

NEW ZEALAND

potter

1972

P. backhouse

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AUTUMN 1972
VOLUME 14/1

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NEW ZEALAND POTTER is a non-profit making magazine published twice annually

Subscription rates: Within New Zealand: \$2 per annum, post free. Australia: \$2.20
Canada, U.S.A. \$US2.40 United Kingdom: 22/-
Other countries: \$US2.40

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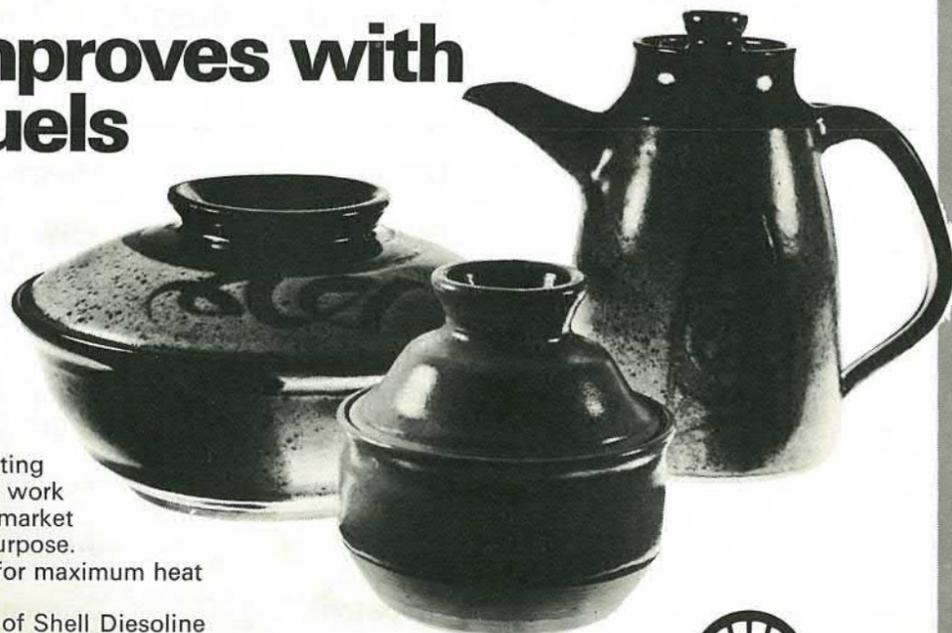
Printed by
Deslandes Ltd.
Wellington

Editorial/subscription/advertising correspondence
should be addressed to **New Zealand Potter**
P.O. Box 12-162 Wellington North New Zealand

New look for the N.Z. Potter

This issue of the Potter springs a new look on our readers. Improved techniques on the production side and need of increased space for content requires a larger and more flexible format. To mark this step forward we take the opportunity to show in detail, potters related to their environment.

firing improves with better fuels



The choice of fuel for heating a kiln is very important to work done on the wheel. Shell market two basic fuels for this purpose.

Shell Diesoline—a fuel for maximum heat output.

Shell Thermol—a blend of Shell Diesoline and illuminating kerosine with excellent vaporising qualities for initial light-up.

Ask your nearest Shell Depot about fuel delivery.

Kitchenware by Roy Cowan, Ngaio. The stoneware coffee pot and casserole were Shell fired at 1300-1350°C and the porcelain sugar bowl at 1350-1400°C.



40.2

NEW ZEALAND potter

editorial

Since potters by the nature of their work are closely attached to the soil, they are keen on growing things. Most grow something even if its confined to bonsai trees or a row of vegetables. For many potters the urge to grow has been so strong that they have taken to the land in a big way. They are not suburban gardeners, but landscapers going about systematic planting to reverse the tree-felling epoch started by the early settlers which persists in some quarters to this day.

