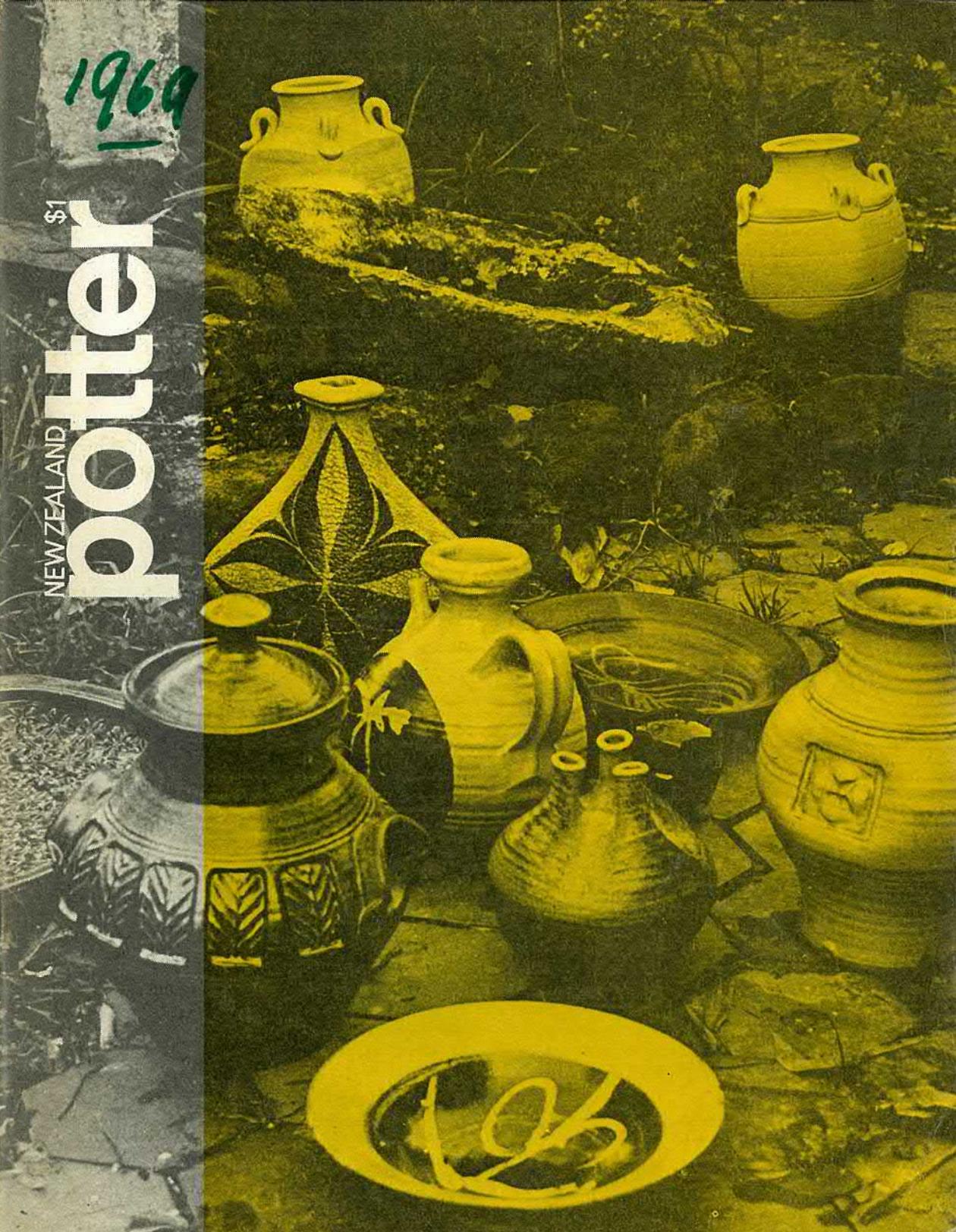


1969

NEW ZEALAND
\$1
potter



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VOLUME 11/2 SPRING 1969

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FRONT COVER

The photograph on the cover shows a selection of the 200 pots from Warren Tippett's recent one man exhibition held at the New Vision Gallery, Auckland.

'Warren Tippett's work is marked by the variety of his decorative effects and the fact that as a young potter he seriously continues to work toward an original style, making a great deal of highly competent work on the way though sacrificing a little grace in the effort to be vigorous.' T. J. McNamara.

Photo by Marti Friedlander

NEW ZEALAND potter

editorial . . .

The history of artists and craftsmen working in ceramic materials for buildings is almost as old as the history of architecture itself. In this issue we are looking at the contribution being made by ceramists and potters to architecture of our time.

There is considerable evidence of small artist craftsmen producing applied decoration for buildings in New Zealand. However the bulk of ceramic material for our buildings is produced today by factories so far the factory produced functional items like bricks, tiles, hand basins and so on, have not captured the imagination of artist-orientated ceramists.

If one of the by-products of a general public awareness of good design in pottery is going to be dissatisfaction with bad design in our environment, then the time could well arrive when industry will need to consult with the craftsman who has never lost touch with the basic disciplines of his materials. It is however possible for the craftsman to knock on the door of industry before waiting for industry to come to him. In line with this spirit we have included a brief account of the work of Italian potter Nino Caruso, who is designer to a ceramics factory.

New Zealand has a strong body of potters whose work has become known internationally. We also have the raw materials, in fact we are exporting them. We have then, all the ingredients necessary for a strongly design-oriented architectural ceramics industry whose products would find export markets.

Ceramics in architecture

Nino Caruso typifies a new breed of European potter. He accepts that since 99 per cent of ceramic materials used in buildings today must of economic necessity be factory made, he will make a more significant impact on the design of the buildings we live in by working with the factory. He says 'Ceramics in architecture is an economic problem and this is why it is necessary that artists are connected with industry.'

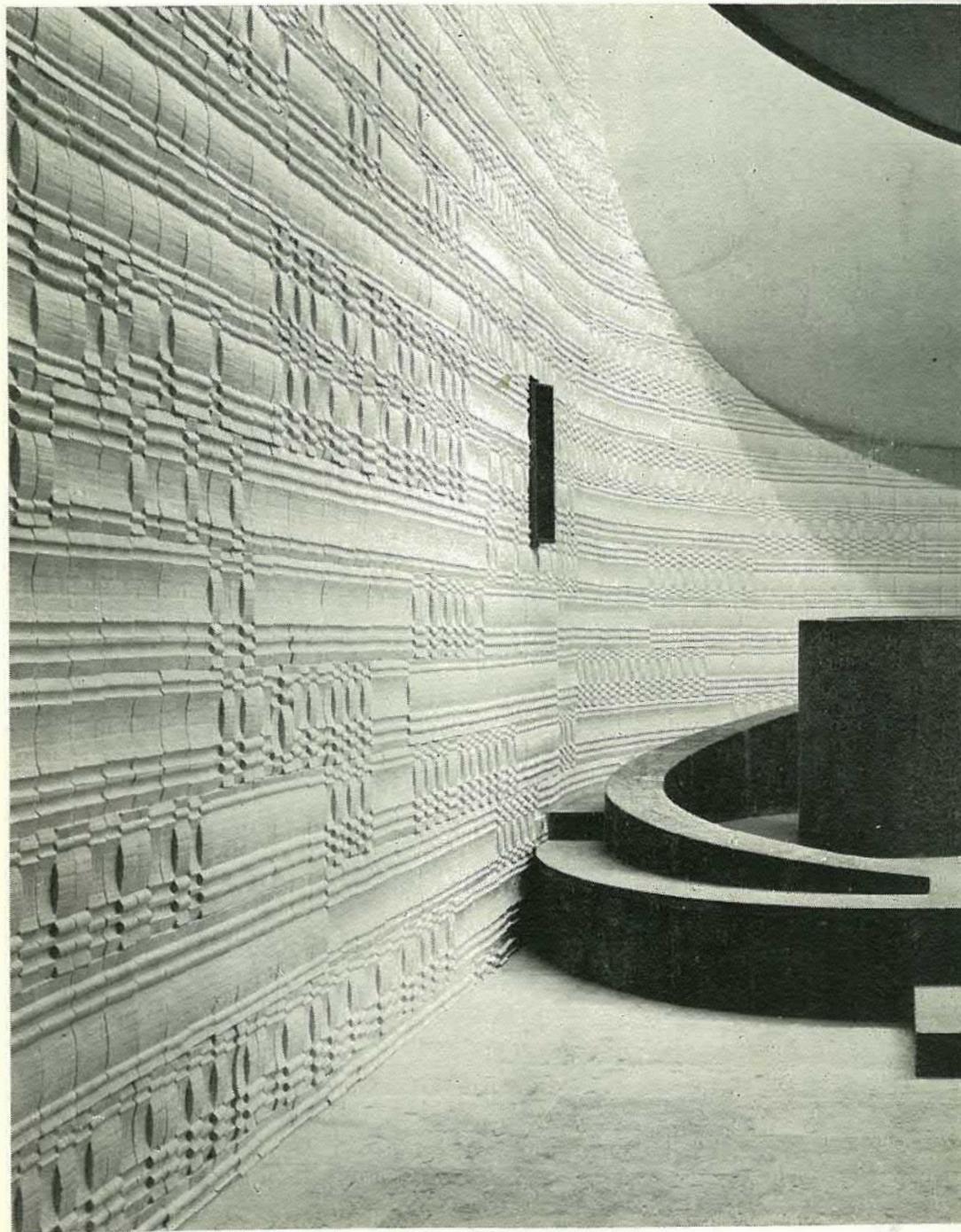
Nino Caruso, sculptor, ceramist and designer has received many prizes in his own country Italy, and is represented by works in museums and private collections abroad. He is closely associated with a ceramics industry C.A.V.A. (Ceramic Artistica Vietri Antico) which has its modern factory in Cava dei Tirreni in Salerno, Italy. Cava dei Tirreni belongs to the region where in the past many ceramics shops run by capable craftsmen flourished. The C.A.V.A. industry arose from this tradition, and is perhaps the only one that still produces floor and wall tiles reproducing old drawings of the authentic Vietri and Neopolitan school, always respecting the spirit and the artistic heritage of the past.

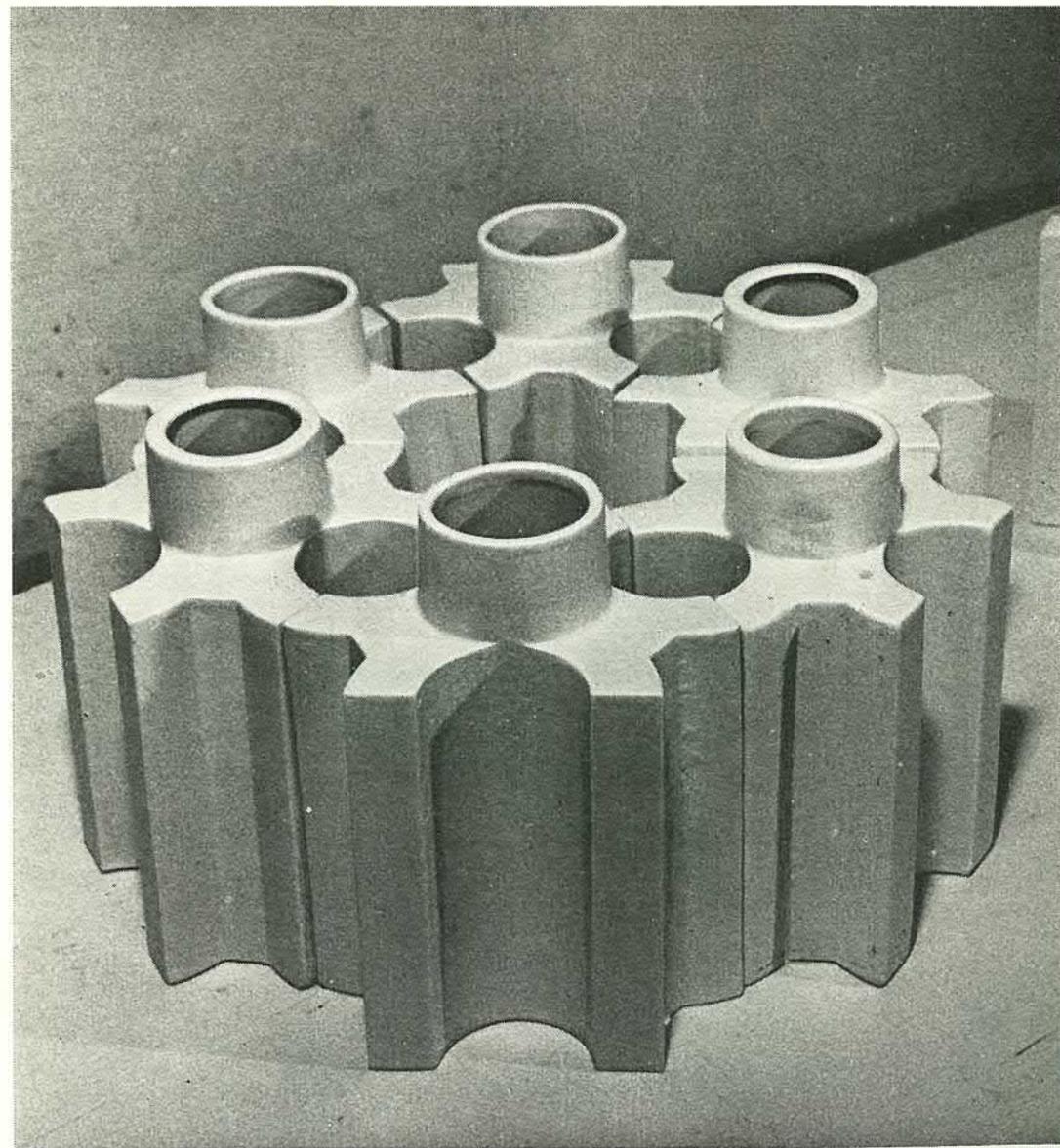
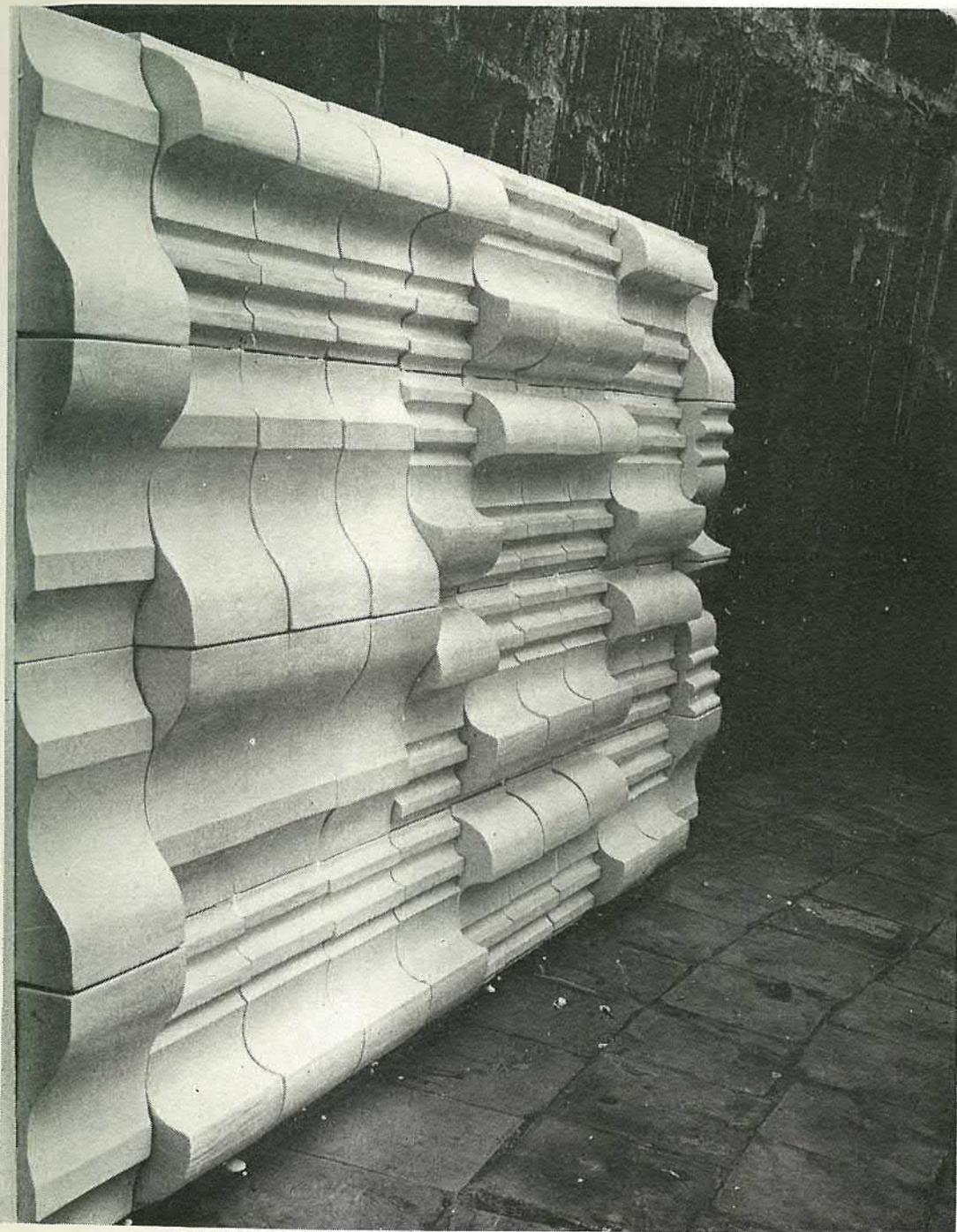
The C.A.V.A. industry, aware of the ever changing pattern of our society, has created a lively and up-to-date research organisation staffed by highly specialised people to study and solve the problems of production and find the needs of today's consumer.

