. When fully closed the pot is inverted, the side hole is closed and the neck is opened in what has been the lower end.

then placed between the knees, and with a paddle in her left hand and the anvil stone in the right the potter gently pats it out. The roughly worked shape is then set upside down in the sun to dry out for about an hour. After it is beaten with paddle and stone until the walls are thin and even. The thickness of the walls is judged not only by feel but also by the sound of the paddle. The rim is decorated by rolling 'koli' shells in pairs round the edge.

For cooking pots or 'kuro' the potter begins with three cylinders of clay of equal size. One of these is flattened into a pancake shape with the hand and then punched into a bowl shape with a stone. The other two lumps of clay are made into oval pancake shapes. The bowl is set into a leaf ring and paddled, then turned on its side; one pancake is set into it and the joints paddled, then the other is fitted in so that the pot is now a thick-walled rough cylindrical shape, with a rounded bottom. A long strip of bark string is wrapped around it to hold the shape of the clay while drying. After two or three hours the strip is removed and the potter gently paddles the top of the pot, thinning the walls and making the opening smaller. With a short bamboo knife she cuts a hole in the side of the pot. This cut out piece is removed, thinned to an even thickness by squeezing with her fingers, and set to cover the hole in the top of the pot. The left hand holding the anvil stone through the hole in the side of the pot, and the right hand holding the paddle, the whole top is beaten into a rich swelling curve. After further drying the pot is inverted. The bottom now becomes the top and is gently opened with the fingers to form a new mouth. The hole in the side is covered over and the shoulder and lip formed and beaten out into an even thin-ness.

The 'vuluvulu' (small finger bowl), and 'hue' (pot-stand) are also formed by anvil stone and paddle using slightly different methods. When the pots are dry they are fired by the women in a bonfire of dried coconut fronds. The fire is kept going for about twenty minutes, then the pots are fished out one by one with a long pole, set on three stones and rubbed with chunks of resin from the Fijian kauri tree.

Earlier investigations by other people have been made into pottery techniques at Ra, in northern Viti Levu. The main difference seems to be that here the basic shape is formed from coils rather than slabs so there is no need to invert the pot because

the hand can always be inserted from above to hold the anvil. The paddle and anvil method is used at Ra for the subsequent shaping of the pot, but the beaters are somewhat different in form, so that the pots finish up with a different surface from the Sigatoka pots. They are usually thicker and more heavily ornamented with incised designs.

Pots are still being made in other parts of Fiji but as yet the methods have not been documented. It is obvious that here there is a rich field for exploration but it is to be hoped that this can be continued as it has begun — gently and with wisdom, so that the traditional balance is not upset. In the Fiji Museum at Suva there are excellent collections and displays showing both pots and methods of making. The Museum also has on sale pots made by these contemporary primitive potters, which they commission and buy at a proper rate of exchange. In this way neither potter nor tourist is exploited.

As potters ourselves we can appreciate the skill and hard work that goes into the making of these beautiful vessels, and enjoy the finished product to the full. If our understanding could be used to help with its preservation what a useful thing this would be.

In his investigations Bruce Palmer has been assisted by Elizabeth Shaw, of the Department of Anthropology, Auckland University; and Peggy Dickinson (a keen potter known in this country) and Meredith Sykes, both university graduates from the U.S.A.

In New Zealand our interest was invoked by Terry Barrow's knowledge and collection of Pacific treasures, by a photographic record of Fijian potters at work made by Denis and Joy Hanna several years ago, and by the fact that both Hamada and Kawai thought it worth their while to detour through Fiji on their return journey from New Zealand.

Setting the pots for firing.

Dressing the hot ware with resin.

Carl Vendelbosch, Rachel Graham and Peggy Laird give Carl some unhelpful advice on decorating one of his individual pieces.

THE WAIMEA POTTERIES

Waimea Pottery is a craft pottery in which a group of potters, led by Peggy and myself, combine to work as a team to make a range of domestic ware out of the resources available from the surrounding country. Such an organisation, common in England and Scandinavia, but correspondingly rare in New Zealand (Harry and May Davis at Crewenna, Jim Nelson at Hanmer are exceptions) has been criticised as being likely to inhibit the development of character in the pots. Behind this lies the misconception that individualism cannot flourish in a group context. To anyone who has listened to the Borodin Quartet or the Vienna Trio this season, this must surely appear unfounded, and more immediately in the pottery world we have the example of Saxbo, under the direction of Natalie Krebs.

Our aim in establishing Waimea is to gather a strongly co-operating team to work out designs that originate from myself. These, we find, modify themselves in practice, and only attain their final settled form after several months of production. The rhythm of throwing a series enables the thrower to work at a much greater speed, and with considerable economy of effort, which is important if the pottery is to manage to survive economically. We feel that the concept, and the results of our efforts, at Waimea are strongly traditional, being based firmly on functional pots for use in our established ways of preparing, serving, and eating food. Our methods are those of the traditional potter — wheel thrown and turned shapes, pulled handles, and press-moulded rectangular dishes. All these are simple hand processes.

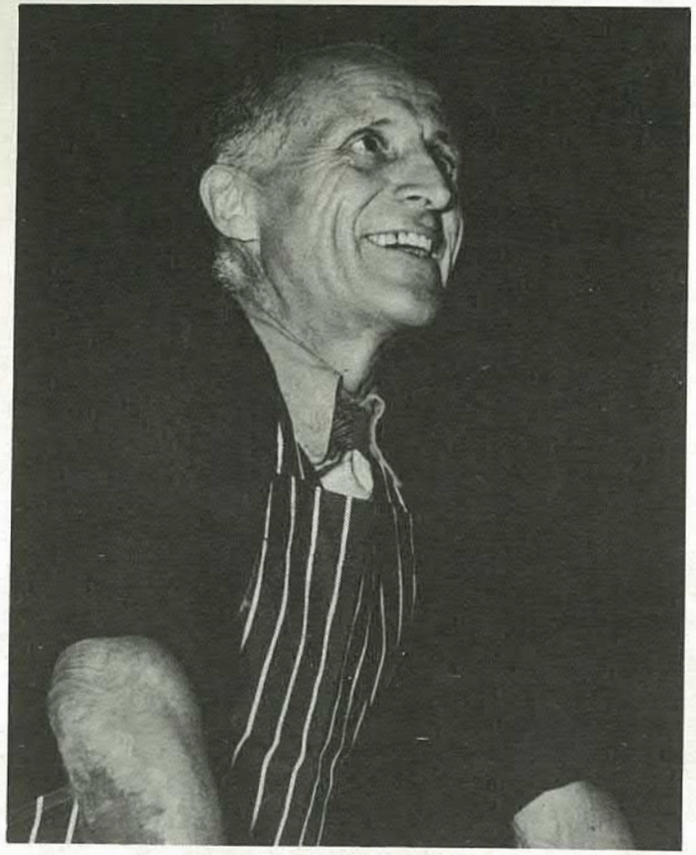
It must not be thought that we are so immersed in making domestic pieces that we devote our time solely to this. Side by side with making the standard shapes, everyone working in the pottery has the right, and the responsibility, to develop his own work, and evening and weekends