The potter is fortunate in that he can live almost anywhere. Since space in grounds and buildings is what he is looking for he can find it in the country. Often there is an older house to be retained and deficiencies in the vegetation are put right by planting, to create a total living and working environment sympathetic to the potters needs, as natural looking as possible, but in fact planned. Potters are to be found all over New Zealand living in these kinds of surroundings. In this issue we have chosen country potteries near Wellington to describe in detail how they are doing it. All have something in common in that they are

conserving and regenerating rather than exploiting the landscape, but each naturally places emphasis on different aspects of his environment according to his personality and his needs.

Reference is made also to other craftsmen and artists who are using old urban buildings as workshops/studios/galleries. The reason for using these old places is not always altruistic but sound economics. They need space, and houses built before 1920, presumably when building costs were lower, is where they find it. Nevertheless the fact that many older houses of architectural merit are being taken over and put to use by people of sensitivity, ensures that they stay alive instead of being pulled down to make way for OYOs.

It is encouraging to see that the government has given recognition to the fact that a harmonious environment has to be consciously sought and is not the automatic biproduct of material development. The appointment of a Minister of Environment is a small but formal beginning.

OUR COVER

Cover photo by Marti Friedlander of Barry Brickell's estate at Driving Creek, Coromandel. Two truckloads of pots rumble across a ten foot viaduct on his 10 inch gauge private railway system. As Barry himself says 'a little peril improves a good pot'

INDEX FOR POTTER

The Potter will be fifteen! Next year to mark fifteen years of publication we will be printing an index for volumes one to fourteen. John Stackhouse who has undertaken the task of compiling the index is listing both potter and subject to make the most useful reference possible.



Photo: A. Brandon

Jane, Hana and Mirek

Closely to the land Potters and environment By Margaret Harris

Mirek and Jane Smisek have been at Te Horo near Levin for just on two years although it would appear longer judging from the development already taken place.

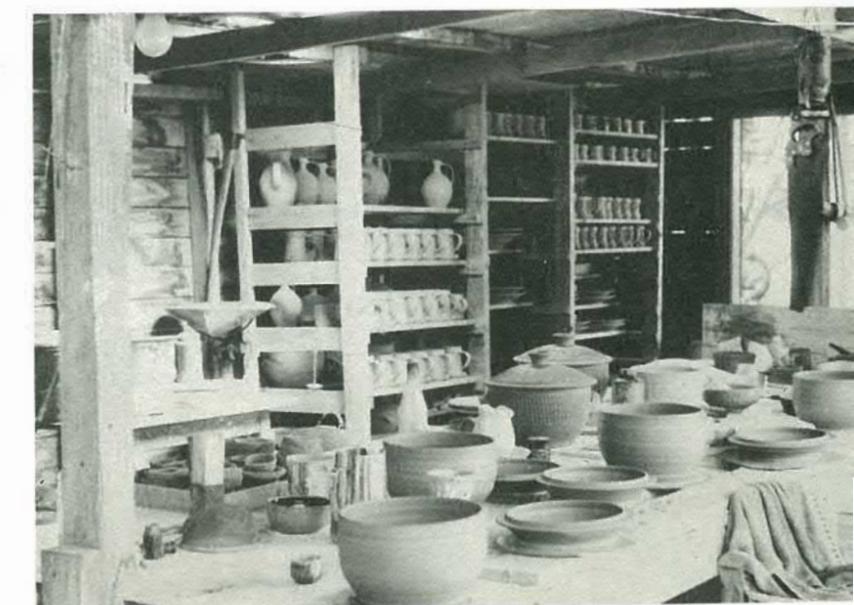
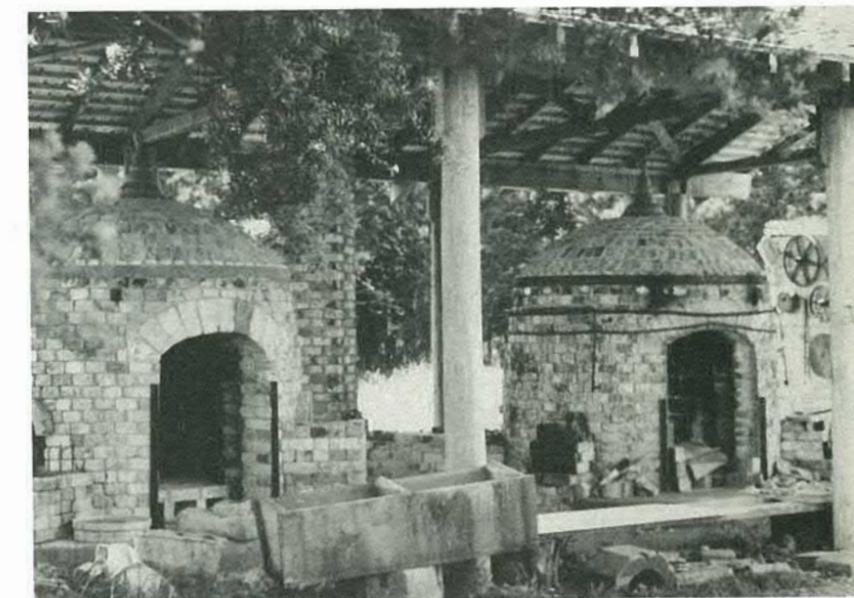
The eye catching feature of Mirek's and Jane's place is the kilns. These twin beehive kilns, one for stoneware firing, one for salt glazing are architectural works of art. The firebrick domes topped with clay finial, look as someone said, like seventh century Byzantium. They are certainly new—in the Manawatu. Blazing from a night firing they provide a sight worth seeing for travellers flashing past on the nearby main trunk line.