In Italy commissions for work are obtained mainly through architects. Nino Caruso finds it necessary to stimulate contacts between architects, artists, builders and ceramic industries so that each should fully understand the needs and abilities of the other.



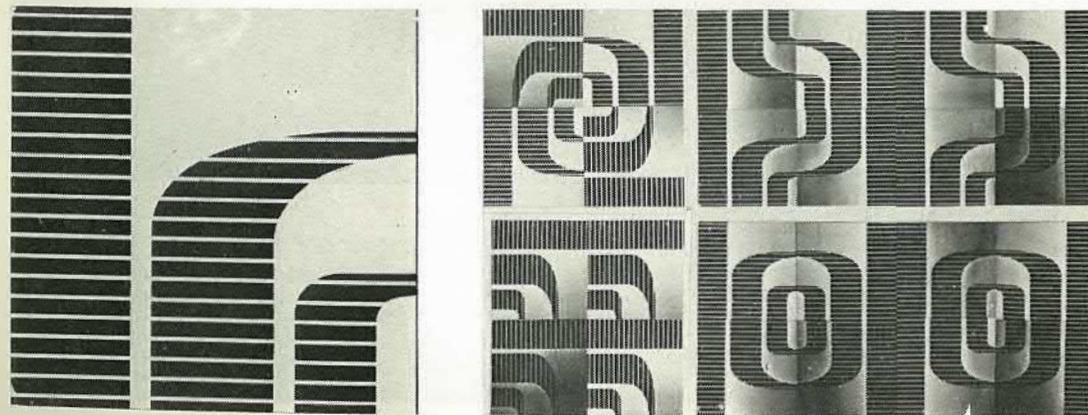
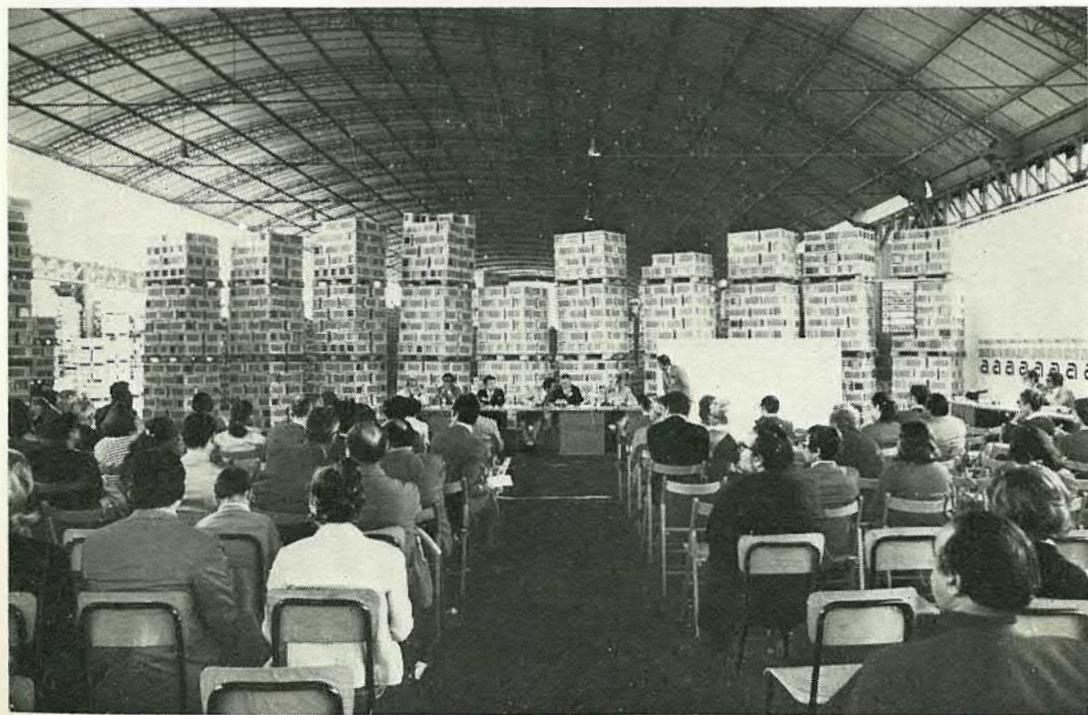
Above, Nino Caruso. Opposite, white ceramic wall tiles for the Evangelical and Methodist church of Savona, Italy. The positive and negative relief gives a rich and changing texture. The tiles were designed by Nino Caruso and made by Ceramica CAVA.





*Above, these vases which can be used separately or together are also designed by Nino Caruso and made by Ceramica CAVA. They are 20cm high, made by slip casting and fired 980°C with a matt white glaze. The modules for wall decoration, **opposite**, made by the same process, are 30 x 20 x 7 cm.*

In June an international seminar on ceramics in architecture was held at Salerno, Italy. The major sponsors were CAVA Ceramics Industries with backing from artists, manufacturers, universities and government. The main object—to obtain information from the assembly of so many qualified and experienced people to improve the production and application of ceramics in architecture. **Below**, pallets of boxed tiles formed a sculptural background for the seminar held in the ceramics factory. **Bottom**, a competition was run in conjunction with the seminar. This prizewinning entry was designed by M M Garrault of France. **Opposite**, a ceramic sculpture by Nino Caruso—of coiled construction.



The potter's role in buildings

— an architect's viewpoint

by Ian Athfield

I see the potter essentially as a traditional craftsman—a person using and understanding clay, making earthenware vessels. When a potter seeks work outside this field he either becomes a clay sculptor, or a ceramics technician; both playing completely different roles.

The potter being a utilitarian craftsman plays an integral part in everyday life. His work should be seen in every household, every garden and every building. This same opportunity does not exist with pure art forms such as sculpture and painting. The potter's challenge comes, as does that of the architect, from the ever changing needs of our society and the development of new materials and techniques. These factors demand solutions to new problems and new solutions to old problems; in short new buildings—and new pots.

The limitations and the qualities of the materials a potter is working with have been known for centuries, but the pressures of an industrialised world have been with him for a century at the longest. The beauty I see in pottery is the imperfection of a hand produced item, and the potter who discards an article because of a crack, or a glaze imperfection, infuriates me as much as does an architect who patches up bony concrete or laquers brass.

When creating pots for a particular building it is essential that the potter understands what the building designer

is doing, and it is equally important that he does not try to compete. The same can be said of the designer. He must respect the potter, painter or sculptor he is working with. The question of complete harmony between designers, artists and craftsmen remains one of education. Each individual must know and understand his role and the limitations of the materials he is using and the framework he is working in.

The pressures of society and the need to make money must have its effect on the artist and craftsman. But it is too easy for them to bend to the requests of others instead of satisfying themselves. This practice produces a frustrated artist and may, in the long run, satisfy no-one.

In buildings there is a tendency to bring in the potter or the artist at the end to provide the 'decoration' or the 'finishing touches' needed to complete the building. It is probably better not to be included at all if he is only thought of at this stage. Many self conscious efforts are being made by people involved in building to include arts and crafts. Unless these efforts are made with understanding, the results at the best are mediocre. Because New Zealanders are becoming aware of the emergence of indigenous crafts, and because New Zealand pottery is recognised as being of a generally high standard, it is becoming almost a universal commodity at domestic level, and I consider is doing much to increase an overall visual awareness.

I see the potter being used far more in commercial projects and especially in hotels and eating houses where table items should be potted.

Because of the nature of the potter's work the items he produces must of necessity be small—but because of the way in which they are produced and the beauty and durability of clay, they can have an important place in a building. I would like to see potted door handles and toilet pulls reintroduced. And even potted wash basins, baths and lavatory pans. I can imagine these being produced in the natural colour of clay—easier to clean and more appropriate than pink or black plastic.

For lampshades, earthenware has characteristics that no other material can hope to match under artificial light, and this particular sphere has hardly been touched on by potters. In the garden and

outside, the potter has an unlimited field for which he can produce. Clay products have a unique quality: the older they are, the better they become.

Personally, I find the potter producing a mural for a building as out of place as an architect producing a mural. This use of the potter's talents seems to me to be an abuse of his natural talents and I do not think he has made enough pots yet to sit back and feel satisfied.

I admit that the New Zealand potter has had considerable impact, but I consider that there is plenty more for him to do. No-one and especially the potter can afford to sit back and wait until some over art-conscious architect or some benevolent building owner approaches him for a contribution. He must push his own product and in doing so will find out more about the product of the other artist and creator.

AUTHORITATIVE BOOKS ON POTTERY

KILNS AND KILN FIRING FOR THE STUDIO POTTER by *H Fraser and L I Ceram*

The firing of pottery was until recently something of a mystery to the amateur potter, but nowadays kilns are readily available and this book is designed to enable even the complete novice to select a suitable kiln and to fire his pottery with assurance and satisfaction.

CERAMIC DESIGN by *John B Kenny*.

Here is a 'How to do' book in one. Complete instructions for methods of forming and decorating ceramic ware are given with step-by-step photographs to guide the designer along the way.

CERAMIC SCULPTURE: METHODS AND PROCESSES by *John B Kenny*.

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CERAMICS by *E Constantine and L Krevolin*

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This book deals with the essential materials for making pottery; the basic hand-building processes, illustrated in glazes projects; and the techniques of decorating, finishing and firing.

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MANAWATU POTTERS

With ten oil fired kilns spouting diesel fumes into the air and with as many electric kilns tucked away in corners of workshops, the Palmerston North and Feilding area is a fairly active little pottery centre. And if the long waiting lists of applicants wanting to join classes is an indication, there is plenty of interest in the craft.

This may seem strange in a district rich in sheep pastures rather than in clays and minerals suitable for potting, but it seems to have begun ten years ago with the coincidental establishment of the Design Centre by Jack Laird and of evening classes at Queen Elizabeth College by Stan Jenkins, and at Feilding Agricultural High School by John Fuller. Jack has long since departed for richer sites but the rest of us still import our requirements, although there has been some experimental fossicking in the Tararua. After the departure of Jack Laird, Jim Greig took over as tutor to the Palmerston group and gave great support. Jim is now a full-time potter living and working in Greytown, Wairarapa.

We have no full time professional potter in the immediate area, nevertheless a considerable body of work is being produced. Perhaps the most prolific potter is Peter Wilde who has recently completed a new 45 cubic feet kiln for firing his large and vigorously thrown storage jars, planters and stewpots. Peter was invited by Roy Cowan and Juliet Peter to join them in an exhibition in Wellington a few months ago.

Of the other Palmerston potters, the one who has shown the most rapid development is Piet Radford. His work shows decided promise. Zoe Bendall, Barbara Taylor and Peg Jackson work independently, but share their oil fired kiln. Dorothy Abraham and helpers have successfully completed the first firings of their new Cowan kiln. Graeme Voss has provided himself with a creditable set-up at his farm in Longburn.

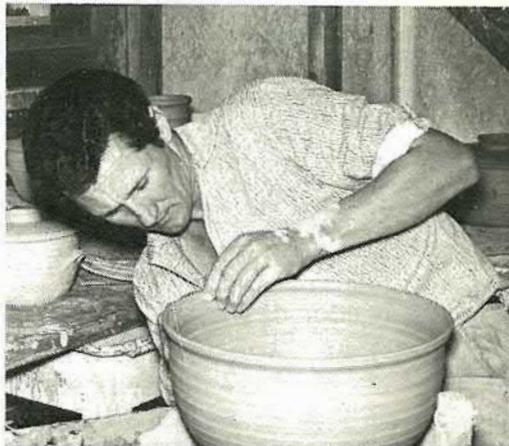
Over in Feilding Stan Jenkins operates a very efficient and immaculate workshop. He is now producing a range of bigger pots and casseroles which are freer and more generous than his earlier more rigidly controlled forms. Stan has

recently taken up a position as lecturer in ceramics and photography at the Palmerston North Teachers' College, a position for which he is well qualified. His place at Queen Elizabeth College has been taken by Laurie Lord, who potted in the far north. He is a welcome addition to the potting fraternity here.

Don Chambers' interest in things horticultural has led to a range of terrace pots and planters. He is also making storage pots and stewpots. Through restricting his means Don has rapidly developed a recognisable style and it will be interesting to see what he can achieve with salt glazing in the small salting kiln just completed.

Gaynor Nairn who was the first in the district to build herself an oil fired kiln, is dedicated to producing and refining domestic ware of small, but sound proportion.

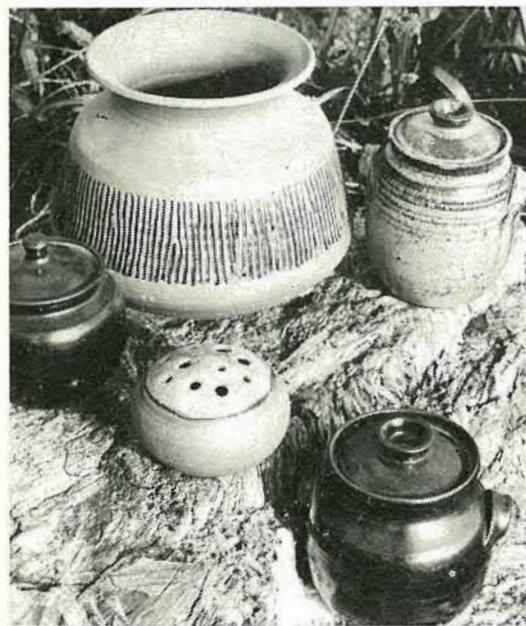
For myself, the well known complaint of pressure of other work and too many other interests allows little time to pot, but when I do, I try to spend some appreciable time with domestic ware, in which I try to practise what I preach to my pupils on function and material dictating the form. I also enjoy experimenting in form and texture with less concern for its ultimate use. *John Fuller.* □



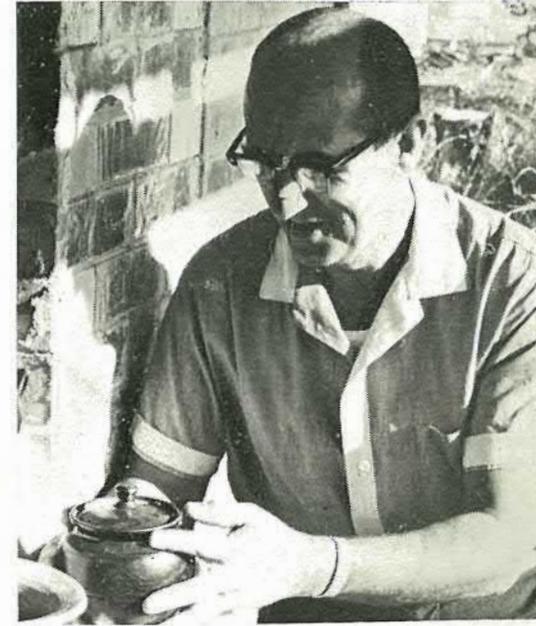
Peter Wilde, big pots vigorously thrown



Gaynor Nairn, domestic ware of small but sound proportion.