see the pottery busy with this aspect of our lives. Living, as we do here, with mountain, forest, river, and sea all in views from the studio working windows, and our materials to hand — clays from Puramahoe, Hyde and Kakahu — feldspars from the Baton Saddle, the Sherry River and Motueka River, and silica sands, ilmenite sands, calcite, dolomite, magnesite, iron ore and Uranite, for glazes, all these things, as well as the whole impact of our life here, help to shape, determine, and refine our work.

At present there are seven of us working together. If the number increases it will be by an organic growth that springs naturally from the needs of the pottery. Peggy and I assume that our job as leaders of what is promising to become a very able pottery team, is to keep alive its original inspiration, set high standards of design and craftsmanship, and watch over these things very carefully. We are careful to keep a balanced group and to this end have set our faces against temporary students joining us for a few weeks or months. There are always adjustments to be made when a new member joins and it is disturbing when one leaves. So we try to build the team up of potters whose intention it is to stay with us. It is our fortune that so far no one has left us. We enjoy the companionship of our fellow potters in Nelson and there is open house at Waimea Pottery for all seriously-intentioned potters who come past our doors.

Jack Laird

Jack Laird and Royce McGlashen stacking the biscuit kiln trolley.



Cardew at work.

MICHAEL CARDEW

Michael Cardew (b. 1901) early took an interest in pottery when his father took him to visit a country pottery at Fremington, near Barnstaple, England. While an undergraduate at Oxford (where he spent four years) he spent his vacations at this pottery learning to throw. One of his outstanding characteristics is to make rather than to reason, and he reacted from the world of the classical scholar and in 1924 joined Bernard Leach at the pottery at St. Ives, where he remained for three years, working on the rediscovery of the technique of English slipware.

In 1926 he bought a traditional pottery (closed since 1915) at Winchcombe, and with the help of one of the former workers, Elijah Comfort, learnt to fire the great round up-draught kiln, and to make household earthenware pots in quantity. These were jugs, bowls, casseroles, teapots, baking dishes and large cider and beer jars fitted with wooden spigots, lead-glazed and decorated with trailed or combed slip. At first these were light golden in colour, but later he used more black slip, often decorated with a trailing of white slip, and towards the end of his time at Winchcombe he introduced copper green.

Of Cornish origin, he always wished to return to his native county, and in 1939 he left the Winchcombe pottery in the hands of Raymond Finch, who had worked there with him, and settled at Wenford Bridge near Bodmin in Cornwall. Here he built a new kiln, and at first experimented with tin-glazed earthenware, but became increasingly interested in stoneware. War and a return for a period of work at Winchcombe interrupted his experiments, and in 1942 he accepted the post of pottery instructor at Achimota College in the Gold Coast, where as teacher he followed K. S. Murray and Harry Davis, both former St. Ives pupils. The school was closed three years later, however, and accepting a grant of money instead of a return passage to England, Cardew moved with a few of his African students to Vumé-Dugame on the Volta river, seventy miles from Accra. This village was known for its large unglazed red earthenware pots, but wheel and kiln were unknown. Using only the local materials available, he built a kiln and wheel, and began making stoneware pots which were unique in their colour and decoration because of the peculiar combination of clay and glaze ingredients. Cardew went to Vumé to make pots, not to teach the local potters: if they cared to benefit from their observation of his methods the knowledge was freely available.

In 1949 Cardew returned to Wenford Bridge where he re-organised the pottery and rebuilt the kiln to take stoneware with an increasingly scientific approach from the knowledge gained in West Africa. But England could not hold him for long, and in 1950 he accepted an appointment as Pottery-Officer to the Commerce and Industries Department of Nigeria. In 1951 a Pottery Training Centre was set up at Abuja, in the Northern region of Nigeria, and Michael Cardew was put in charge. By April 1952 the first buildings were ready and the first four trainees taken. The site is laid out so that all the processes for making pottery and glazes can be done. There are areas for preparing clay, two main workshops complete with footdriven potters' wheels, a drying room and a damp room for use in the dry season. The main kiln is housed in a round hut of traditional design. It is a round down-draught kiln

The kiln.

Photos Peter Stichbury.

with four fireboxes, about six feet across inside, and five feet high. The second and third chambers are outside and form the chimney, being connected to the main chamber by an underground flue. The large second chamber is used to fire the biscuit ware, water coolers and locally made bricks. The small third chamber above this is chiefly used for the roasting or calcining of raw materials. Next to the kiln is a long open shed, to keep the firewood dry in the rainy season.

The firing lasts for about 30–34 hours, and takes about four days to cool. The chief kinds of pottery made are: teapots of all sizes, coffee pots, jugs, tea cups and saucers, beer mugs, plates, dishes and bowls, cooking pots with covers, also large jars with screw stoppers for oil. Large oval dishes for food are made on moulds, and there are also glazed beads and buttons — placed on a bed of sand in the small spaces between the larger pots.

The training provided at Abuja is based on the old idea of apprenticeship: that a skilled trade or industry can best be learnt where the work is being produced for daily needs and for sale to the public; so it is not like an ordinary school but more like a large workshop for production. In addition to the learners who come from other towns for a four years course there is now a small group or team of permanent Abuja people, who are mastering the intricacies of a new industry. These men are the backbone of the pottery, they ensure that there is continuity in production, and the beginnings of a new tradition. Thus when a new trainee comes to Abuja, he can see from the beginning how the work has to be done, and all the permanent pottery workers become his instructors.

But as Michael Cardew says, it is easier to write a simple account of what is being done than to answer the more important question of "Why do we do it?"

In his own words: "In pottery, as in art, it is a case of all or nothing. Either you have the root of the matter in you, or you have not. . . . Pottery is not a fine art like painting or sculpture, but it has an element of art in it, and this helps to decide its fate in the eyes of the user. What is this root of the matter which one either has or does not have, which gives the work that element of universality which is called Style?

"The question is important because style, the standard in art, is more subtle than any industrial standard, and quite as difficult to achieve; and it is applied just as rigorously. If a teapot is not good enough in design it will fail just as surely as an electrical or engineering component which does not come up to specification.