The care with which Mirek has designed and built his kilns, to be things of beauty in themselves,

to be sited where they can be seen as part of the surroundings, is typical of his attitude to his work. In real craftsmen tradition he is concerned with the quality not only of the product, but of all the things that go in to make it, and this includes his tools and his living and working environment. He has consciously set about creating a sympathetic environment for he feels that if he is in harmony with his environment his pots will be that much better. In establishing themselves, the pottery and the garden had equal priority. Mirek and Jane have done a lot of planting—exclusively natives and have worked wonders: rhubarb patch into alpine garden, parsely into fernery and a great deal more in time counted in months. They say the secret is water—day and night.

The house is a typical turn of the century house with a generous verandah. The kind of New Zealand house that is well worth keeping. (Only too often these are the houses given over to hay, while the misguided owner has moved into a stark brick box that will never sit happily in its countryside.) Two bedrooms have made a showroom and other pots are displayed along the verandah or outside on benches of disused wooden railway sleepers. Sleepers are not the only piece of obsolete N.Z.R. equipment the Smiseks have made use of. They have the Te Horo station which was moved along the line! Eight hundred square feet of railway station, loo, timetable-blackboard and all, provide necessary bedrooms for three children and space for mess making, as Mirek says otherwise known as a creative room.

Mirek continues to make high quality thrown pots for which he has an established reputation. Jane, who took up pottery after her marriage to Mirek, makes slabware.