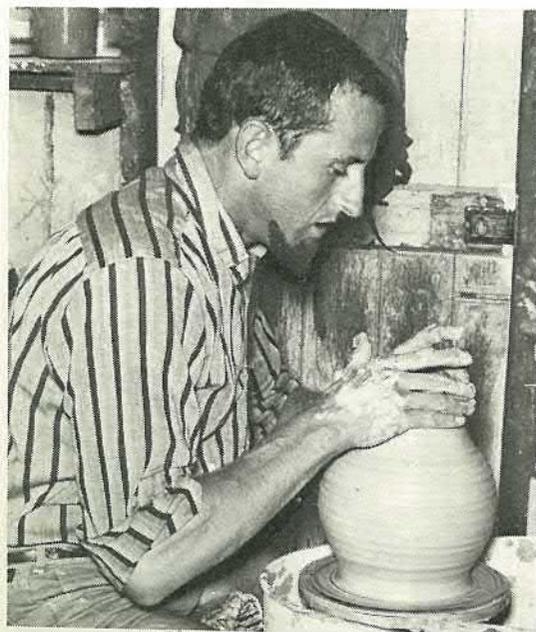


Don Chambers, terrace pots and planters and things horticultural.

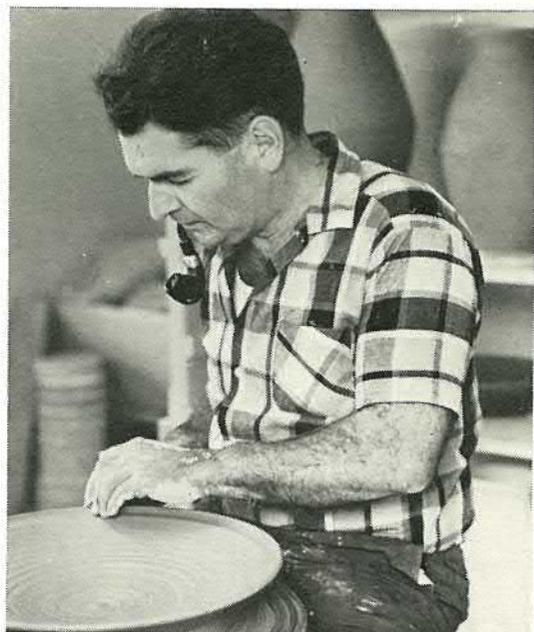




John Fuller, form and texture—function as an afterthought.



Piet Radford, potting of definite promise.



Stan Jenkins, freer and more generous in form.

photographs by Stan Jenkins and John Fuller

The Craftsman

by Dorothy Abraham

To the artist craftsman the creation of beautiful things is a way of life. Selling is often alien to his nature. Nevertheless an outlet for his work is desirable. With the pottery movement in the Manawatu moving from strength to strength, a method of marketing the collective output was a factor to be considered. Two and a half years ago 10 craftsmen organised a gallery in Palmerston North to do just this.

The partners all know, like and respect each other. They are all part-timers devoting only their leisure time to their craft. Six of the potters, Barbara Taylor, Zoe Bendall, Peg Jackson, Dorothy Abraham, May Jordan and Ann Redpath are housewives. Peter Wilde is a surveyor, Stan Jenkins and Don Chambers are art teachers. Bridget Smeeton, a spinner and weaver, combines teaching with her craft.

A small gallery was found on the fringe of the central shopping area in Princess Street, Palmerston North, opposite the National Airways office. In the week prior to opening, the women cleaned and painted, and at the weekend, Stan

Jenkins and Peter Wilde did miracles in constructing shelves and display stands. We started modestly with no advertising and were surprised and pleased at being discovered by an enthusiastic public. However this small, narrow, gallery gave us only limited display space, so when the corner shop next door was offered, we moved in there.

With glass fronted doors on the corner of Princess and Main Streets, and windows facing both thoroughfares, the goods are now displayed for all to see. The shop has been a great success. To cope with the demand for stock a number of artist craftsmen have been co-opted on a commission basis, and we now have copper and enamel ware, screen printed fabric articles and leather work.

It is run on co-operative lines. Each member mans the shop for half a day each week. Members also have special job assignments such as doing books or making payments. Rather averse to meetings, we do however meet once every two months. Everyone has a say in what we do, but we make decisions as a body. For the most part the shop now runs itself and we wish we could produce more. □

The Palmerston North Art Gallery

The Manawatu has in its Art Gallery a lively and progressive place that does much to encourage and stimulate local artists and craftsmen. With plans afoot for expansion it has recently appointed its first full-time professional director Brian Muir, a young man still in his twenties and therefore with a youthful approach to what can be done. Brian Muir has this to say about the gallery.

'The gallery mounts touring and temporary exhibitions which change on an average once a fortnight—a very heavy programme. It also is building up a permanent collection of art works. Its acquisition policy is a very good one, concentrating on work by New Zealanders who have made significant contributions to the development of art in New Zealand from 1890 to the present day. Already it has become a well balanced collection.

The gallery is financed largely by the City

Council but also receives revenue from the Manawatu Arts Society members' subscriptions. In fact, it is owned and maintained by the council and administered by the society. Attendances are very high and are increasing all the time. Twenty thousand last year—in a city with a population of 50,000.

Established only 10 years ago, the gallery is in temporary premises. The proposed development of the city centre provides for an Arts Centre in the square (those of us in some other cities will show some envy here). The gallery will be separate from the civic buildings, the library and the proposed museum, and that is as it should be: closely associated, but a separate entity.'

It is too soon to know what will eventuate from the recently proposed Reynold's re-development plan for Palmerston North but it is abundantly clear that the temporary building is even now inadequate for the lively scene its art gallery presents. (Brian Muir has recently resigned from the Palmerston North Art Gallery to take up a position at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery in Christchurch.—Ed.) □

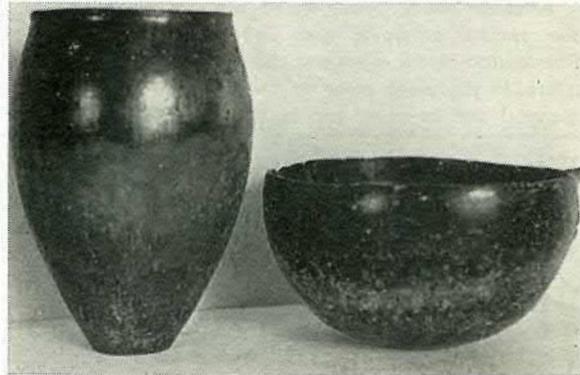
The Development of Pottery

An exhibition showing the development of pottery, selected and lent by the Auckland Museum, was recently on show at the Palm-erston North Art Gallery.

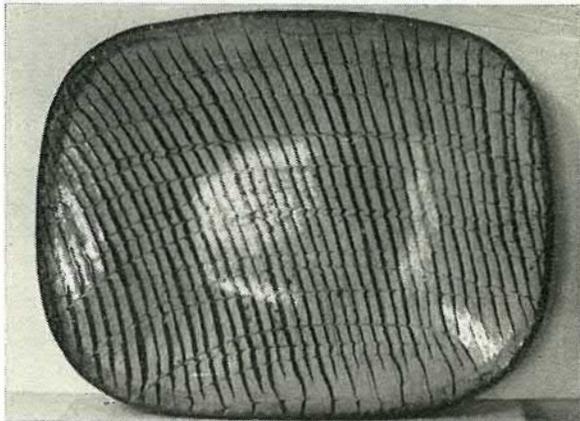
This exhibition of pots, though small in size, was vast in its range of time and place and comprehensive in its coverage of ceramic techniques. It encompassed pots, handbuilt and burnished, made in Egypt 4000 B.C. and in Bronze Age Cyprus—a stirrup pot from Peru—English medieval slipware—tin enamelling from Turkey, Persia and Spain—pots for many purposes from China, Japan and Fiji to English industrial ware and European soft paste porcelain made in imitation of Oriental ware—and

conversely, Chinese porcelain made for export to Europe. Large English feathered slipware dishes and a pot-bellied German salt glazed ballarmine stood with tiny Thai funerary jars, one with a celadon glaze of delicate bird's egg blue—and a rude medieval earthenware pipkin contrasted with a superb Ming celadon stem cup and its companion vase in a rich copper reduction red.

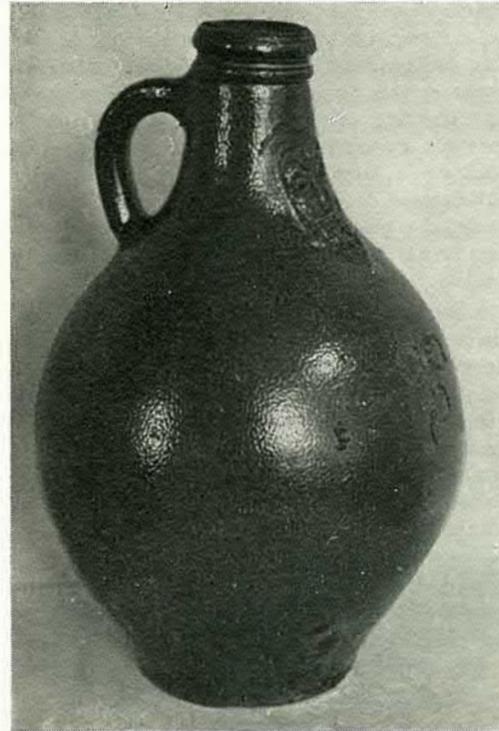
Altogether, an exhibition which any student of ceramics, starved of direct contact with distant cultures, found full of interest. Incidentally, the ceramics section of the Auckland Museum is a must for any student of pottery visiting Auckland. □



Left, Egyptian 4000BC, height 6 in. Right, Cyprus bowl, Bronze Age; both hand-built in burnished red clay.



English slipware dish, trailed and feathered in cream and dark brown slip, 15 in. long.



German saltglazed Bellarmine, 1650, height 11 in.



Turkish (Iznik) jug, 16th century, height 9 in., white tin glaze with leaf pattern in green, blue and black and deep reddish brown enamel flowers.



Ming, 17th century, the vase copper reduction red, 8½ in.; the stem cup is celadon, 5¼ in. diameter.



Delft plate, 1680, 13½ in. diameter, in characteristic blue and white tin glaze.

photographs by John Fuller

Culture for the next 10 years—the NDC

Suggestions to the National Development Conference

- 1 *Alternative means of Government financial support to lottery profits.*
- 2 *Tax exemptions for donations or bequests to cultural organisations.*
- 3 *Support and encouragement to the inventive artist.*
- 4 *More emphasis on education for living.*
- 5 *More out-of-school and adult education.*

These are some of the suggestions the Social and Cultural committee reported to the second plenary session of the NDC in May this year.

An improvement of the quality of life was the broad term of reference under which the committee was asked to make recommendations. The social aspect already has a well established legislative framework, so was easier to discuss than was the cultural aspect. For culture it was found to be necessary to talk of general principles rather than particulars. For this reason the committee regards its findings as provisional—a clearing of the ground to identify the broad issues for discussion.

The report says that the best society is that which through a rich complex of voluntary

organisations increases both the spontaneity and variety of life. The preservation of the individual, and his uniqueness, is of utmost importance. This *quality of life*, not to be confused with *standard of living*, implies personal fulfilment for everyone, allowing for different personal value judgements between people (e.g. an industrial worker and a high country sheep farmer). To give more quality to life, an environment must be created in which man is free to develop his capacity to the full.

In the committee's opinion the cultural environment is the combination of the social, intellectual and artistic pursuits which stimulate and entertain; the climate of appreciation and fulfilment which spreads from widespread participation in these activities and which nourishes creativity; and those aspects of technology and science which contribute to artistic creation and response.

A definition of culture that appealed to the committee was, 'A culture begins with simple things—with the way the potter moulds the clay on his wheel, the way a weaver threads his yarns, the way the builder builds his house. Greek culture did not begin with the Parthenon: it began with a whitewashed hut on a hillside. Culture has always developed as an infinitely slow but sure refinement and elaboration of simple things—refinement and elaboration of speech, refinement and elaboration of shapes, refinement and elaboration of proportions, with the original purity persisting right through.' (T. S. Elliot, *Notes towards a definition of culture*).

Our cultural development as New Zealanders must be a process of adapting our inheritance, both traditional and Polynesian, and the influences of the modern world to our own environment.

Culture should be allowed to evolve: it should be encouraged, *but never imposed*. Once the community has demonstrated what it wants, and what it can do, it should be fostered before anything else. Those providing patronage (financial assistance), must be responsive to the movements of people's tastes and needs. People recognise and respond favourably to quality, and to what has meaning in their lives; mediocrity and lack of relevance can easily kill this enthusiasm.

Getting down to more detail, the committee

considers that the inventive artists, such as composers, painters, *potters* (our italics) and writers, as distinct from performing and interpretive artists have not received their fair share of support. Far more should be done to identify and encourage inventive artists.

Artists generally derive their support and nourishment from the response made to their work by members of their own community. For this reason a balance needs to be maintained between the number of exhibitions, performances, and works of art originating in New Zealand and those coming from overseas. Too much reliance on overseas exhibitions can have adverse effects on local traditions and development and can result in local artists going overseas and thus being lost to the community. The local stimulus does need strengthening through visiting artists and teachers and this is particularly important in the smaller centres. When talking of smaller centres the committee considers that they have been deprived since the community Arts Service was allowed to die. This service was provided by the Regional Councils of Adult Education under the Adult

Education Act of 1947 (now replaced by the Adult Education Act of 1963). Investigation should be made on the best way to re-establish a service suitable to the smaller centres.

The report goes on to talk about the cultural gap between the schools and the adult community, the lack of co-operation between organisations at local level, the need for continuing education and the roles of the mass media.

The comment in this report is fairly predictable. All the ideas have been around and aired for some time. It is a pity that the report could not have been more specific. But since cultural affairs have been considered worthy of inclusion in the country's development plan perhaps the suggestions will at least have some official backing. All the same it is a pity it couldn't have been a more directive type of report. For instance its final recommendation is for the setting up of a co-ordinating body to develop and encourage, and to advise government on cultural matters; the question of whether the organisation should be given statutory recognition to be examined later. How much more positive to have said, 'we need a Ministry of Culture.' □

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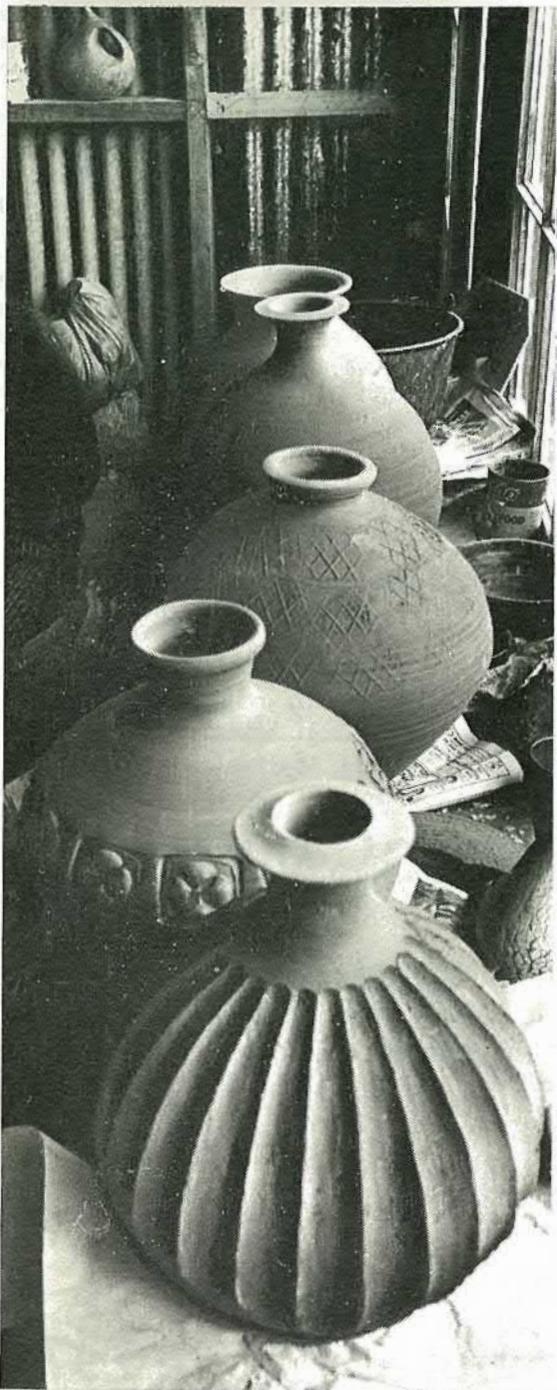
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Photo Marti Friedlander