"It is impossible to decide by any formula or words what makes the difference between good and bad art, and even if it were possible, it still would not take us much nearer to producing good work.

"Some have asserted that the key is Love , because true love is the most concentrated satisfaction of the self combined with the most complete abdication of the self. . . .

"By a natural reaction, others try to dogmatise along a more practical line, saying 'Work' is the only answer. I once heard a great art teacher tell his West African pupil 'Work is the meaning of life, there is no other meaning.' But this also will not quite do, because the word Work, like Love, has been too often profaned to mean 'That which one has to do and does not like doing.'

"The most satisfying word on this subject has been said, in almost mystical language, by a modern Japanese philosopher, Soetsu Yanagi:

> 'When you are doing your work, you and work are two different things. But when you become the work itself, and do the work, or in other words, when the work itself is doing the work, true work becomes possible. Will it not be possible to say, that all beautiful work is the work done by the work itself? When this state has been reached, a true work deserving the name has been done.'

"For practical potters the conclusion seems to be: Train yourself to be a channel for the racial genius; for it is a paradoxical fact that the most purely national art has always been the most universally accepted art.

"Nigerian traditional potters have a great gift for clay-work, although the technical standards are primitive. If some of this skill can be led into a channel where it will produce articles of a technical standard which is acceptable to modern habits of life, you will have not merely our old friend 'a valuable secondary industry' but an industry which is a true expression of the national style, producing a ware of which Nigerians can be proud and which the rest of the world will recognise and perhaps admire. 'Why do it?' is therefore an important question. The answer is: Because Nigeria is, or should be, a Nation. A nation's prosperity must always depend chiefly on its major products and industries. Groundnuts, cocoa, palm produce — without these Nigeria could not continue to be. But the smaller industries, based on the natural resources of the country, growing out of the innate genius of the people, and in turn nourishing and enlarging that genius — it is the wealth and variety of these that give a nation its stability and its character, and like the work of its writers, artists and musicians, contribute to the respect in which it is held by its neighbours."

In June 1965 Michael Cardew left Abuja Pottery Training Centre for the last time to return to Wenford Bridge Pottery in England and settle down to finish writing his book on Pioneer Pottery. It is our good fortune that an invitation to lecture in Oregon, Canada, next year, has led him to consider coming on to New Zealand, his interest in our country fostered by his friendship with Peter Stichbury, Ray Chapman-Taylor and Colin Bailey.

Peter Stichbury says: "The thing I admired most about Michael Cardew was his directness and honesty and enthusiasm as a

potter. In his own words he would have **hated** to be a lawyer, doctor or some such professional man, and he just delighted in direct, lively potting — direct decoration (mainly slip) carried on I feel from his earthenware. His pots are not really sophisticated, rather they are unpretentious. I remember some of his huge oil jars, sent to London for exhibition, one in particular with a glaze as deep and rich as one could want. I am sure he did not like the idea of too exact repetitive throwing, and this is how he keeps the vitality in his pots — each is interpreted anew as he makes it." Ray Chapman-Taylor says: "Michael Cardew was at the Jos Museum, Nigeria, wher I visited it in November 1963. He had been supervising the building of a fine new pottery there and was full of life and enthusiasm. A few days later I visited him again at Abuja, and bought a few jugs and beer mugs from him — very pleasant pots in the well known stoneware tradition. They might have been made in Japan, Cornwall or New Zealand."

Helen Mason

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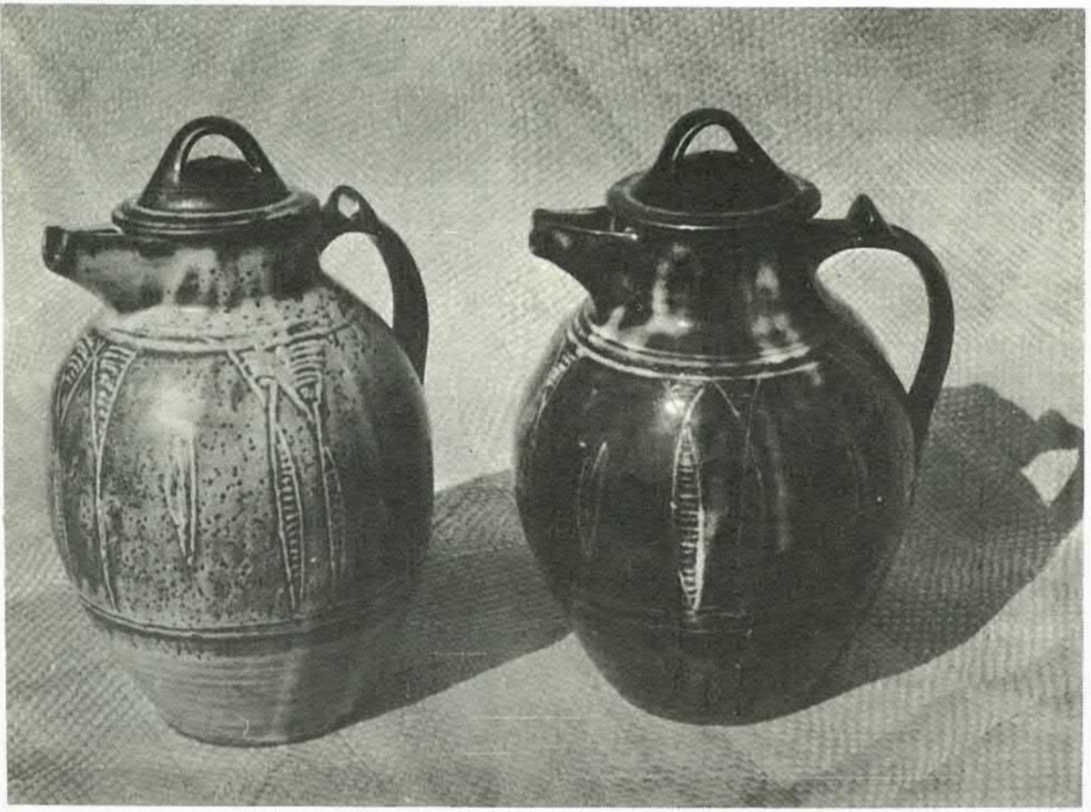
'Nigeria' No. 52, 1956. A Quarterly Magazine published by the Federal Government at the Exhibition Centre, Marina, Lagos.

'A Chronicle of Abuja': African Universities Press Lagos, 1962.

'Artist-Potters in England' by Muriel Rose, Faber & Faber 1955.