Kiln shed, twin kilns and throwing room

Photos: Doreen Blumhardt

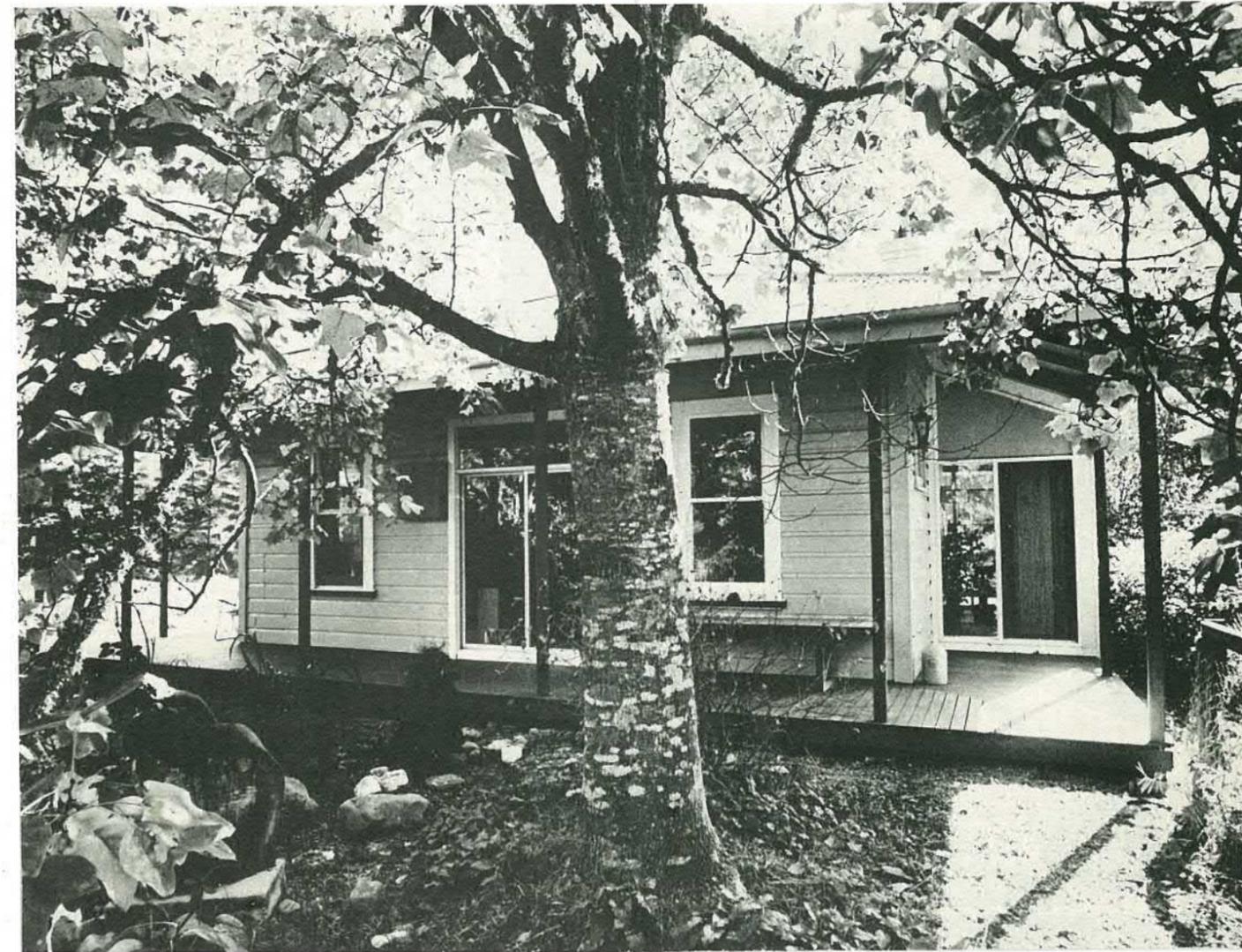
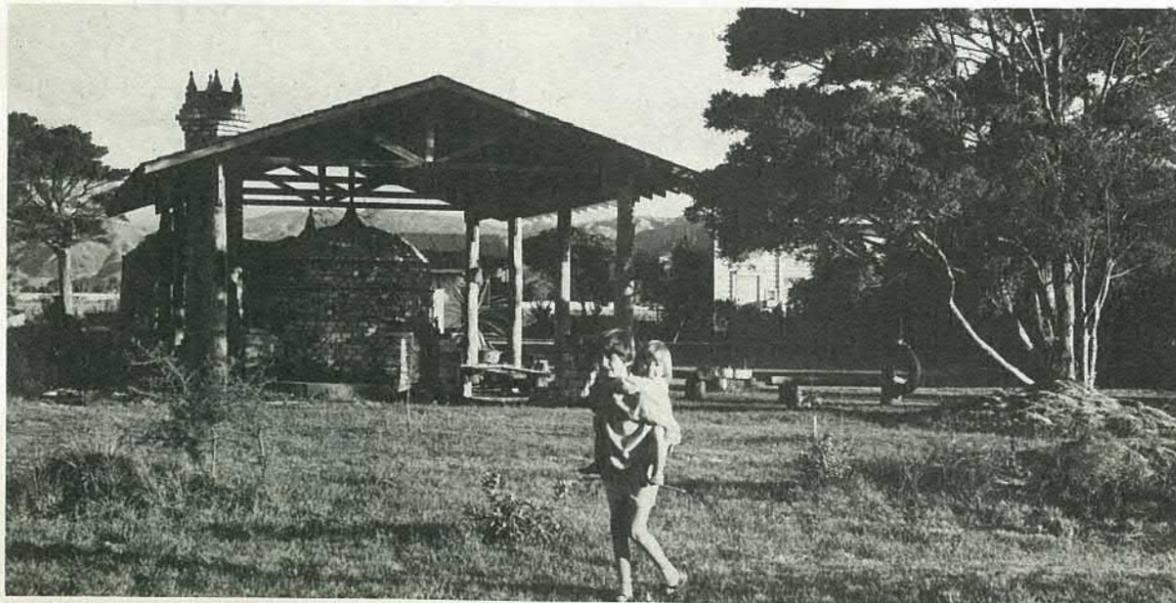