Pottery Warren Tippet



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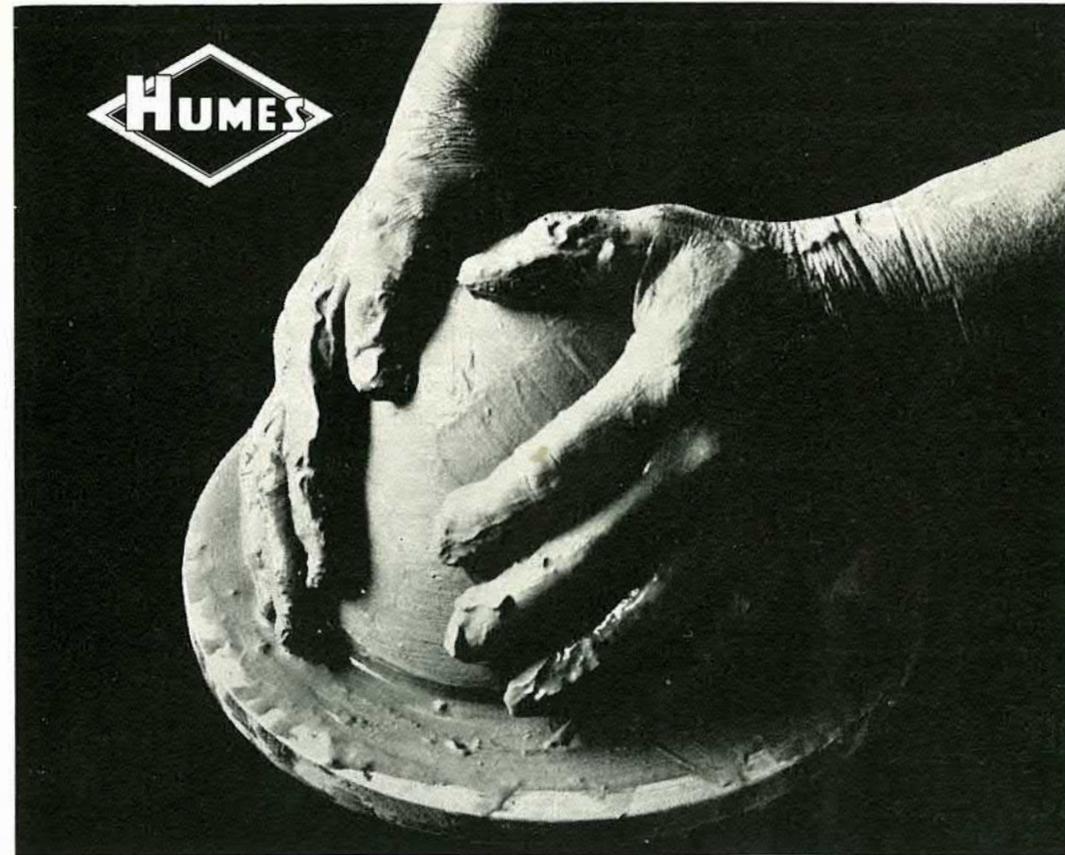
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EXHIBITIONS

1. Pottery for outdoor living

This was the theme for a stimulating exhibition which has been one of this years exhibition highlights at the Canterbury Society of Arts Gallery in Gloucester Street, Christchurch. It was put on by the Canterbury Potters' Association. Our reporter is Virginia Angus.

'The pots and sculptural pieces were set among rocks, scree beds, plants and magnificent potted shrubs. The general effect was of a many terraced garden with concrete block tables at different levels. This marvellous background created just the right setting for the outdoor lamps, planters, terrace pots and pieces of sculpture suitable for the garden.

Over the last few years outdoor living on terraces and patios has become popular and the pottery shown in this exhibition would add interest and charm to any terrace or garden. I was particularly taken by the clever lamps—large and small—many made to stand on the terrace itself and suitable for electricity or candles. Other particularly interesting pieces were the garden sculptures by Bavid Brokenshire, Nola Barron and Rosemary Perry. The bird feeders and bird tables created much attention. These, one felt would be a most suitable accessory to the small courtyard garden of the town house. Other pottery, mostly stoneware, included charcoal pots, a variety of large terrace pots, pinched candle holders, pots to hold tall grasses or flax and even a magnificent chess set.'

If the number of entries was a little disappointing to the organisers, the standard of the exhibition as a whole was excellent. Selector Yvonne Rust said, 'The few people involved in this exhibition have really extended themselves to cope with the imaginative theme. Although

they were not necessarily outdoor potters, they have achieved the architectural qualities required for terrace ceramics. It is a pity that more potters in Christchurch did not support this exhibition because a theme such as this, makes people think in a different way and must inevitably affect the style of their normal work. This keeps a potter on his toes and keeps his work vital.' □



A group of pots by Rosemary Perry—sculpture, hanging wind bells, a terrace lamp and some domestic ware. Photograph by Christchurch Star.

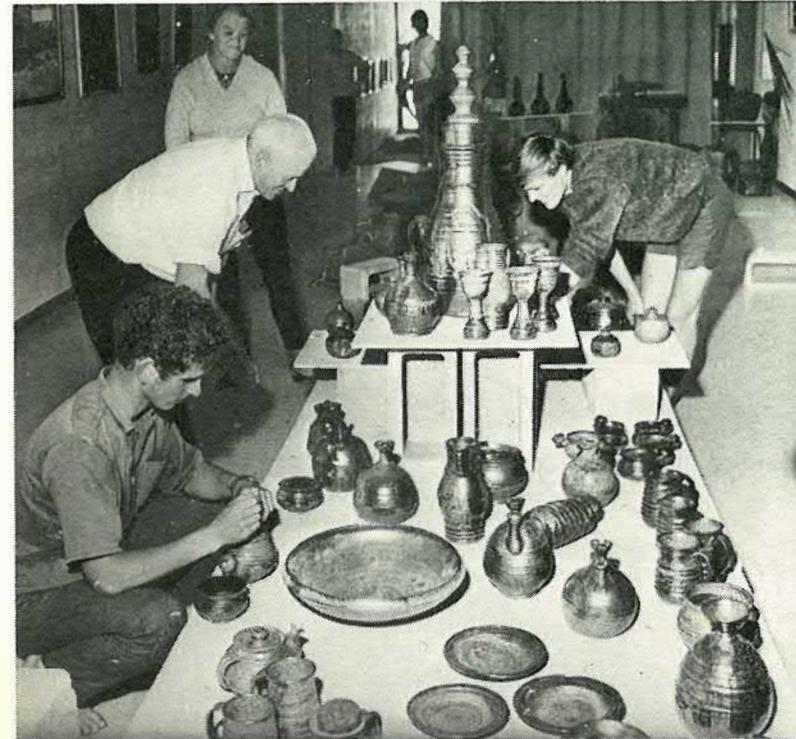
2. West Coast pottery

In April, West Coast potters and painters as a group sent an exhibition out of their area for the first time. The Canterbury Arts Society in Christchurch, mounted the show, which created quite a buzz of interest in the city. Yvonne Rust the motivating influence, with nine others sent pots, some inspired some modest enough in size and quality, but the impact of the show was one of vitality and new growth.

Although the exhibition included water colours and oil paintings, carved jade and gourds, jewelry and weaving, it was dominated by the pottery. Utility with beauty was its theme and the stoneware pottery was certainly both—splendid casseroles, wine jugs, mugs, teapots, plates and even a toastrack.

Virginia Angus writes, 'I've been to many exhibition openings and I can't remember one I've enjoyed more than this. Guests were entertained by the famous Kokatahi band (one of the oldest in the country) with their unusual instruments including concertinas and rather old violins, one with a megaphone attached! They were dressed in colourful miners' period clothes and amused a very large crowd with ballads and jigs. Refreshments of flagon beer further created the typical West Coast atmosphere of friendly hospitality.

The Commissioner of the West Coast, Mr D B Dallas, when opening the exhibition praised the initiative and enterprise behind this display. It was using the natural resources not only of materials, but of skills and ingenuity of the people themselves. It was good to see form and function, art and commerce linked so frankly and naturally. He reminded exhibitors that West Coast products should develop a reputation for quality—because quality will always sell. □



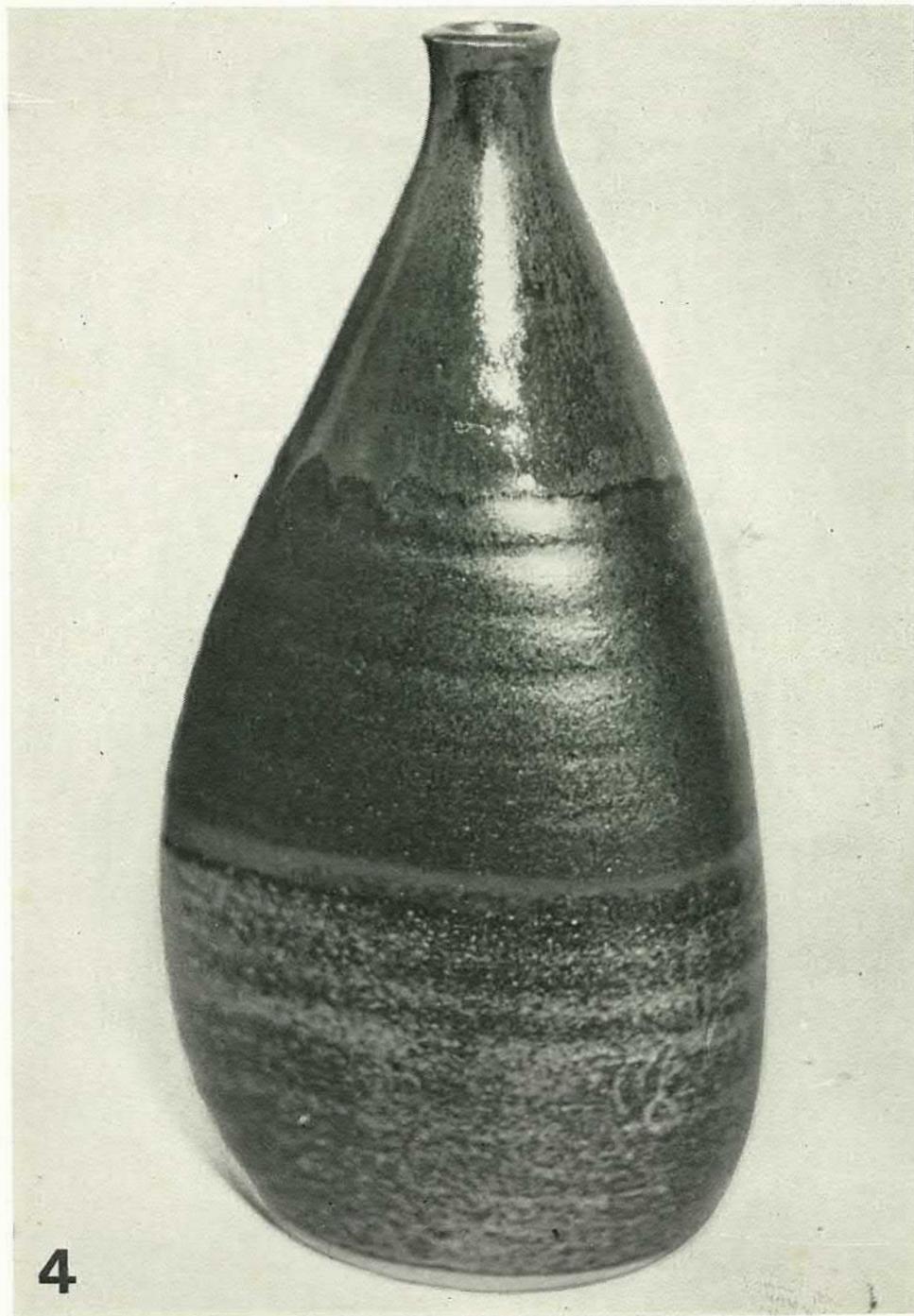
Yvonne Rust with other West Coast potters setting up their display in Christchurch. Dominating the centre table is a huge cider jug with goblets. Photograph by Christchurch Star.

3. 1969 Academy exhibition

A look at a few of the pots from those on view at this year's Academy exhibition of sculpture, pottery and graphic art in the Academy gallery, Wellington, from 23 August to 14 September.

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 Len Castle | Hanging pot | height 4½ in. |
| 2 Doreen Blumhardt | Large platter | diameter 16 in. |
| 3 Muriel Moody | Decorative stoneware head | height 10 in. |
| 4 Christopher Vine | Three-sided bottle | height 10 in. |
| 5 Carl Vendelbosch | Fluted vase | height 13 in. |
| 6 Graeme Storm | Pot | height 12 in. |

photographs by Pat Conneally





5



6

4. 1969 Invited potters

Plans to obtain coverage for this exhibition for the *Potter* fell through when the gallery director, Mr Brian Muir, left Palmerston North to take up his new appointment. Those invited to participate this year were: Barry Brickell, Patricia Perrin, Una Sharpley, Len Castle, Roy Cowan, Juliet Peter, Peter Wilde, Paul Melser, Michael Trumic, Doreen Blumhardt and Mirek Smisek. □

5. Canberra exhibition

The exhibition of New Zealand pottery held recently in Canberra was very well received. Twelve New Zealand potters were invited by the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council to submit three or four examples of their work which they considered to be suitable for a New Zealand representative exhibition.

Lady Hasluck, wife of the New Zealand High Commissioner to Australia at the opening said, 'We are very lucky to have this exhibition sent from New Zealand for us to see and compare with similar work produced in Australia. It helps in the understanding of nations to observe their art forms and the directions in which they are extending. I don't think Australians need to search very deeply for understanding of New Zealanders, for we have the same background of race and traditions, but there is a natural feeling of competition. I think in this case we shall have to look to our laurels, for obviously the pottery movement in New Zealand is vigorous and sophisticated'.

Seventy per cent of the pottery was sold on opening day, an indication of the appreciation of the Canberra viewers who are considered to be well informed on artistic affairs.

This on the spot comment on the New Zealand pots in Canberra comes from Margaret Frankel, a New Zealander resident there.

This exhibition, the first by a group of overseas potters to be shown in Canberra, was displayed at the Australian Sculpture Gallery in rooms of domestic proportions. It is always an advantage not to have pots overpowered by space and only in one or two cases were the pots too

crowded or not exhibited at good levels. On looking at an exhibition of this sort one realises that ideally the pots should be chosen by one selector from the work of the different artists to present a harmonious collection. The pots were shown in individual groups.

Len Castle's large square bottle was presented by the New Zealand High Commissioner to Her Excellency Lady Hasluck. □

6. 13th National exhibition

This year the National Exhibition is to be held in Auckland. In 1965 when the 9th National Exhibition was held here, Martin Beck in his review of the Auckland scene and the growth of interest in pottery said movement during the past twenty years had been slow at first, but explosive over the last five years'. He noted that there were then 170 members of the Auckland Studio Potters, of whom 50 were regular exhibitors throughout New Zealand. After a further four years, membership and exhibiting members has almost doubled.

A greater number of potters have turned to a life of full time potting and hundreds of hobbyists indulge in the joys and frustrations of making and firing their own pots. Countless numbers attend evening classes offered by most of the high schools, and for the few who are keen enough to pursue their craft and skill further, hundreds emerge after a year's attendance with at least an interest in pottery and some understanding of the basic skills involved.

This has created a steady market, and craft shops have sprung up in nearly every suburb and district, as well as in Auckland city itself. Competition from so many shops, for pots to sell, has resulted in much that is poor technically and weak in design, being on display, but work offered by potters with a professional outlook, and work shown in galleries and one man exhibitions, has set a standard which has brought about a more selective public and a more general awareness of quality.

The National Exhibition will be held in the Auckland War Memorial Museum's special exhibition hall and is likely to be visited by 10,000 to 15,000 people, providing a splendid opportunity for seeing the work of New Zealand's most competent and creative potters.

(N.B.: see notice on page 52)

Symposium

During the four years since the National Exhibition was last held in Auckland, an increasing number of New Zealanders have taken the sometimes hazardous step of becoming full time potters. Auckland Studio Potters, who are responsible this year for mounting the Exhibition, are interested to know how it is all working out, and they are arranging a symposium to get as many of these people together, to discuss common problems.

The symposium will be held in the Auckland War Memorial Museum's new auditorium, with the first session on Friday 14 November, when some of our well established potters will discuss the question of aesthetics, illustrated by slides of their own choice.

Subjects the next day will be the individual and team approach to the making of pots, and also a thorough discussion on the principles of kilns and firing.

Everyone is welcome to the sessions for which a charge will be made, so that the travelling expenses of the more distant potters, will be met.

These sessions should finish about 4 pm so that these will be plenty of time to prepare for the formal opening of the exhibition that evening.

Selector

Ivan McMeekin, sole selector for the 13th National exhibition.

Born in Melbourne in 1919. Started potting in 1949 with Michael Leach at the Penzance School, Cornwall, then spent three years at Michael Cardew's Wenford Bridge Pottery, also in Cornwall. Returned to Australia in 1953, and started the Sturt Pottery at Mittagong. In 1959 joined the staff of The University of New South Wales, where he continues with teaching, research, and potting. 1967-68 on behalf of the University carried out a survey of materials in the Darwin area Northern Territory, developed bodies and glazes based on these materials, and supervised the setting up of a pottery training unit for Aborigines at the Bagot Aboriginal Reserve, Darwin.