Photos Peter Stichbury.

Cardew pots made at Abuja.



ART AND CRAFT SHOPS

The growing number of attractive and well-run craft shops throughout the country are a great help to the potter in disposing of his pots. They make a valuable contact point with the public for a sympathetic saleswoman can make the buyer aware of the effort and skill that goes into the making of crafts. We list below some of the shops known to us and would like to hear from more:

Levin

"Have you considered a show room where artists in this area could display their goods?" This casual remark by a friend while Mr. and Mrs. Fisher were planning the building of some new shops led to the opening of "The Vista", showroom and gallery in Oxford Street, Levin, where pottery, handcraft and paintings by leading New Zealand artists are displayed. Opened in September, 1965, the first few months brought visitors from all over New Zealand and from many parts of the world. Many have commented on the high standard of craftsmanship and have offered congratulations on the general setting and layout.

Taupo

William Hindmarsh, who is working up an excellent business in garments made from deerskin suede, is also selling pottery and handwoven woollen pullovers made from homespun. His shop is opposite the Post Office. The New Zealand Handcraft Gallery, near the Lake Hotel in Tuwharetoa Street, stocks a wide range of crafts of high standard.

Hamilton

Devon Art Depot in Victoria Street has for many years carried good stocks of New Zealand pottery and has done much to encourage many a struggling potter to work harder.

Cambridge

Mrs. Stephanie Vanoosten has just opened an Art Shop here with a wide range of craft work.

Whakatane

Here Mary Evatts runs "Floral Craft" — a Gallery and Florist Shop, with the help of her husband Bruce Evatts, who makes floral containers for Mary to use, as well as domestic ware. Mary says: "Our native plants, trees, flowers, even rocks, are so beautiful — why don't we use them in floral art much more?"

Christchurch

"Several Arts", 793 Colombo Street, run by potter Michael Trumic and his wife Victoria; this shop has helped greatly in building up goodwill towards and interest in the crafts. The exhibitions they put on periodically of one or two man shows have helped in the establishment of several potters.

"The Little Woodware Shop", 12 Victoria Street, sells paintings as well as crafts. The shop opened in December, 1965, and has a gallery upstairs for exhibitions.

Rotorua

Eric Scholes Gallery at Whakarewarewa shows New Zealand painting as well as pottery and handweaving.

Hastings

Kamaka Pottery (Bruce and Estelle Martin) has a showroom which is open on Thursdays only from 9.30 to 4.30 p.m. at 806 Karamu Road, Hastings.

Lower Hutt

The High Street Gallery at 93 High Street, Lower Hutt, carries a wide range of New Zealand made pottery as well as other crafts.

Carterton

"Turkey Red" Co-operative Cratt Shop in the High Street opens seasonally, then closes down to prepare fresh stocks as it is run by the craftsmen themselves. Open Saturdays as well as weekdays it attracts many people from the city.

10th Exhibition New Zealand Society of Potters

CANTERBURY SOCIETY OF ARTS GALLERY
DURHAM STREET CHRISTCHURCH
8 - 19 OCTOBER 1966

OFFICIAL OPENING : 8 OCTOBER AT 8 PM

Invitation tickets 10/- each. Send to Exhibition Secretary:
Mrs Beryl Lonsdale,
115 Dyers Pass Road, Christchurch 2

Complimentary tickets will be sent to Potters whose work is accepted for exhibition.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor,
Dear Madam,

I would be grateful for the opportunity to take issue, in your columns, with some comments by Miss Doreen Blumhardt in the February issue of the Potter. Miss Blumhardt quotes me as writing about Pop painting "You should stand or sit quietly in front, and hear what the painting has to say". In the first place this remark was not made about Pop painting (although it may well apply) but about certain abstract expressionist paintings in the James A. Michener Collection. To be more specific; about certain trends in modern painting apparent from those works. Secondly, I did not write that comment, but made it in conversation with a journalist — a very different thing.

I take the strongest possible exception to being quoted out of context and, further, to being used as a negative prop to Miss Blumhardt's personal prejudice towards one school of contemporary painting. In relation to the James A. Michener collection Miss Blumhardt is thoroughly misleading. Of the 40 works shown in New Zealand, only one could be described as Pop, James Dine's "'Four Coats". The bulk of the collection was representative of various stages in the development of American Abstract Expressionism and Abstract Impressionism. I cannot personally see how exposure to one of the most influential schools of post-war painting could "confuse the public".

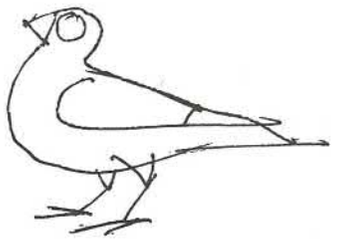
I thoroughly agree with Miss Blumhardt about the urgent need for public education in art. The first essential for this, however, would seem to be the existence of open minds among the educators. It would be a great pity if we were only to be offered art already digested for us. Surely the public should be equipped with some kind of facility to make their own decisions. How will this be done, if they are to be shown only those schools of painting some cultural censor has decided that they are allowed to see.

Yours faithfully,
Hamish Keith

The Editor,
Dear Madam,

I enjoyed your magazine so much as it had so much information, even in its advertisements, that one never really tires of it like other monthly magazines.
I also enjoyed the printing, paper and whole presentation. It is so refreshing, coming as it does from people who are also expressing refreshing ideas into our national life.
I remain,

With every good wish,
(Mrs) Frances E. Haste



CONTAINER AND CONTAINED

Pete Smith

Hands which can cup, press, mould,
hold a tool, can form containers
to help them. Hands which can dip
into water and lift brimming to
drink from can make and can use a
bowl, cup, glass, and will sense what
it contains: sense of cool water,
of wine, of hot scalding tea, smell
of coffee.

Watch a child carry a glass of water
aware of fullness, of what is in;
not just a glass, but glass of water.
When we see and feel a container we
form an image of its contents. When
I have found a shard, a small fragment
of Greek pottery lying in the hot dust
and smell of thyme in the hills of
Sicily, I have felt, wondered what has
been in this?

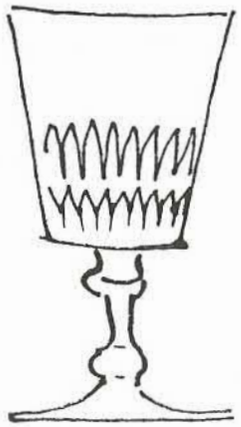
A container evokes what it contains.
It has rights of possession. . . .

Think of the names of containers.
Phials, amphoras, flasks.
Mortars, syringes, retorts.
Vats, urns, goblets, vessels.