The Smisek's house

Mirek and visitors



Kiln complex as seen from road and railway



Front view of the Wright's much altered house

Photo: Barry Durrant

By Margaret Harris

Freedom to live where you want

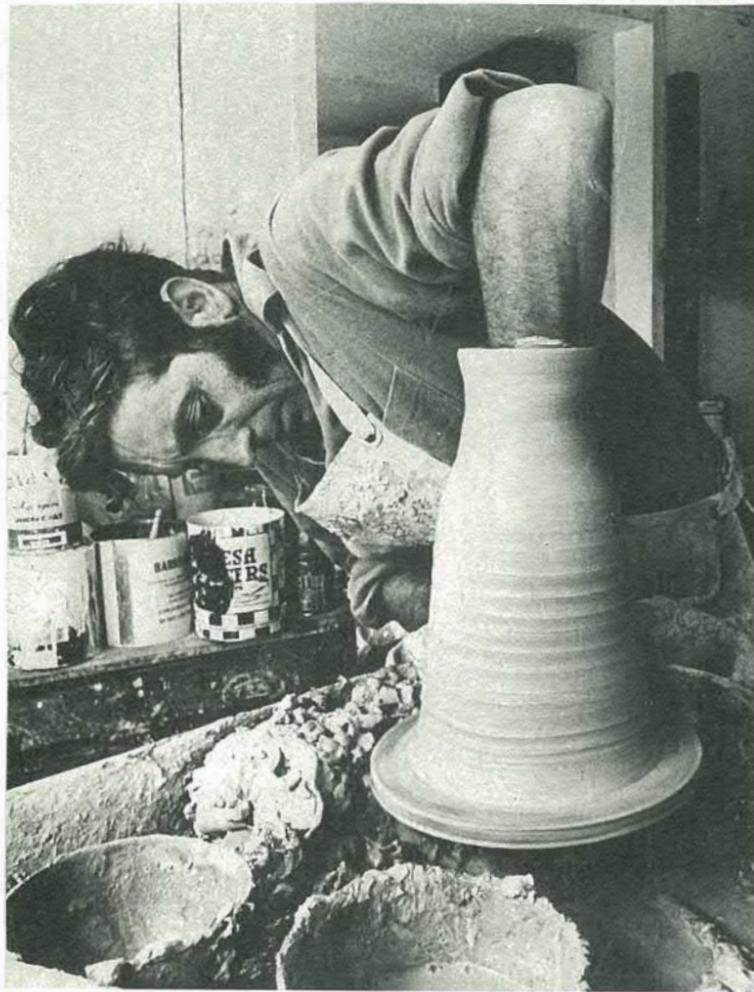
Reikorangi Pottery in a valley near Waikanae shows the maturity of Janet and Wilf Wright's seven years there as fulltime potters. Although most of the planting has been done by Wilf, many of the trees were put in when the place was his family's weekend property, so the grounds are already established. Janet was interested in pottery when she married Wilf and she found she could learn, so they both make pots.