Pottery and porcelain of the Sung and Ming periods in China, Korean pottery, the English



Ivan McMeekin

traditional wares and the work of Michael Cardew and Bernard Leach have been his sources of inspiration. He believes that pottery as an art form can act through the making of useful pots that sell at moderate prices and uses this medium of expression rather than that of ceramic sculpture. He believes in the value of knowing and using local materials and in 1967 published *Notes for Potters in Australia* which is mainly about Australian raw materials and the development of clay bodies based on these. Is also interested in the design of wheels and kilns. □

New museum display

The Auckland War Memorial Museum has opened the new hall of Asian art.

Designed and arranged by Trevor Bayliss, it is the major collection of Asian ceramics in New Zealand, and is divided into sections of China, Japan, Persia, Turkey, India and South East Asia. As well as ceramics, the crafts and arts of these areas are also shown.

Potters wishing to see representative ceramics of all periods in the world's history, should not miss seeing the sections devoted to ceramics in the museum.

Barry Lett Gallery

From 17 November the gallery will be showing the 5th Annual Sculpture Exhibition.

Gallery

The New Vision Gallery was established in 1956 to provide a professional exhibition centre for the visual arts in general, although the gallery emerged naturally from the crafts shop. Our traditional link with the crafts was maintained in a comparatively small number of exhibitions of pottery as a vital part of our activities (usually three to four a year).

In the beginning doubts were raised whether exhibitions of the so-called 'fine arts' should be held next to craft shows and we were criticised for that reason; we have never felt any hesitation to do so because we found that high quality craft exhibitions never did prejudice the standards of our other shows.

To the contrary; they have a wider public and provide a stepping stone towards the more involved, sophisticated levels of art appreciation. The link with 'usefulness' makes pottery more accessible and acceptable, thus bringing many closer to the understanding of certain qualities in art, rather than drawing people away from understanding.

The contemporary development in the creative crafts makes distinction (let alone discrimination) between the fine arts and the crafts an absolute anachronism.

It is also interesting to note that in painting and sculpture the trend away from personal involvement and individual expression becomes stronger (environmental art), whereas most potters are aiming at a deeper personal involvement and expression, towards qualities formerly sought after in painting and sculpture. They are always being criticised by 'art critics' if they fail to have 'exclusive individual identity'.

We find the reasons amongst potters, in favour or against exhibiting their work, varied and interesting. No potter nowadays needs

exhibitions for economic reasons; he can sell his work at the door or in the weely increasing number of craft shops and markets, and some claim (mainly the producers of domestic ware) that the crafts in general should retain the modesty of the old anonymous guilds—a service to good quality and craftsmanship only; that they should not indulge in the precious pride of self-expression.

Others feel that an exhibition is a challenge of standards, a very rewarding experience and not necessarily a pretentious personality cult. This is underlined by the fact that only very few can attain the high standard and quality required to justify a large one man show, consisting usually of about 300 selected pieces. We estimate that in spite of the enormous upsurge of pottery in New Zealand, the number of exhibiting (or exhibitable) potters lies between ten and twenty at the most, a figure that turns out to be roughly similar to that for painting, sculpture, and graphics.

Amongst those who have successfully exhibited in our gallery are Patricia Perrin, Doreen Blumhardt, Barry Brickell, Len Castle, Roy Cowan and Juliet Peter, Martin and Nancy Beck, Harry and May Davis (Crewenna), Claire Bunby, Paul Melsner, Doris Dutch and Warren Tippett, who recently had a glowing exhibition of richly coloured and decorated pots ranging from minute trinket boxes to huge crocks (August 18-29, 1969), and Mirek Smisek from Manakau (27 September-6 November 1969).

In spite of different points of view and attitudes, we find justification in continuing exhibitions of pottery of the highest achievement in New Zealand. They still hold tremendous appeal and do not contradict our feeling that handmade pottery should penetrate everyday life in a modest and unpretentious way, reminding us of an ancient tradition as well as promoting a new attitude towards objects in our close environment.

The appeal is such that we have recently decided to relieve the pressure of the opening nights by providing a more relaxed way of previewing during the whole of the Sunday afternoon preceding the openings. □

Kees Hos.

Potters of Great Britain

To any New Zealand potter wishing to live and travel in Great Britain—not as a tourist—I fully recommend a motor caravan. It was by this means my husband and I toured for nearly two years, moving on as we pleased. Thus, by the by-ways of England we were able to visit many well known and famous potters. Heading south from London in the late spring, we found the Wenford Bridge Pottery in a setting of wild flowers. For miles the attractive hedgerows had brushed both sides of our vehicle, but it was a worthwhile experience to find Michael Cardew busy packing his huge and interesting kiln. He and many other potters came to the gate to wave us farewell, and there we found them as interested in our mode of travel as we were in their pottery.

The famous St Ives pottery, once a few miles out, is now surrounded by the ever spreading town. In Devon, Michael Leach pots in lovely surroundings near Barnstaple, where his showroom resembles an exhibition with pots of every shape and size. On through leafy lanes to Bovey Tracey, where David Leach has an equally exciting showroom with other crafts displayed among his lovely pots. His son John pots alone on the coast where his work finds a ready market in the small coastal towns. Thus the famous name is carried on with credit into the third generation. In Surrey, Dennis Moore was working on an interesting ash glaze of remarkable colour. The romantic Cotswolds make an inspiring setting for such world famous potters as Raymond Finch with his happy staff and perfect results. Chris Harries who specialises in slip trail work, with his daughter and son-in-law, Dieter Kunzemann, doing similar work nearby, while further north Geoffrey Whiting makes his perfected teapots along with many 'bread and butter' lines. In Wales we received the warm hospitality of Frank Hamer and wife Janet who were working for their joint exhibition. Frank was throwing huge pots with a little applied clay decoration, while Janet's work ranged from small pinch pots to large slab and coil garden pots. In fact the exhibition would surely suit all

tastes. Also in Wales I enjoyed meeting and collecting the strong earthenware pots of Reg Southcliff and the brightly coloured pots of Patrick Gaze who, incidentally, was so interested in New Zealand that I gave him the address of Jim Nelson, with the result that he joins Jim in Hanmer this year. In Shanagarry, Ireland, we met the Pearce family, Phillip and sons. Simon has fond memories of his pottery stay in New Zealand. Back in London Lucy Rie pots in a picturesque news near Marble Arch while Kenneth Clarke has his large potteries in the heart of the city. He and his wife were specialising in tiles of every shape and size, with design most gay and original.

The Craft Centre near Carnaby Street is well worth a visit as the work of all these potters is nearly always on display. On our many visits to Stoke we were treated royally by Wenges, Blythe Colours and many other such firms. We also kept in touch with Val Hunt of Christchurch who, after his marriage this year intends to spend another year in Great Britain before returning home to New Zealand. (My collection from all these potters is at present on exhibition in the Otago Museum.)

One of the highlights of our tour was the Pendley Manor refresher course for potters. This was organised by Murray Fieldhouse and sponsored by Dorian Williams and George Wenges, using Wenges materials with Marshall Carson as representative. This was a very extensive and varied course beginning with a substantial English breakfast at 8.30 a.m. then classes practically non stop till 11 p.m. except for morning and afternoon tea breaks and wonderful meals. In naming a few of the tutors, the course will speak for itself. Geoffrey Whiting demonstrated teapot making, Frank Hamer dealt with clays, kilns etc., Michael Casson applied decoration, Danny Killick throwing etc., David Leach porcelain making, Kenji Tunaki brushwork, John Reeve direct potting, Paul Barron glazes, Clifford Wyndham some simple methods with clay and glaze. Other lecturers including Murray Fieldhouse taught a bit of everything while keeping

continued on page 33

New vitality

Mirek Smisek has recently established himself at Manakau, five miles from Levin. We asked Mirek if his work done here, in new surroundings was different from that done in Nelson. He says that the changes are mainly the result of a natural growth in the appreciation of the values expressed in the humble pot. In the quest to express simplicity, the potter gives a generous personal feeling to his work—in other words he puts his heart into it. The honest potter's wellbeing is reflected in a good pot. Mirek hopes this is the case with his own work at Manakau.

One big change though, is the use of the beehive kiln. He is very enthusiastic about this kiln, which with no corners to trap the flame, gives even distribution of heat. He says it's beautiful to use.

Another change which will distinguish the Manakau from the Nelson pots, is the decoration. He is now combining rocks and sands both in a body and in the glazes to give natural texture. The colourings are influenced by the subdued tones of the native bush—he loves our native bush. Clay still comes from Nelson, but local potters will welcome the news that tests on various clays in the district have given quite promising results.

When asked what lines his future development will follow, Mirek Smisek says simply 'continue in natural development with the best expression possible'.

There does in fact, seem to be a new exuberance and vitality in his latest work seen in the Rothmans Gallery, at the New Zealand Display Centre earlier this year. Mirek Smisek has always been a potter conscious of form—strong form at that. 'I like clay with a good grain because it imparts great strength to a pot. Furthermore it is free, plastic and responsive to work with.' This character was amply shown in the work displayed at this exhibition.

The most impressive pieces were the array of bowls and platters which were generous and open. Mirek Smisek is certainly a master of the throwing technique for these shapes. They

were all beautifully balanced and proportioned and never too heavy. The bowls with rhythmic scratched patterns inside would be a delight on the table for steaming rice—or salad—or on the wall to be looked at. The deep foot was wired for hanging. The platters also, with their radial sunflower patterns, would be equally at home on table or wall.

Following his philosophy that 'a pot should not only be admired, but have its fulfilment in daily use and frequent handling', Mirek Smisek concentrates on domestic ware. This exhibition of some 200 pieces ranged from bowls, large and small, massive branch pots to small containers, to teapots, coffee pots, casseroles and a variety of drinking vessels. They were all carefully made and finished with a restricted



Mirek Smisek, born Bohemia, Czechoslovakia, full-time potter since 1957. Studied at Kyoto University and the Leach Pottery, represented in collections in New Zealand and abroad. photograph by Evening Post

but pleasing range of glazes. Decoration was mainly of scratched or incised markings or applied by a wax resist method giving a softer outline to the design than would have been obtained by brushwork.

This exhibition was the work of an accomplished potter—an assured craftsman whose work appears to be gaining a new maturity and depth. □

Right, Mirek Smisek's beehive kiln has just been unloaded. Jane Smisek cleans bottoms.



Potters of Great Britain continued from page 31

seventy pupils under control and at the same time fostering the strong comradeship that closely knits all potters.

The highlight of the school for me was at the end of the week when the grand finale at 9 p.m. was a raku firing at Northfields Studio. Murray said he liked a raku firing in the snow, in fact it must be snowing. It was. It had been for days and the country was a picture. We donned gumboots and warm clothing and set out in cars for the few miles to the Fieldhouse home. There we snuggled as near as possible to the red hot coals on the kiln where the demonstration was in the capable hands of John Chalke. Firstly our wide necked pinch pots were dipped in thick glaze and put round the top of the open fire brick kiln to dry, while the snowflakes fell fast upon them, they then went into the small 'oven' like so many cakes, to be brought out on long tongues ten minutes later, dropped firstly on sawdust and then into the bucket of cold water. The results were both interesting and satisfying, many strong colours being produced, but to me a raku firing still remains a miracle. These batches of pots were produced regularly every ten minutes until midnight during which time we all did justice to the delectable piping hot barbecue 'Les poulets Richelieu dans la neige'.

I sincerely hope that many more potters from New Zealand will have the privilege of attending similar schools, all are well advertised at the London Craft Centre. *Ina Arthur, Dunedin.* □

Are we judges ?

The old subjective criticism 'I like it' or 'I don't like it' is often the excuse for accepting something however bad, and conversely, for rejecting something however good. For those who wish to judge intelligently, there are in all art forms, certain *musts* and pottery is no exception. Members of the Canterbury Potters Association were provided with some criteria for evaluating their own or other people's pots by Michael Trumic.

'First there must be skilled craftsmanship—an experienced hand and obedience to certain well established rules. Suitable weight, even thickness, spouts which pour and handles which can be comfortably grasped—these are some of the many aspects of technique which potters must come to grips with. The way to obtain mastery over the clay is practise, practise, practise.

Next the pot is judged on aesthetic grounds. The rules of design can be learnt as well as those of craftsmanship. So the question to ask of a pot is not 'Do I like it?' but 'Does it satisfy the laws of design?'

Finally we ask 'Is the pot alive?' If the maker throws himself wholeheartedly into his work, something of his personality comes through, and expresses itself in the pot. As in other forms of art this may not always be pleasant, and it may not be generally liked, but this does not detract from its worth. A good pot is much more than an object of technical proficiency.'

Fire on the Coast

A pottery in a disused brewery—there is an incongruity about the idea that makes one smile, and yet it catches one's imagination, too. To establish *any* pottery calls for drive and initiative, but *this* idea, one feels, would require a relish for the comic side of life as well. Yvonne Rust has just this zest. When David Carson-Parker and I visited her recently in Greymouth, we were both convinced that it is this capacity for activity and laughter together that has enabled her to achieve so much during her two and a half years on the West Coast. Whether her teaching is formal in the classroom, or informal in studio and field, she has the knack, catalyst-like, of releasing forces of energy and enthusiasm in those around her.

Years ago, during excursions from Christchurch in search of clays and glaze materials, Yvonne noticed a brewery on the outskirts of Greymouth which struck her as an ideal place for a studio. Then in 1966 came news that it was vacant; she applied for—and obtained—the position of art mistress at Greymouth District High School—and leased the brewery.

There were no other potters in Greymouth when she arrived, yet by now, thanks to her efforts, there are perhaps as many as ten who promise to emerge as full-time craftsmen. One or two are ex-pupils from the High School, but the greater number began by attending a course of evening classes she was persuaded to give. Last year thirty people came; this year as many as sixty. The majority, as anywhere in New Zealand, have other occupations and regard pottery as a hobby; but at the same time a surprisingly large number are young men who wish to take it up as a career. And they

come from all walks of life: among others she mentioned to us an apiarist and a baker.

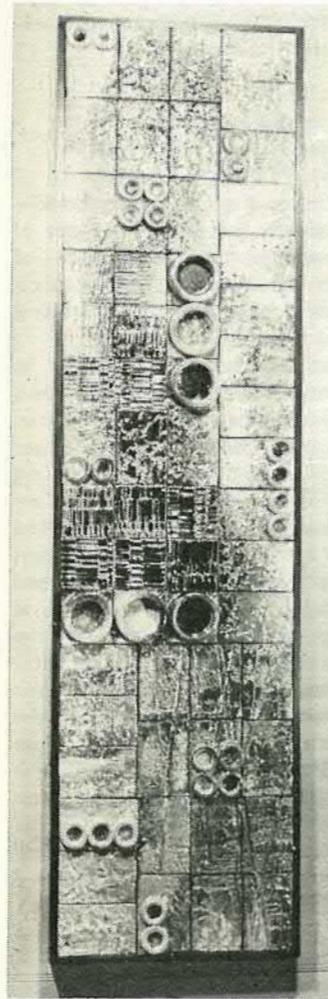
The most remarkable of Yvonne's ideas came at the time of the closing of the Dobson State Mine. If any miners were interested, she proposed teaching them pottery as an alternative career. The authorities, impressed, offered her the use of the mine's white-tiled bath-house as a pottery ("If a brewery, why not a bath-house?") and although only four men took advantage of the offer, they have all of them persevered to the point where they are now setting up potteries of their own.

All through her potting career, Yvonne has been noted for her experimentation with local clays and natural glazes. The fascination of the West Coast, she told us, has been to find clays, grogs and glazes which, occurring naturally together, naturally run together. She knows the country intimately and looks at it with a prospector's eye. Everywhere, from north of Westport to south of Haast, one has only to mention Miss Rust and her red van. On the road south to the glaciers she directed us to a sawmill where she regularly obtains rimu ash; following meticulous instructions we found the serpentine that gives Paringa brown glaze; when she caught sight of some friable rocks I had found at Stockton, I was hard put to it to prevent their turning into grog! Even the bricks with which she is building circular coal-fired kilns were found in the course of her field expeditions. They come from the coke ovens of the Brunner Mine, and have not been fired since 1898 when the mine was closed by a disaster. Hand-made in brass moulds at the rate of 600 a day, more perfect fire-bricks would be difficult to find.