Bells hang down and empty their sound.

In my house, which holds my family,
are many containers.
There is the big, green-glass wine
jar from Spain, safe in its plaited
cane cover, with twisted cane handles.
It holds three litres.

There is the coffee grinder from the
Spanish hardware shop in Benicarlo.



There is the coffee jar Barry Brickell made a long time
ago but we have lost the lid.

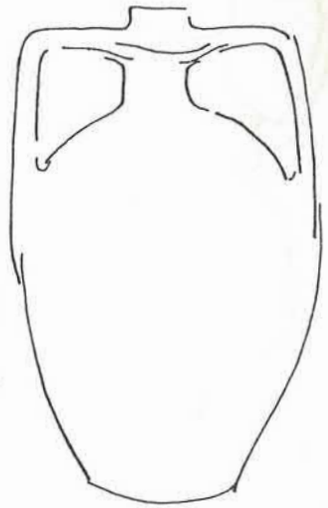
And Crown Lynn cups, green ones with white inside
which is just as well when you drink your coffee
black.

There are the glasses in the cupboard, some we bought from
the junk shop near Apt. The big heavy one for absinthe;
the oily liquid smokes into the iced water, cool grey. The
glass is very heavy in the hand, and sometimes cafes
use them for coffee.

The small ones have been cut, just a little, near the
base of the bowl and it makes the wine light up.

The best are the little common hand-blown ones,
quite thick and heavy between one's fingers,
always a little misshapen. I like the way the
shope of the wine is so apparent inside them.

There is a robust and satisfied brown jug
from the open market in Suresnes, Paris.
It has two lines of wheel-marked decoration
and an opalescent grey interior, and holds
four cups of coffee. It has rather a rump and sits.

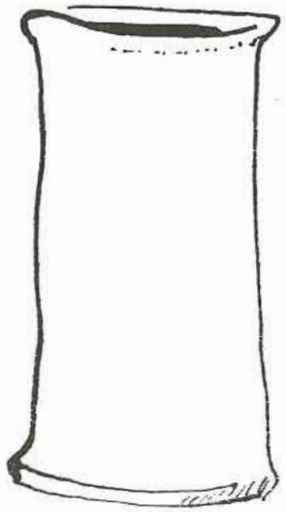


There is a Leach coffee pot, much more conscious
of origin. It keeps the coffee hot and looks as if it
would with its lid and the way it throats up at the top.

There is a Helen Mason jar, cylindrical. It holds a
substantial cylinder of water and sometimes has flowers
in it but not always. The edges are sharp. We are
very fond of it.

The green glass Spanish porron has a great
swelling base pregnant with wine, and the
great jutting spout narrowing to a tiny hole
jets the wine in a hard stream to the back of one's throat.

The little clear glass oil jar has spout blobbed on
and drawn out in a quick curve, then the glass is snapped
off in a clean break, and it doesn't drip.



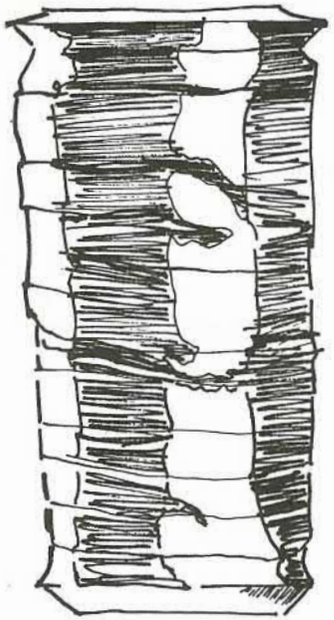
There are water jars from Sicily:
water is precious in this sun-assaulted
land, to be protected and valued and
carried from where it is to be found.

Big, bellied-out bodies to hold fullness.
Necks shutting in, and keeping out sun,
stopping spilling.

They rest easily across the hip when you
pour from them, and two hands can swing
them up from the ground.

These are a few. There are others:
bowls, dishes, saucepans, casseroles,
baskets, bottles, flagons, frypans.
I am startled to think how many
containers we have about us, to
contain something of value:
water, wine, coffee beans, oil,
stew, soup.

Something, glass, clay, fibre,
wood, has been wrapped around
something that needed to be kept.



What is some remarkable about clay is its versatile structure and character. It is a substance of the earth, a common part of experience, to be trodden on, to be exposed by running water, washed over, dissolving in a muddying stream, deposited; to dry out, solidify under the heat of the sun, yellow or grey or white or red stain and scar on the hillside, dust-dry in the heat of the sun, blown in the wind.

Abundant, carrying with it the imprint of weather, natural forces, man animal, bird, leaf, stone. Capable of being formed, pressed, moulded, altered, yet possessing its own characteristics : density, firmness, plasticity, texture, grain.

Able to be made fluid by the addition of water; a solution that will flow, pour, settle.

Able to be made plastic; of a consistency that will permit it to be moved into an infinite variety of shapes, or take an imprint, and hold the form given it, with extreme precision.

Able to be dried out, solidified, so that further movement is impossible, yet capable of being cut, scraped, incised, engraved.

What is miraculous is that subjected to fire it becomes like the parent rock again: permanent, substantial, impregnable. The mark of a leaf skeleton (fragile, delicate, transitory) can be imposed on the receptive clay and in the flame become ageless.

In a sense its versatility is its problem: the mind aware of its manifold potential may move too freely, superficially, taking the properties for granted. Perhaps in its use it needs a more alert supervision

than many other materials, for every finger-mark and tool mark will be discernible. It can reflect the making process very clearly. It is always necessary to remember what it is being used for.

Drawings by Pete Smith.

POTTERS

June in London

'After about two months of real bliss things here have gone rather flat. The main problems are (1) the pottery have got themselves such a big order that there is no firing for me for at least three months (in any case the firing is always under fired), it is terrible not to be able to have any control of the kiln — not even the loading, things are very roughly treated and some things actually broken. A young man, a brilliant potter, I think, teaches at the pottery (children on Sats.). He has just had an exhibition which had a mixed review in the art press (he fires at a privately owned stoneware kiln — no thank you, we don't have enough room for ourselves) and after working for 5 years he netted £200 and that he says he'll be lucky to get from the gallery under 6 months. He is a pupil of Lucie Rie and Hans Coper.'