By now it is more than one person can manage to keep all this activity going. But fortunately Yvonne has found other potters coming in from outside to assist her. Roger Ewer (already a Greymouth personality, since he sports a vintage car with psychedelic decoration from the brush of Phyllis Perrin) is helping her build kilns. Artist Peter Tennant, who with his wife Connie has recently moved from Christchurch to Greymouth, where they have both extended their interests in pottery, is this year helping conduct evening classes.

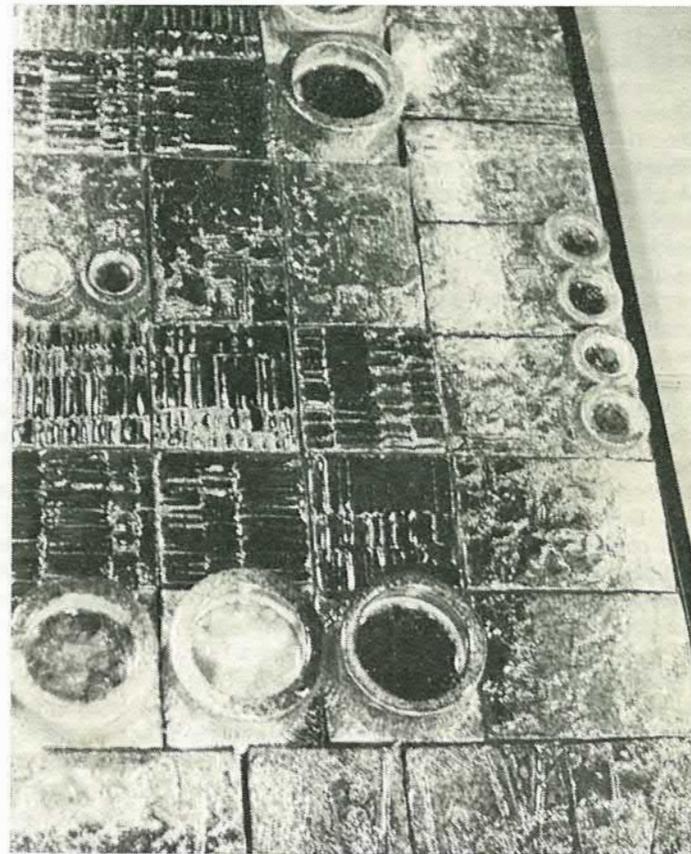
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Tiles by Nola Barron



This 5 feet 9 inches panel of ceramic tiles by Nola Barron is installed in the Christchurch Girls' High School.

photographs by Nola Barron



The atmosphere that surrounds Yvonne and her group is unashamedly and delightfully zany, but with it there goes a voracious appetite for work, and an excitement that comes from experimenting in a hitherto untapped area of New Zealand. Looking to the future, they have formed themselves into the Mawhera Potters' Associa-

tion. Their aim: to create a pottery which has cohesion and individuality; through their use of local materials, to make articles with a West Coast identity, which cannot be matched anywhere else in New Zealand. □

Jeremy Commons.

BOOKS

POTTERY FOR PLEASURE. *Elizabeth Lissaman, A H & A W Reed.*
Reviewed by Oswald Stephens.

A book which will fill a long felt gap in the potter's library is *Pottery for Pleasure* by Elizabeth Lissaman. It is written, with great care, to guide potters in the early stages of their craft.

The book is concerned solely with the making of earthenware, from the preparation of the clay slip, the drying of the slip to plastic clay, the wedging of the clay, the various methods of shaping the pot, pinching, coiled work, slab work and wheel throwing. One small, but useful section is given on the shaping of lids and spouts.

There are some excellent paragraphs on decoration, including slip work, wax resist, (which could with value be amplified), incising graffito, painting with oxides and underglaze colours. A chapter on glazes and methods of glazing should give the beginner many helpful hints, and be a useful starting point for future development.

A list of the materials and tools a beginner will need is found in Appendix I. An excellent Appendix II gives a list of the many firms in New Zealand and in Australia who supply pottery equipment and materials. Most useful to know just where you can buy what.

A few minor misprints have escaped the eye of the proof reader. 'Crocus Martis' is wrongly spelt 'Crotus Martus'. 'Nepheline Syenite' is given as 'Nepheline Seyenite'. And on page 39 in the list of glaze formulae, the word 'oxide' is omitted in speaking of Zinc, Tin and Zircon oxides. This might confuse a beginner.

Elizabeth Lissaman is one of the pioneer potters of New Zealand. She has given life-long devotion to the craft, and has now produced a book which will be of great value to anyone wishing to take their first steps along the fascinating road of potting.

The reviewer will be glad to have *Pottery for Pleasure* on his shelves because most books are too technically advanced for beginners. It will be good to have Elizabeth Lissaman's

book with its simple and clear instruction to answer questions. The book is most attractively printed with many good plates. The cover is particularly pleasing. It can wholeheartedly be recommended to all those who wish to start experimenting and developing the skill of working with earthenware pottery. □

PIONEER POTTERY. *Michael Cardew, Longmans.*
Reviewed by Peter Stitchbury.

This remarkably fine and authoritative book—a must for every serious potter—comes out of the firsthand knowledge and experience of Michael Cardew. It is largely a technical book and gives a valuable reference for the practising potter, student and teacher.

In separate chapters we have geology in lucid form, the study of the nature of clay and other raw materials such as silica and felspar. Clay bodies, glaze formulae based on the Seger formula, pot making in all aspects, kiln building (wood-firing—a new experience for most New Zealand potters) and firing, and the associated field of refractories are all dealt with. Equipment for an average size workshop is discussed, and of significance to all potters is the last chapter on the relationship of the artist potter to the fine arts on one hand, and science and industry on the other. Michael Cardew's own philosophy has valid arguments to offer. In speaking of the place of pottery in the arts, he says, 'It is time for potters to claim their proper field. Pottery in its pure form relies neither on sculptural additions nor on pictorial decorations, but on the counterpoint of form, design, colour, texture and the quality of the material, all directed to a function. This function is the uses of the home. Compared with most of the other arts it is a private and domestic art.'

Fifteen appendices follow, giving extra information on such subjects as clay testing, glaze calculation, ball mill operating, thermal expansions, temperature charts and the thermocouple pyrometer.

The photographs are all grouped together. In the main they are of hand built pottery from Nigeria. Included are decorative grain stores—made as huge coiled pots and baked in the heat of the tropical sun. A series of photographs show Ladi Kwali making a traditional Kwali

continued on page 42

NEWS OF PEOPLE, POTS & EVENTS

New Group in Gisborne

We are always pleased to hear about a new pottery group. Josephine Hacking reports:

The Gisborne Pottery Group has now been going for a year. Previously we were an unofficial group meeting once a month to share views and sort out technical details common to us all. During this period Patricia Perrin came and gave us a week's school. This provided great stimulus. Later, members of the Napier Group came for a series of weekends and the help they gave us was of great value because they were using the same clay mixture and could therefore pass on some good basic glaze recipes.

It was becoming clear that an official group was necessary, especially for those who had attended the courses at one or other of the local high schools and wanted to continue potting without committing themselves to buying their own wheels and kilns. So the group was formed and fund raising began.

Within a surprisingly short time we had acquired a shed which the Gisborne Art Society kindly allowed us to put on their property. They also lent us money to buy our first wheel and electric kiln. But we are quickly becoming self supporting and intend to buy another wheel and build an oil fired kiln for stoneware.

There are now 32 members—full members who use the equipment, and associate members who have their own equipment but take part in group activities. We have two local exhibitions a year, run in conjunction with the Art Society. This centennial year, with the Philatelic Society and the Post Office we staged a special exhibition of local pottery to help raise money for a city community hall.

Earlier this year we were lucky to have Doreen Blumhardt for a weekend school. We hope to be able to offer the group schools of this kind from time to time, because they release new energy and enthusiasm.

One of our members has been accepted as a member of the New Zealand Society of Potters and others are very active, experimenting with

low fired earthenware and producing red glazes and coloured glass effects with some success.

We would welcome any potters visiting our district and hope they get in touch with us.

News from Dunedin

Since the *Potter* was last in print, the Otago Potters Group has held a very successful Open Day. Members demonstrated various aspects of the potter's craft, in fact everything from clay mixing and preparation to firing. In the three hours more than 400 people came through our workshop and some from as far away as Milton and Oamaru. Much interest was shown in the work and many of the men were busy taking measurements of the basic equipment! We were very encouraged to find so much interest and feel that the Open Day was helpful to those who like to buy handmade pottery, but have little idea how it is made, and the time it takes. We displayed a selection of good New Zealand pottery belonging to the members; pottery by most of the well known potters, so that people could also see what is considered good by national standards.

The group has recently installed electricity slot meters for paying for the firing of the electric kilns. We set the meters to cover the cost of electricity used plus a small amount extra to cover depreciation—kiln furniture, cones and so on. This scheme is proving most satisfactory for all concerned and we would recommend it to other groups.

There have been two exhibitions in Dunedin. Ian Gray-Smith with his theme 'moneybags' showed in the Public Library lecture theatre. Most of the work was salt glazed and there were some very effective rock forms adapted for flowers and seaweed arrangements. These showed a stronger feeling for texture than has been evident before. The few wall plaques showed more refinement in finish, but it would

be good to see this work on a bigger scale.

In May the *Connoisseur* held an exhibition of Yvonne Rust's work. This showed a very virile and robust treatment of the clay and an obvious involvement with her materials. It would appear that Yvonne Rust has an acceptance of nature's part in the forming of her pottery—in some ways it could be called an Oriental approach. She is prepared to take, and in fact rejoices in, what the clay, glaze and flames provide, during the process of her creating. Because of this philosophy she is prepared to stand by her work in the face of criticism of its finish. *Beryl Jowett*.

Return from abroad

Graeme Storm is back in Auckland after 18 months in Canada, Britain and Scandinavia. Graeme was tutor at the Pottery Summer School in Quebec, and in the autumn undertook a lecture demonstration tour organised jointly by the Canadian Guild of Potters, and the Canada Council.

After some time spent in Britain and Scandinavia, Graeme and his wife Jackie returned home via Russia and Japan.

Showing in Hamilton

John Parker and Grant Hudson, two young Auckland potters, held their first exhibition recently at the Upstairs Gallery, Hamilton. A feature of the exhibition seemed to be the very different approach and character of the work shown by these two potters, who have been subject to very similar influences. It will be interesting to see more of their work in the future.

Invitation from South Australia

We've had a letter from Mr Harry Marchant, president of the South Australia Studio Potters Club. He says the club which has fine premises and a limited membership of 150 would like to extend club fraternity to potter visitors from New Zealand. Mr Marchant gives his address as 27 Commercial Road, Hyde Park, South Australia 5061.

Coromandel news

The new post office opened in Coromandel recently has a series of ten stoneware tiles which are a feature of the entrance. Each 6 x 6 tile depicts some industry or activity carried on in Coromandel—fishing, mining, logging, ploughing, shearing, potting and the Driving Creek Railway! The potter responsible for this interesting idea—Barry Brickell.

Warren Tippett has built a new workshop and is enjoying plenty of space to work in. Warren, some of whose pots are shown on the cover of this issue, held an impressive exhibition of nearly 200 pieces at New Vision in August.

Gail and Gerry Greenwood now have a jet burner kiln and are producing some good reduced celadons.

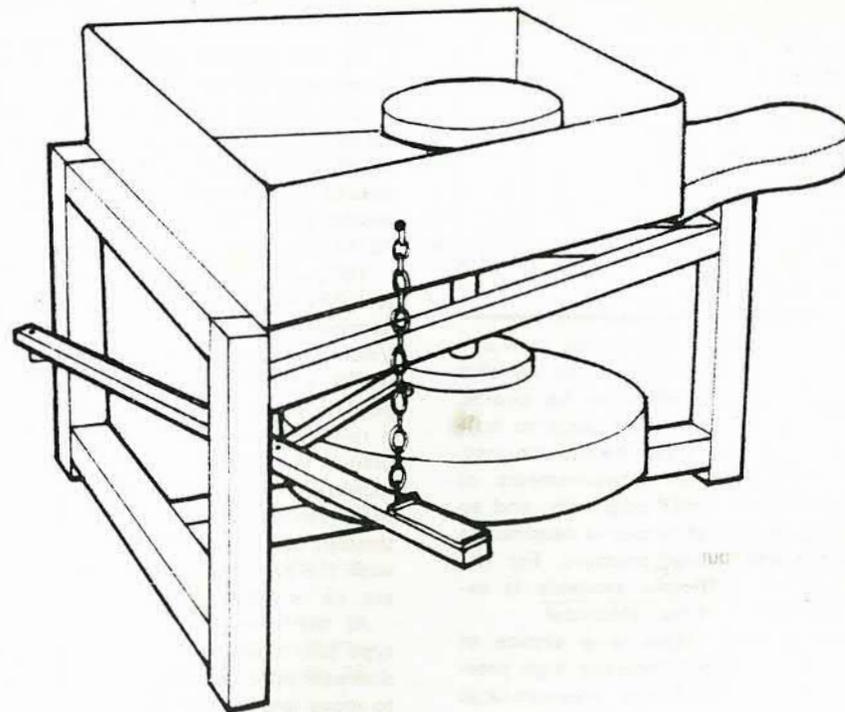
Valuable experience for Christchurch potters

Fifty people were fortunate enough to attend a pottery school conducted by Mr Harry Davis of Crewenna Pottery at Risingholme this year.

The tremendous speed and confidence with which Mr Davis threw a series of teapots, coffee pots, bowls, casseroles and vases held his audience spellbound. Typical Crewenna pots are simple, practical and honest, graceful in line and devoid of the embellishments too frequently found in the work of lesser potters.

His lecture dealt with ceramic materials, clays, glaze materials and glaze problems. He also showed slides which dealt with the making of such equipment as kiln, ball mill and pug mill.

Finally he gave a talk on 'The conflict between Art and Commerce looked at historically with a view to considering the role of creative arts in the future'. In a scholarly talk enlivened by his fund of good humour, he showed how, as long as the artist or craftsman lived in an anti-commercial society, his work had a sparkle, playfulness and variety, but with the coming of the art patron and the business tycoon the artist or sculptor was drawn into social contact with princes and his work lost the exuberance it once had. If pottery can escape the preciousness often associated with the artistic point of view it has something important to do.



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How to blow

by Roy Cowan

When air under pressure has to be provided to fire a kiln some cost is involved, so we offer these notes to aid the sufferer in his choice. After all, he might as well know what to buy, or how to deal with the bargain he has acquired.

Compared with the power requirements of such things as wheels, small pug mills, and so on, a surprising amount of power is required to maintain an air flow under pressure. For our purposes, the limit of power available is assumed to be from $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 h.p. electrical.

Accepting this level, there is a choice of systems which are aligned between high pressure—small air volume and low pressure—large volume. The high pressure systems can atomise the fuel spray more effectively so permitting starts from cold on the one type of burner, but necessitate a large commitment in power and mechanism in relation to kiln size. The low pressure systems achieve a better ratio of power to kiln size and simpler burners can be used,

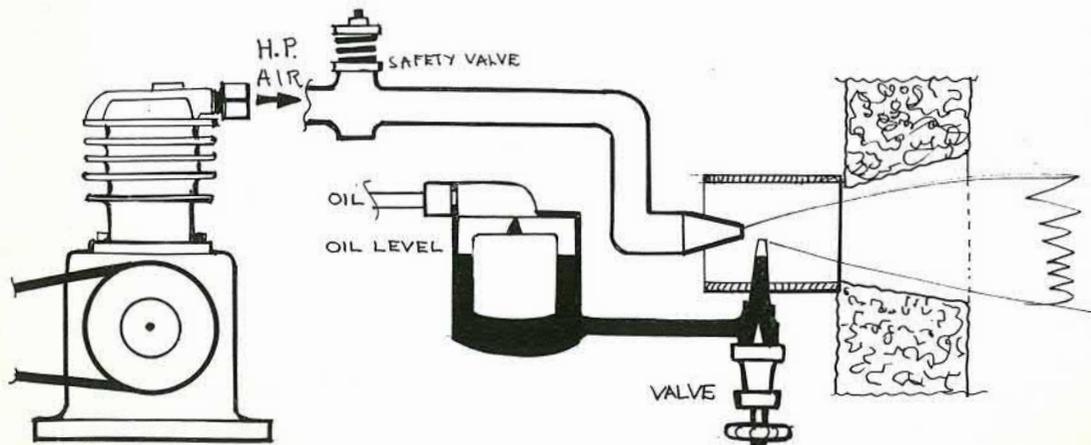
but pot burners are often necessary as a starting stage.

At the highest pressure end lies the air compressor system. The motor-driven compressor, of the type used in garages or for paint-spraying gear, is applied to a regulating nozzle which produces an oil mist fine enough to ignite readily. The volume of air within the 1 h.p. limit would allow the firing of a kiln in the range 12 to 20 cubic feet from two burners.

Turning to the fans, the type called a forge fan, having a large diameter casing of narrow section, lies in the middle of the pressure-volume range. Whereas the compressor produces a small volume of air at pressures of pounds per square inch, the forge fan musters a relatively large flow at high pressures measured in the scale of inches water gauge—twelve inches would be a normal pressure. At 1 h.p. a forge fan is well suited to firing kilns, either through variants of the atomising nozzle as used with the compressor, or with pot and jet burners, up to 80 cubic feet.

At the low pressure end is the ventilating type fan, marked by a bulky casing with large diameter inlet and delivery ducts, and designed to move large volumes at low pressure. 3 inches water gauge is a median figure for the pressure range, and large kilns fitted with pot burners or with jets can be fired.

Below, high-pressure system. Either the float system shown or a magnetic cut-off valve should be fitted.

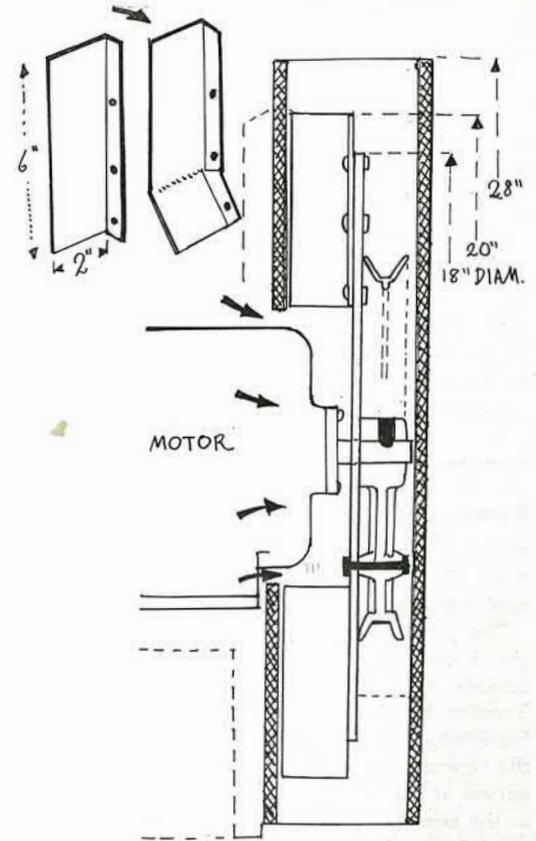
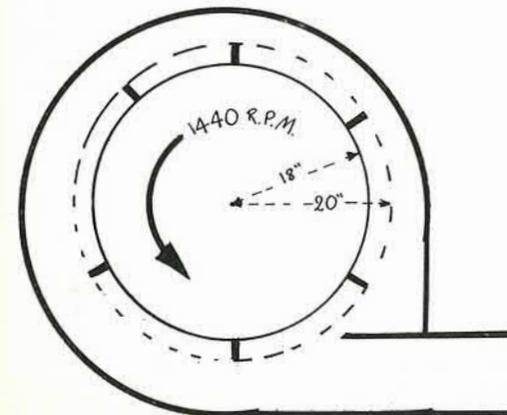


Both forge and ventilating type blowers are made with motors incorporated, or with pulleys for belt drive. If the latter system, requiring an independent electric motor, is used, it will be found that pulley ratios must be arranged to give a substantial increase in fan speed over the usual motor speed of 1440 r.p.m. This form of drive, however, has some disadvantages. With small electric motors, it is possible to draw relatively high power outputs for short periods—as in a wheel, where the drag produced while centring a lump of clay lasts a short time only. But kiln fans will operate at a steady load for hours, so the value of the load must be well within the maximum or the motor will heat up. Unfortunately belt drives themselves require a surprising amount of power.

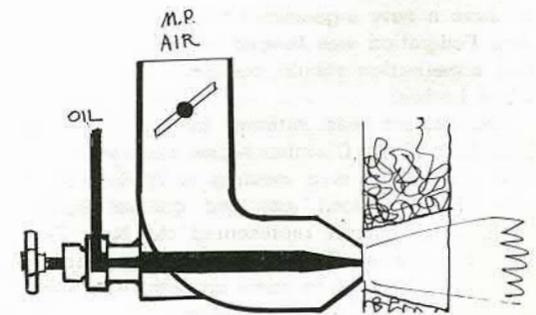
The answer would seem to be, then, to find or make a fan which will produce the right air values at motor speed, so permitting direct drive with minimum transmission loss. In this case, the motor can be part of the fan, deriving forced cooling from the air intake.

Here are details of a fan which is easy to build and is used to fire pot or jet type systems up to 160 cubic feet, at pressures between $2\frac{3}{4}$ and $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches water gauge.

The rotor is a disc of one-eighth aluminium eighteen inches in diameter carrying six or eight radial blades six inches long and projecting two inches from the disc. The blades, of one sixteenth aluminium sheet, are riveted in place to extend one inch beyond the rim of the disc so that a twenty-inch circle is swept. An alternative kinked blade form which will resist vibra-



Below, medium pressure system, using a forge fan. Both oil and air are regulated. Above, section of fan. The example employs a large size diecast pulley wheel to stiffen the fan disc. Note that the fan rotor, below left, is off-centre in the casing, producing a tapering duct.



tion better is shown, but the straight form is quite reliable. Care is taken to produce a balanced unit.

The shaft may be the actual motor shaft if of five eighths or three quarters diameter, or a standard saw bench spindle, linked to the motor through a flexible shaft coupling. Half inch ply may be used for the casing. The shaft axis is offset from the centre of the casing so that a tapering air duct is formed outside the fan area. In construction, the relation of motor or shaft and casing must be rigidly fixed so that the free edge of the fan blades can run about one eighth of an inch from the casing wall without liability to contact through flexing. If the motor is not adjacent to the fan inlet, a duct should be made

to take the inflow from beside the motor to aid cooling.

The twenty-inch model will provide ample air for kilns up to at least 100 cubic feet, a $\frac{3}{4}$ h.p. motor being required. For kilns below 50 cubic feet, a sixteen-inch fan and $\frac{1}{2}$ h.p. motor will be ample.

If a double-pole type motor running at 2800 r.p.m. is used, a compact type of fan with eight or ten inch rotor may be constructed. In service, the actual work performed by the motors driving such fans is greatest when the largest air flow is occurring and least when no burners are connected. The right way to regulate air flow, accordingly, is to use an air valve rather than to allow air to blow off. □

Books continued from page 36

water pot, and others show some of the equipment discussed in chapter II. The book is also well illustrated with clear diagrams.

The particular appeal of this book comes with the knowledge that it is written with such genuine authority and experience behind it. As Bernard Leach says, 'This is not mere book knowledge nor are the formulae dry; everywhere the contact with harsh necessity, and with nature in the raw, rules out sentimentality and at the same time enlivens what might have been the aridity of theoretical science.'

It is also a book with human appeal, written for fellow potters, often laced with wit and humour and with an individual approach which will have universal attraction. □

Towards cooperation

In June a new organisation called the National Arts Federation was formed. It is intended that this organisation should coordinate all arts and allied bodies.

The project was initiated by Arthur Hilton, President of the Chamber Music Federation and was given form at a meeting in Wellington of most New Zealand arts and cultural bodies (Doreen Blumhardt represented the New Zealand Society of Potters), which appointed a steering committee to come up with recommendations for a September meeting. □

Meet the editor



Margaret Harris, editor of the Potter; arts graduate, University of Canterbury; housewife; mother; gardener; one-time schoolteacher; four years editor of Export News for Industries and Commerce Department; has tried her hand at potting but prefers to write about other people's pots. Photograph by Douglas E Cosh

De-airing pug mills

by Harry Davis

Introduction

Much of the potters' activities seem legitimately classifiable under the heading 'heavy manual'. Wedging and kneading are undoubtedly among the heaviest of these and ever since I first heard the merits of the vacuum pug mill extolled I aspired to possess one. No doubt many potters have had the same thought, but the price (over \$1,000 without freight) is prohibitive.

Over a number of years I have collected information and pondered the possibility of building such a machine. This is the result, and expectations have been handsomely fulfilled at a cost about one-third the price of a machine of comparable performance landed in New Zealand. This was not achieved on a do-it-yourself basis, as the machine was built by a local firm of engineers.

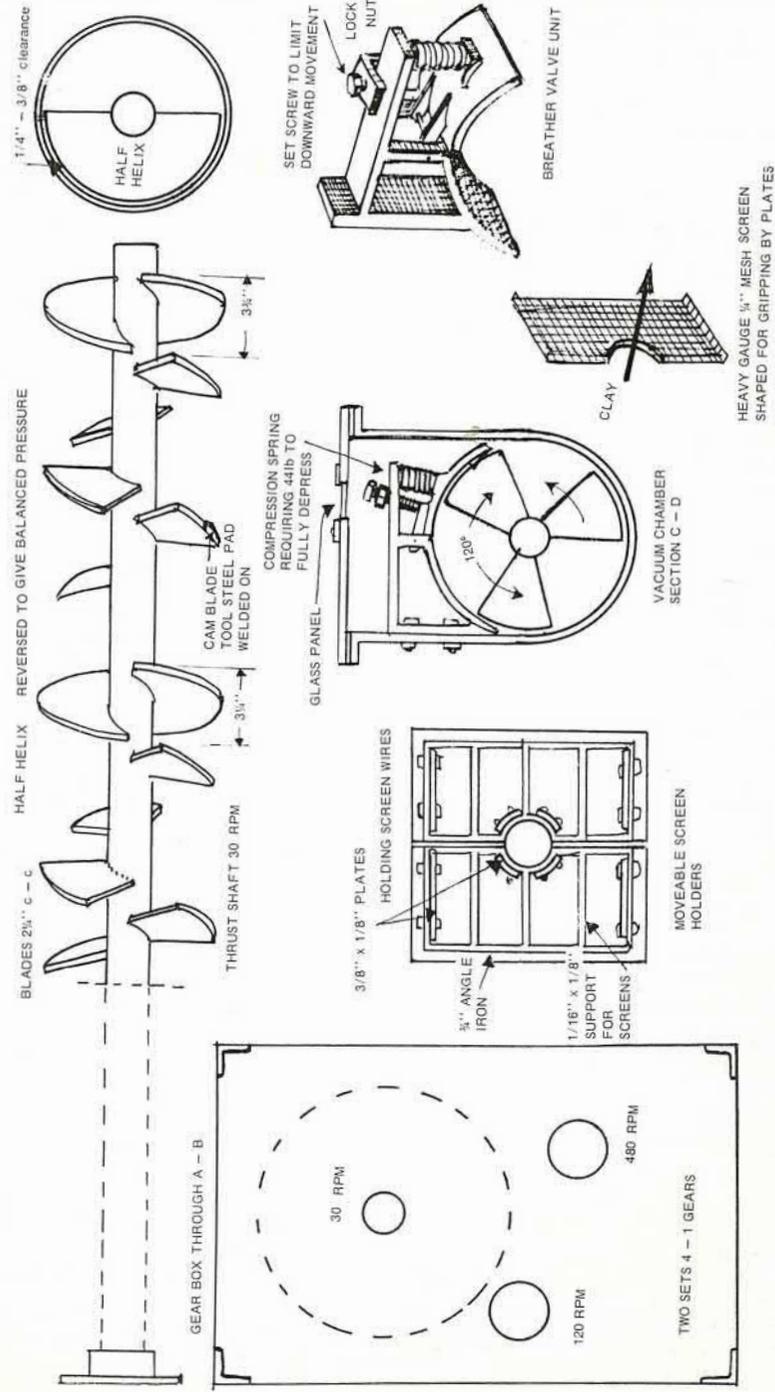
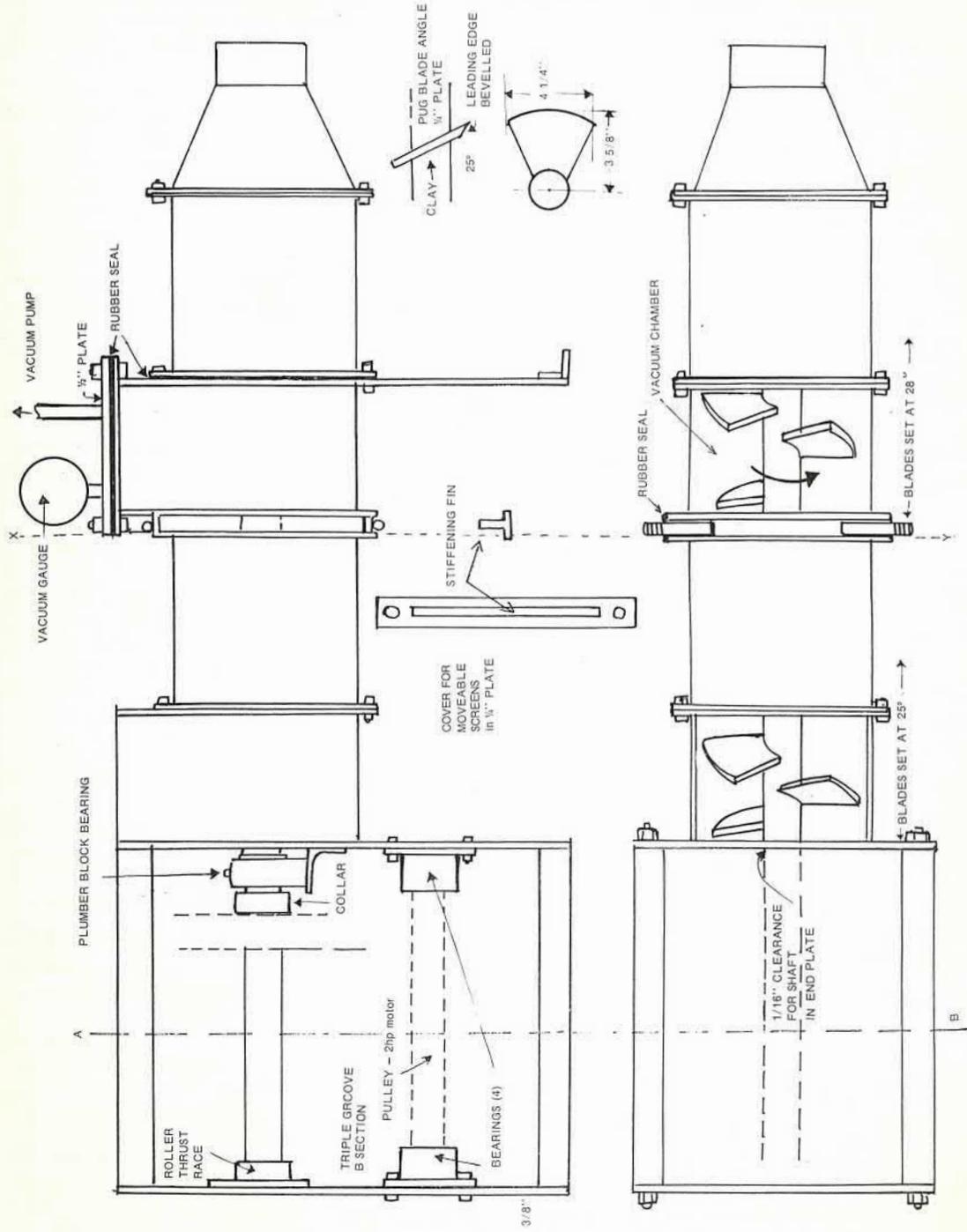
A mixture of newly cut turnings and water can be de-aired to yield clay in delectable condition ready to throw immediately, and in one pugging. Such air and bubble-free material is almost impossible to achieve by kneading and wedging, even when starting with more promising stuff. It is also a remarkable fact that the de-airing process produces a marked increase in plasticity. This is a property most valuable in the case of naturally short clays and bodies such as porcelain.

Definition

A vacuum pug mill consists essentially of two ordinary horizontal pug mills connected together with a vacuum chamber between them. The clay enters the vacuum chamber in a shredded (spaghetti like) condition. Air pockets, including minute interstitial air cavities in clay thus shredded, explode in a vacuum and the clay is said to be de-aired. The second pug mill gathers up the shredded clay in the vacuum chamber and recompresses and extrudes it. This process is complicated by the fact that the clay from the first pug mill is assisted through the screen by the pressure of the atmosphere (14 pounds per square inch or 700 pounds on an 8 inch bore pug as illustrated). It is also hindered in its exit from the second pug mill by the same atmospheric pressure and the resistance of a conical mouthpiece. This state of affairs causes the universal problem which is the tendency for the shredded clay to bank up in the vacuum chamber, and accounts for the fact that these machines are always provided with an inspection window in the lid of that chamber.