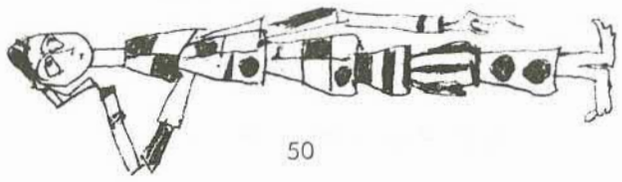
'In the art world everything is OP. You can't get away from it, OP sculpture in Battersea Park, OP art on materials, in stores, on furniture, on clothes, jewellery — everything. Plastic in a new 'wet' finish looks very high gloss — in suits and dresses and even short coats and jackets for men — they are called 'Syn' clothes — the whole place swings with decadent brilliance and I feel it is rather a fiddling while Rome burns, only it's electric guitars.'

'Chelsea is a hepped up Sydney King's Cross — actually I don't imagine there is a place like it in the world at the moment — morals are in flux, there are more boys dressed up like girls than you would bother to count, genius is 2 a penny and I am staggered by all the terrific, amazing talent everywhere — it's a bit like a brilliant flowering from a muck heap (the muck heap meaning also the terrible conditions most people live in, and the terrible expense of everything to eat, plums 9d. each, oranges 1/- to 1/6d. each, beef 14/- lb.'

'I went to the N.Z. House three times and each time the place was absolutely empty — none of the paintings were sold and I think they were as good as any I've seen. I think and I've done a lot of investigation, an art show to be a 'success" must have expensive promotion. One must manoeuvre round the right people and exhibit over a period of time, win prizes at Continental exhibitions and then like a good race horse make Ascot at last.'

From a letter by June Black. For illustrations, see 'Time' magazine, April 22, 1966.

Harry Davis, who has been on a teaching tour in Canada, left Halifax on the 16th June on the first stage of his homeward journey. In a short letter he exclaims at the 'astonishing experience of a late Canadian spring. For weeks the temperature only just staggered up to 32°F at noon, and went heaven knows where at night. On the 12th of May it was snowing in Toronto and yesterday in Detroit the temperature was 85°F (not three weeks apart).'



National Publicity Studios photo.

POTTERS

Len and Ruth Castle, together with their daughter Briar, left this country on June 12 by the "Oriana" for Honolulu, where Len will study at the University of Hawaii's workshops. During his stay he will give several seminars at the University as well as doing his own practical work. He also intends studying the collections of Pacific artifacts at the Bishop Museum, Honolulu, and hopes to contact the local potter Inoyue, of whose work he is an admirer. Early in July Len will hold an Exhibition at Joji's Gallery in Honolulu. From Hawaii he will move on to Japan, arriving in September. There he plans to visit Mashiko, working with the potter Shimaoka if possible, and then he will make for Kyoto, where he hopes to hire a kiln and workshop if such is possible. He would like to make contact with the younger potters of Japan, and also visit the traditional potteries at Hagi, Shigaraki and other places. Ruth Castle, meanwhile, will return to New Zealand with Briar in September until mid February when she will leave for Malaysia on a tour to investigate and observe the methods and techniques of basketmaking and the use of native materials. She plans to build up a teaching collection. From there she will meet up with Len in Japan, and they will travel back to New Zealand through the east. They are due back in New Zealand early in April 1967. This well-deserved sabbatical year has been made possible for Len through the granting of an Arts Fellowship by the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council.

POTTERS

Peter Hoey, from Letchworth, Hertfordshire, has come out to work with John Lawrence of Pahiatua. Now aged twenty-one, he won a County Major Award after leaving school and took a pre-Diploma course in Fine Arts at Luton School of Art. From there he went on to Camberwell School of Art, studying industrial design and silversmithing as well as pottery. After leaving Camberwell he did research work in Paris for three months. On his return to England he worked in a rose plantation in order to save enough money to come to New Zealand.

Peter says: "My work as a potter, in England, has been conducted in the sphere of the art school. It was at Luton School of Art that I began to specialise in pottery, that is to say, pottery became the main medium as opposed to my previous art studies and subsequently related mediums. I developed a 'style' and technique during a further period of study in London.

"My first tutor was John Lawrence. John gave me an excellent basis of attitude and technique. It was John who helped me to discover myself and synthesize all these vast fields of expression into at least a more eclectic range of vision.

"The conflicts that arose due to various traditions caused me to explore a large range of techniques, studio and industrial.

"While in London I studied with Hans Coper, Lucie Rie, and Ian Auld, together with other potters of repute. It was immensely stimulating to work with craftsmen of this stature.

"Although their craftsmanship and teaching was of immense advantage to me I was consciously aware of having tried to steer a distinct path through the inevitable influences and recognised qualities of their work. A tectonic attitude that I acquired might be symptomatic of the current European approach to the arts.

"While not mistaking the means for the ends, the use of techniques like coiling; slab-building; free-modelling; pressed shapes; casting; or a combination of two or more, has become a rewarding answer to the problems of expression, if not to the problem of the modern potter and his wheel.

"I tend to turn to nature and the environment for help rather than inwards, i.e. the essentials; wood; metals; stones; fruit and vegetables; shells; flora and fauna; in fact, the whole array of shapes and forms one encounters. It is upon these that I feed for the clues to the sort of shapes that I want to make; an attempt at an identification between these tangibles and creative instincts.

"There is a preference for pure surface qualities of the natural fired clay, particularly in reduction firings, with applications of raw oxides, or a combination of oxides and glaze; a reliance upon a tactile surface and the shape for interest. In essence a kind of naturalism, to put it naively, but not in the sense of the Martin brothers' approach or as a revulsion to the 'mechanical'. Indeed studio pottery is hardly ever mechanical in the industrial interpretation of the word. There is, however, an underlying basis, if somewhat concealed, of the study of architecture, silversmithing, applied design and applied ceramics with an inescapable 'in-taught' commercial attitude to all my work.

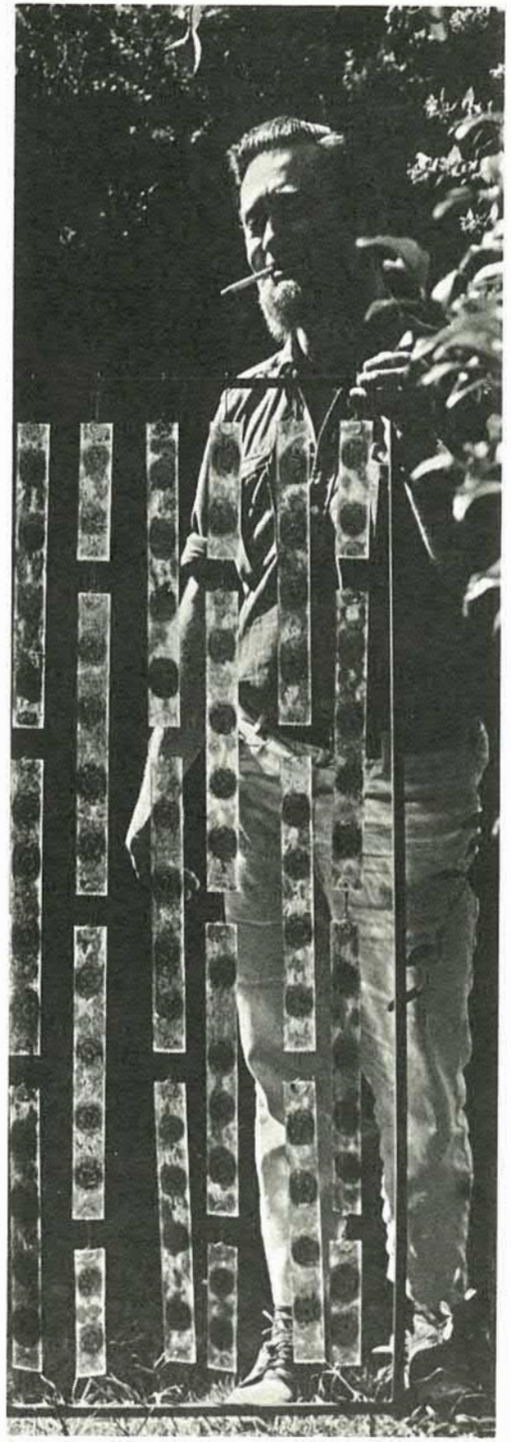
"I am the product of the combination of enlightened modern studio potters and the trend in the British Art School system towards an emphasis on 'good design'."

Val Hunt, a New Zealand potter who worked with Jim Nelson at Hanmer, is now living and working at Stoke-on-Trent, England. He attends a Ceramic College for part of the time and spend the rest of the week working at the Royal Doulton factory at Burslem. One of the lecturers at the College has persuaded Doultons to aid his training by shifting him round every few months. At present he is handmaking earthenware flatware, before he moves on to another department in the factory.

Terry Barrow has now settled into and enjoying life in Hawaii. He says "Bernard Leach passed through here on the 5 May. Joy and I met him with Francis Haar (who does those excellent photographic books on Japan) and we went to lunch at Waikiki. Bernard just managed to squeeze into my Datsun! Late in the afternoon we took him back to the airport where a good number of the University ceramics people were gathered to greet him. Bernard is in very good shape and we did have a delightful talk. He is a great talker and very amusing." Terry plans to go to Japan for a month, leaving Honolulu early in August, and in September Hamada is expected to pass through Hawaii.

Peter Bruce Dick, who will be remembered as a young Englishman who caught the pottery virus from Case and Nancy Beck in this country some years ago, is now established in his own pottery in England — the Coxwold Pottery, Station Farm, Coxwold, York. After leaving New Zealand he worked for a year at Abuja in Africa with Michael Cardew, then back to England for some down to earth training in a country workshop with Ray Finch at Winchcombe. Two years ago he married Jill (another potter) and then a year ago they began work on the converting of a group of derelict farm buildings they were able to purchase at Coxwold. First of all they made a flat out of a granary and open cart shed — part of a fine stone barn. The other half is the main kiln room. They have been producing pots since last October — slip ware fired to cone 1A in an electric kiln designed and built by themselves. This is 8 cubic feet built up from the ground, top loading with a pair of ciment fondu slabs over the top. They had to wind the elements themselves but it worked out quite cheaply — about £60. As soon as possible, however, they want to build a 60 cubic feet wood kiln and branch out into more interesting work.

Frank Finan says: "I chose Mexico when I went overseas in 1964 for, saturated as we were by Japanese influence in our ceramics, I thought Mexico offered hope of new experience on the other side of the Pacific. As far as pottery was concerned I was to be a little disillusioned, finding that stoneware was just being discovered and that the standard of both this and the traditional earthenware (with one or two notable exceptions) was very low. In some of the art schools stoneware is being made with all the worst of 'popular' United States influence — over decoration, pretentious grecian forms, lack of function, the lot. I spent some months teaching in one such school, the 'Escuela de Diseno y Artesanias' in Mexico City. Ironically enough, there I demonstrated Leach and Japanese techniques of stoneware production, because I felt strongly that they badly needed such worthy standards of function and sensibility. It is a sad fact that few good pottery books are translated into Spanish. As the school I built a small salt glaze oil fired kiln (nobody here had heard of salt glaze, not even in industry). Most of their kilns are fired with butane gas, which is cheap, and I discovered that these kilns could produce some beautiful celadons, burning as they do with a clean sulphur-free reduction. This school, spacious and well-equipped, was set up originally to provide opportunity for the talented poor. However, it has now become more of a refuge for the dilettante sons and daughters of the better off social groups. The teaching system took some getting used to, all the maestros are specialists. Some throw but know nothing of firing or glazing, others know only glazing. Indeed, the maestro in charge of the department established himself as a potter by employing two Indian boys to do the throwing for him while he glazed and signed the resulting pots. However, this sort of thing is considered quite ethical here, stemming from the old master pupil system, which is still in practice.



So much for the school, nevertheless there is still some hope, for two districts I visited, at Puebla and Oaxaca, are still making worthwhile earthenware. However, a tour of the Museums seems to show a down grading in the contemporary pots, under the onslaught of tourism.

One of the most promising stoneware potters is Jorge Wilmott of Guadalajara. Jorge has done a lot of research into the designs of old Mexico, both the pre-Columbian and the Hispano-Moresque, which was brought by the Spaniards, accepted by the Indians, and later lost. He has managed to reintroduce these beautiful designs to his Indian staff of about eighteen, who have developed their own sympathetic interpretation.

In return for building a couple of kilns and assisting in developing some bodies and glazes for him Jorge gave me this very fine group of prehispanic pots and sculpture from his large collection. They are mostly from the tombs around Jalisco and are about 700–1000 years old.

How wonderful it is to have troubadours and poets entertaining you on the bus going to work or singing in the street or café without fear of arrest.

I kept getting the feeling in some Mexican towns of being in something like the medieval period of Europe. Some scenes brought to mind the paintings of Breughel, such as a funeral parlour opening wide on the street — as I pass they are gently lowering a body into a coffin — when I pass by again a few minutes later I am amazed to see children playing beneath it. They accept life and death as obvious inevitables. Thus on All Souls' Day, or "Day of the Dead", they eat and play with symbols of death such as candle skulls, death's head cakes and skeleton masks, all to show their contempt and yet respect for death.