This tendency can be controlled to some slight degree by the rate of feeding, but if this is not continuous and adequate, air enters the vacuum chamber via the feeding mouth and the vacuum fails. Various methods have been adopted to deal with this problem mechanically. One method is to have the first and second pug mills on different levels with independent blade/auger shafts. This presents the possibility of running the two shafts at different speeds, and also the possibility of stopping one without the other. Another system is to set the blades and augers at a different pitch in the two halves of the machine so that the clay in the second mill is propelled more vigorously than that in the first.

Yet another device used in Germany is to mount an auger vertically in the vacuum chamber, fitted with a reduction gear and independent motor. The end of this auger, which revolves a little faster than the main pug shaft, is on a level with the top of the shredder plates and performs a continuous downward pushing action on the shredded clay.



HEAVY GAUGE 1/2" MESH SCREEN SHAPED FOR GRIPPING BY PLATES

HARRY DAVIS'S VACUUM PUG MILL

The design illustrated here uses the differential pitch principle and includes a device invented by the writer which performs the same function as the vertical auger described above. Its action is very similar but it has the merit of being very much simpler and cheaper to construct. This device has been named a 'breather valve' as its function, in addition to resisting the upsurge of shredded clay, ensures that the vacuum above it is continuously linked with the area containing the shredded clay. The breather valve is operated by a cam of hard steel on the tip of one of the blades so that it opens and closes once with every revolution of the blade shaft.

Some design features explained

Blade clearance

It will be noted that the clearance between the blades and the cylinder ($\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{3}{8}$ ") is liberal and not very precise. A liberal clearance is important as the movement of the clay through the mill depends on its adhesion to the walls of the cylinder. For the same reason a high gloss painted surface on the walls of the cylinder is undesirable. If the blades come too close to the walls the clay is liable to rotate with the blades, and the same thing happens if the walls are painted with a glossy paint.

Bearings

The length of unsupported shaft inside the cylinder is much greater than the length between the only two bearings. When the mill is empty this permits of considerable whip on the end of the shaft (this machine was built with a $1\frac{5}{8}$ " shaft). This whip is not critical, as when the machine is full of clay, the pressure of clay from all sides exerts a centralising influence on the shaft.

Shredding screens

The usual industrial practice is to use perforated steel plates. The idea of using wire mesh instead arose because small machines using steel plates are notorious for their slow delivery.

The writer even encountered one establishment where a small vacuum pug was despised and left idle, because it was claimed one could wedge the clay quicker by hand. Obviously, a wire mesh screen would have a limited life, but the speed of delivery (20 pounds per minute with ease) and the moderate h.p. consumption are compensations which seem to weigh in favour of the wire mesh. The rate of wear on the wire mesh seems very slow, as after five months of use no noticeable loss of thickness of the wires is visible.

Locating collar

The collar shown positioned against the plumber block bearing on the blade shaft has the sole function of holding the shaft in the conical roller thrust race when the machine is empty of clay.

Breather valve

It will be noted that the breather valve has a curved terminal on the outer end. This consists of a piece of $\frac{3}{8}$ " rod welded on to the end. This curved end was added to prevent a small slither of clay from rising over the end each time the valve descended. In any case, a slight upsurge of clay occurs around the edges and along the hinge joint, and as the pugging action always generates heat, this clay tends to harden. If the machine is not used for two or three days it is advisable to remove the breather valve unit and clean it. The slithers of clay which get past the valve need to be removed periodically in any case. To make this simpler, quick release wing nuts are recommended for the cover of the vacuum chamber.

Gear wheels

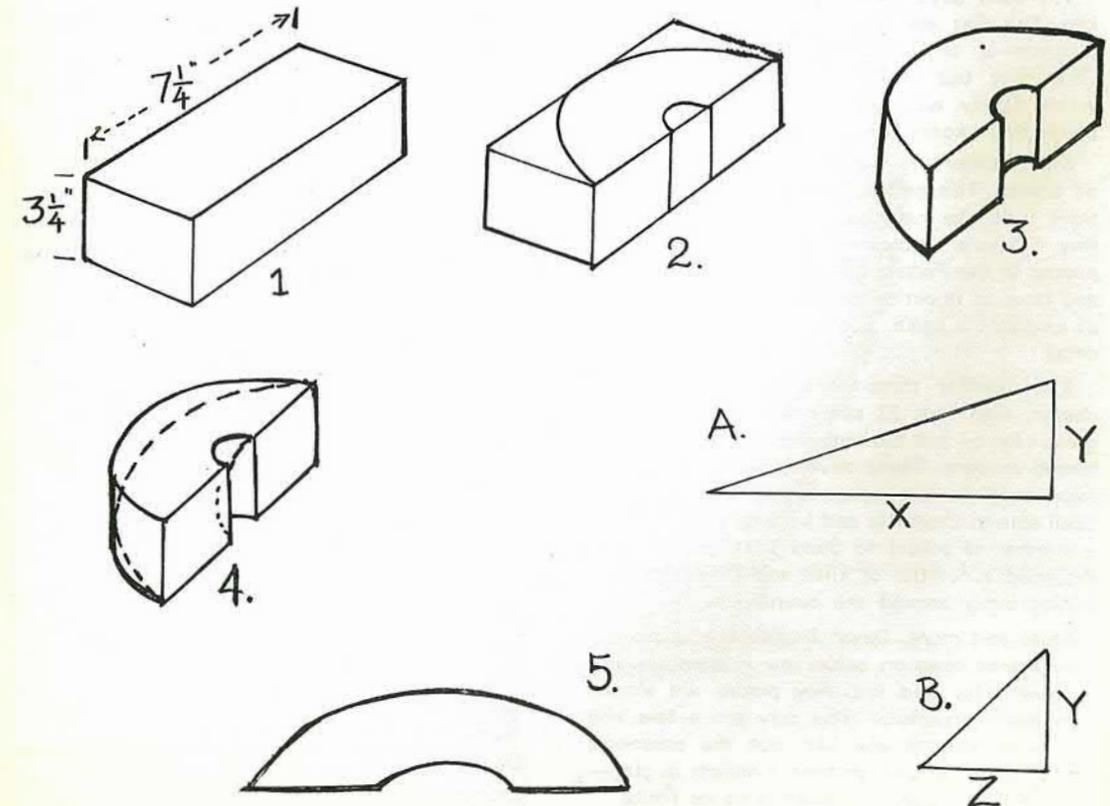
The gear ratios of 4 - 1 x 2 indicated can, of course, be changed according to what is available and in relation to motor speed. (A motor speed of 1450 r.p.m. was the standard in this case.)

Making a template for shaping an auger or helix

Whatever combination of cold bending and hot forging is used, it is necessary to have a template with the correct helical curve. This can be arrived at and shaped in wood by the following method.

If the diameter of the intended helix is $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches and the spiral traverse for half a revolution is $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches prepare a block of wood as in illustration 1. Then take a point exactly central along the $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches side and describe two semi-circles on the wider faces, one corresponding to the radius of the helix and the other to the radius of the shaft for which the helix is intended, see illustration 2. Then cut along these radii with a band saw to produce the form shown in illustration 3. Next cut out two paper right angle triangles, A and B.

X = half the length of the circumference of a circle with radius $3\frac{5}{8}$ inches. Y = $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches,



which is the spiral traverse of half a revolution of the intended helix.

Z = half the circumference of a circle with radius the same as the shaft. Y = as above $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

Next paste triangle A on the outside curve of form 3, and triangle B on the inside curve. See the dotted lines on illustration 4. Note that the two Y sides of the paper triangles must be on the same side of the centre of the block. The choice of which side of centre is taken will decide whether a left hand or right hand helix is to result. The wood showing above the hypotenuse sides of the two triangles is then cut away. The surface thus exposed has the spiral curve of the desired helix and can be used as a template in forging. A piece of soft paper pressed on to this surface and marked round the edges will give the shape in a flat plane of the shape needed for forging. This will have an elliptical shape as in illustration 5. □

The large single piece

As an architect it is not surprising that David Brokenshire concentrates almost entirely on sculptural pieces. The latest go to the full height of the kiln—44 inches. 'I'm thrilled with the presence of good pieces. They stand so completely alone and don't need you any longer.'

Always interested in music, painting and sculpture, David, while at university, was accepted as a working member of the Auckland Society of Arts, specialising in painting. He started pottery in Christchurch in 1962; is largely self-taught; benefitted from weekend schools and acknowledges generous help from other established potters. He says he had the feeling that if he started potting as a hobby it would take control—it has.

The early days were spent wrestling with the kiln. The first was built from a Bernard Leach diagram—a tiny updraught wood firing kiln. Great fun, but soon inadequate. He says the whole family was drawn into the tremendous battle-field excitement of firing the wood burner.

Kiln number two was a 4 cubic feet drip fired oil burner. This poured smuts and strained relations over the neighbourhood. Then thankfully Roy Cowan's articles on kilns and burners appeared in the *Potter*. The change to pot burners and later to injection burners too, made friends of neighbours again. Soon this kiln also was too small.

Kiln number three modelled on a Cowan design, fires two 22 cubic feet chambers progressively by pot burners and injection oil with forced draught. These developments were good experience in kiln construction which he has been able to share. He and his wife have assisted a number of others to build kilns. He has also designed a number of kilns and these are now puffing away around the countryside.

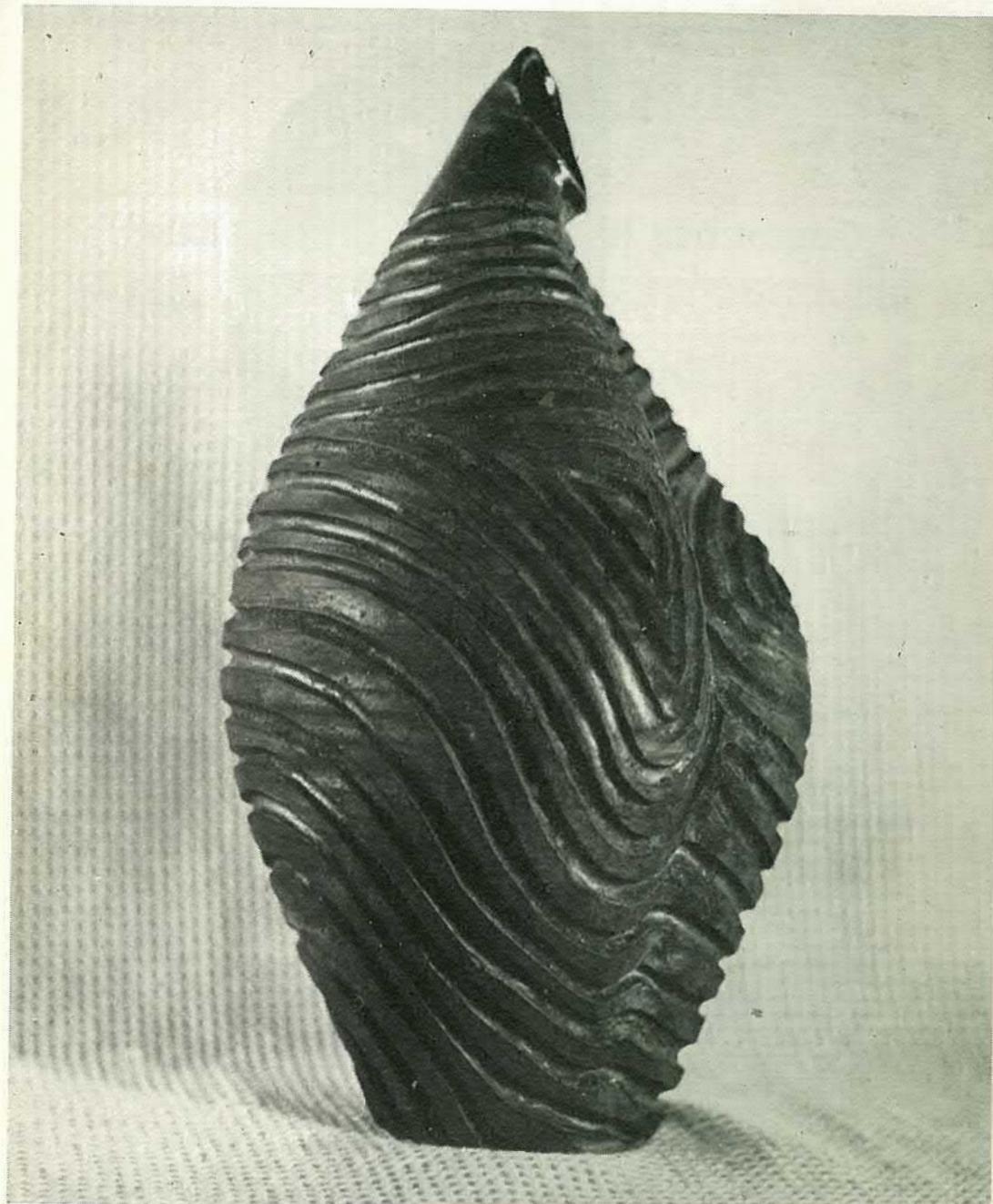
More and more, David Brokenshire is putting thoughts of function aside and is simply working with clay and fire. 'My pieces are almost completely sculptural. You can jam a few bull rushes in them if you like, but the essentials for me are form and material. I delight in clay—its texture and colour. I push it to its limits.'

David's work has been exhibited overseas and is currently showing in Canberra, part of the New Zealand pottery exhibition arranged and sponsored by the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council. A member of the New Zealand Society of Potters, he exhibits in their annual exhibitions and recently, with his wife Noeline and Karin Wakely, put on a 'Clay, Wood and Wool' exhibition at the Canterbury Society of Arts gallery.

After a number of years as a very active member of the Canterbury Potters Association, David now finds his time taken up with giving lecture demonstrations to groups in Christchurch, not exclusively pottery groups, and recently to weekend schools as far afield as Timaru and Invercargill. □



David Brokenshire with one of his larger pieces.



'Lady in waiting' by David Brokenshire, 14 in. high.



'Atilla' by David Brokenshire. 15 in. high.



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THIRTEENTH EXHIBITION

The New Zealand Society of Potters 13th exhibition will be held in the Auckland War Memorial Museum special exhibition hall. The exhibition will be opened by Mr Frederick Turnovsky OBE on Saturday 15 November. It will be open to the public during museum hours from 11 am on Sunday 16 November until 2 pm on Sunday 30 November.

Guest exhibitors: Marea Gazzard, Sydney; Milton Moon, Queensland.

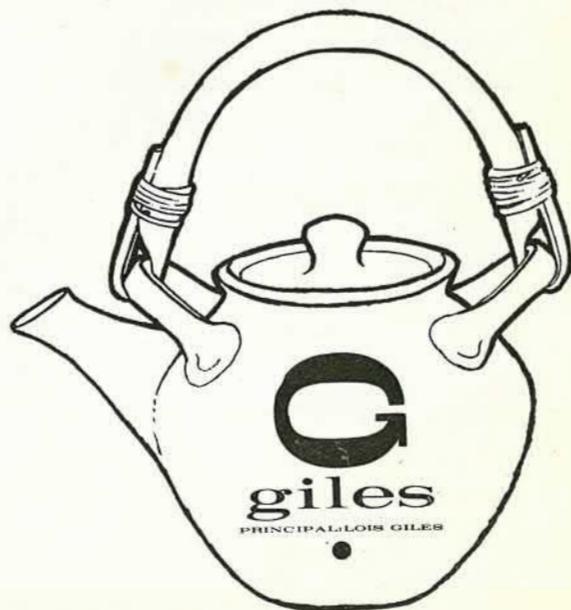
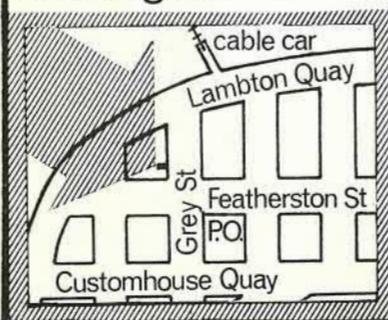
Exhibition selector: Ivan McMeekin, University of New South Wales.

Exhibition committee: The standing committee of the Auckland Studio Potters is responsible for the mounting and management of the exhibition. Entry forms may be obtained from the exhibition secretary, Mrs Doris Dutch, 8 Abbotleigh Avenue, Te Atatu, Auckland 8—or from Mr N Macken, Secretary, New Zealand Society of Potters, PO Box 3294, Wellington.

Works may be submitted by exhibiting members of the New Zealand Society of Potters or by candidates for exhibiting membership. All entries must reach Auckland not later than **Wednesday 22 October**.

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