It was in Mexico that I came in contact with what has become my new diversion, a technique for working stained textured glass. Since returning all my time has been devoted to experimenting with this medium, which, like ceramics, seems to have unlimited possibilities for lights, room dividers, wall panels, sculpture, etc. These I feel have great scope in architecture and interior design.

Frank Finan with stained textured glass.
Prehispanic pots and sculptures from Jalisco region, Photos Marti Friedlander.

I was truly reluctant to leave Mexico — the organ grinders; balloon sellers; the street vendors each with his own distinctive whistle to let the dwellers behind high walls know what particular line he has for sale, whether he has Tamales or is a sharpener of knives; the glorious colours; all this atmosphere that unfortunately we seem only to find associated with poverty

My long term plans are to build a workshop area big enough to house a large stoneware kiln, a kiln for glass blowing and processing, and possibly one for bronze castings. This workshop could work as a school for industrial design students, but mainly as a centre of co-operation between architects and craftsmen in the larger dimensions of structural design.

General view of Sigatoka site.

POTTERY FROM A FIJIAN EXCAVATION

Lawrence and Helen Birks

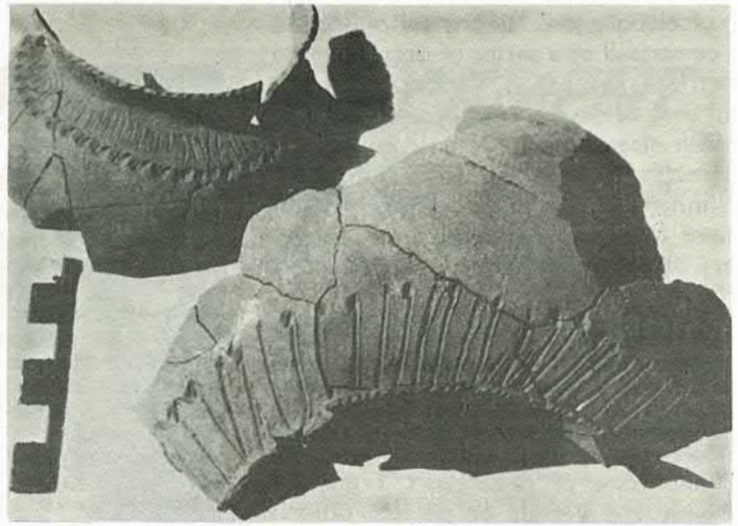
The windswept slope is littered with potsherds. Today the place is bare and unfrequented, and rollers from the open Pacific pound a sandy beach unprotected by the usual coral reef. Behind the beach rise high dunes, the sand over much of the surface constantly on the move. The site has, nevertheless, attracted human settlement or at least periodic occupation on three (or possibly more) occasions in the past, the first taking place probably centuries before the rise of Imperial Rome.

It has also provided evidence that could make it one of the most important archaeological sites in the Pacific, as the three successive occupations were almost certainly widely separated in time and were perhaps not even of the same cultural origin. In addition, the pottery fragments recovered by excavation are, so far as is known, unique for a Pacific site in being capable of assembly to form a series of vessels of recognisable size, shape and decorative pattern.

This should give some idea of the work done by the writers during the latter part of 1965 when engaged in archaeological investigations in the lower Sigatoka Valley on the south coast of the main Fijian island of Viti Levu. Of the two sites excavated, by far the more important was near the river mouth. Here the slope of the dunes facing the sea had been eroded by the action of the trade wind, which is gradually blowing away the semi-compacted sand to reveal a succession of ancient soil horizons. These represent periods when the dune surface has temporarily stabilised and a vegetative cover has become established. The organic material thus produced has left discernible traces in the form of roughly parallel darker bands that can be followed (with considerable difficulty in places) for about a quarter of a mile along the face of the dunes. In this darker material may be found the relics of the vanished inhabitants, almost exclusively pottery, since minerals in the sand and centuries of tropical rains have combined to destroy wood, bone and shell, and stone artifacts have been regrettably few.

Activities began again on the same site in June 1966, but last year the main attention was given to the earliest level of occupation, which produced pottery with a decorative treatment similar to that on sherds excavated in New Caledonia, where a date of 846 B.C. was provided by radiocarbon analysis. However, sufficient work was done on the other two levels to show that the pottery from the three occupations exhibited differences indicating separate pottery traditions.

Thus, while pots from levels two and three have clearly been made by the paddle and anvil method, those from earlier level one



Two partly assembled pots from middle level.

suggest a coiling and scraping technique, with decoration confined to lips and rims, and the occasional use of a red slip or dye. The most prominent characteristic of pottery from the second level is the decoration of the body by a carved paddle, resulting in an impressed pattern usually of rectangles or lozenges. Sherds from the comparatively few vessels found so far on the third level are without decoration of any kind. An unusual and interesting feature of the pottery assemblage from the earliest occupation consists of fragments of pottery objects that are obviously not vessels, all different in shape and size, though some appear to have a general resemblance to one another. Some may be stands for pots, either during firing, when over a cooking fire, or when stored after use. However, the specimen so far most completely assembled suggests use as a brazier, being of cylindrical shape with a projecting lug and a crescentic portion out of the rim.

The decoration on a small proportion of first level vessels is similar to that on wares from New Caledonia and elsewhere in the Pacific, where it has achieved a high level of elaboration. It consists of incised lines composed of a series of dots, forming geometrical shapes in various combinations, and achieves a sophistication not met with elsewhere in Oceanic pottery. It is interesting to note that some authorities see similarities between the finely-made wares of this early period and the Jomon pottery of ancient Japan.

Though processing of material from the site is as yet far from complete, sufficient has been done to indicate that the products of the early occupation are superior in technique of manufacture, variety of design, and style of decoration. From the first level 106 vessels or pottery objects have been noted with a wide variety in shape and size, these include a water-bottle type with burnished exterior, as well as lids or covers, and a well-made handle.

The almost perfect state of preservation of excavated fragments testifies to the excellent workmanship of the ancient potters of Fiji. These fragments are sometimes no more than an eighth of an inch in thickness but most of them have edges sharp enough to fit together (given sufficient time and patience—) to restore the exact shape of the vessel as it came from the fire so many centuries ago. This tradition, though dying out as a result of the impact of the modern world, still survives in some Fijian villages. In one of these, not even in a remote area, we saw the whole process of manufacture and firing. The methods employed were almost certainly those of the people who made the later period pots we dug from under the dunes. Both form links with the dim beginnings of pottery technique, and a tradition that has endured virtually unchanged for many thousands of years.

Fragments of lid or cover from first occupation level.

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