For Wilf one of the great advantages of being a potter is that 'You don't have to live where everyone else does. Apart from being involved with all aspects of pot making which is creative in itself, a potter is free to live where he wants and create the kind of environment he wants to live with. I've always been interested in entomology and natural history so it was logical for me to live in the coun-

try. Besides, living in the country has purely practical advantages for a potter. We often work at night and the noise from wheels and kilns can't disturb neighbours'.

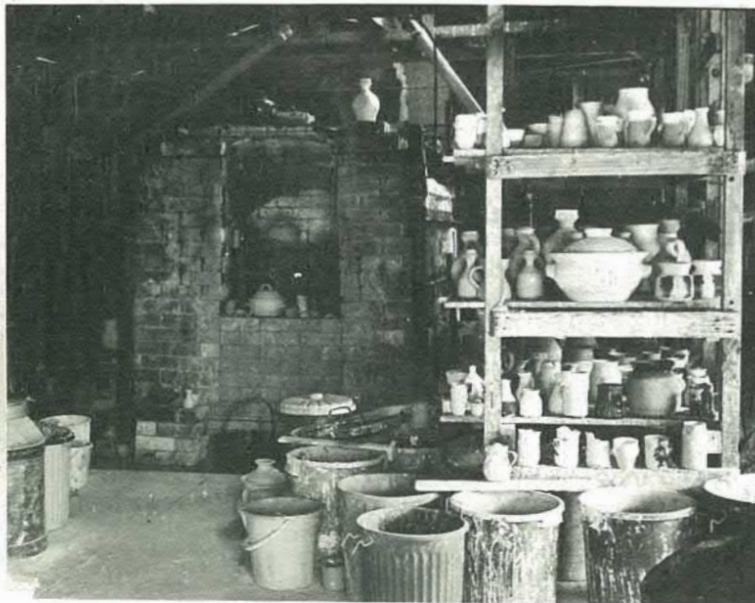
A feature of the Wright's place is the animals. On their thirteen acres they keep the usual dogs and cats, until recently a cow, and a variety of barnyard animals, for children's pets. There's a pony, a donkey, fowls, geese, ducks and rabbits, because they feel that their family might as well have all the advantages of living in the country, such as riding to school and rearing young animals. Wilf has aviaries for his native keas and karkarikis. He says visitors spend as much time looking at the animals as they spend looking at the pots.

He also finds native trees interesting botanically and thinks that it is important to develop interest in this part of our heritage. The garden has a range



Wilf in his throwing room

Inside kiln shed



of deciduous trees as well, to provide variety and to show the changing seasons. Anyone who has been lucky enough to wine and lunch with the Wrights at a table under the trees knows how delightful their garden is.

The seventy year old house has been extensively renovated. It's interesting that they added a verandah on three sides thus resurrecting an architectural style once characteristic of New Zealand houses but not used for fifty years. The builder couldn't understand it. Since all the rooms have doors opening on the the verandah, the effect is of having no sharp line between outside and inside, especially since there are pots and plants inside, and plants and pots outside. In keeping with the colonial architecture, the Wrights have made use of contemporary kauri furniture. And there are books, paintings and artifacts reflecting their interests. Wilf says he would like to be in a position to collect ethnological objects.

Wilf Wright has been a potter for about fifteen years and his beginnings in this career make an interesting story. He had one of the country's first craft shops, Stocktons in Woodward Street, Wellington, which then sold Scandinavian factory produced ware, some Lucie Rie and Hans Coper. Later they obtained the agency for Bernard Leach pottery and imported sample ranges. There was no New Zealand pottery available for sale in the beginning. When the first pieces appeared, it was hard to sell. The buying public had a blockage about accepting a pot that was locally made. Afterwards the trend changed and customers were coming in asking for New Zealand pottery. Both the potters themselves and the shop helped to overcome the initial buyer resistance to the products of the local craft.

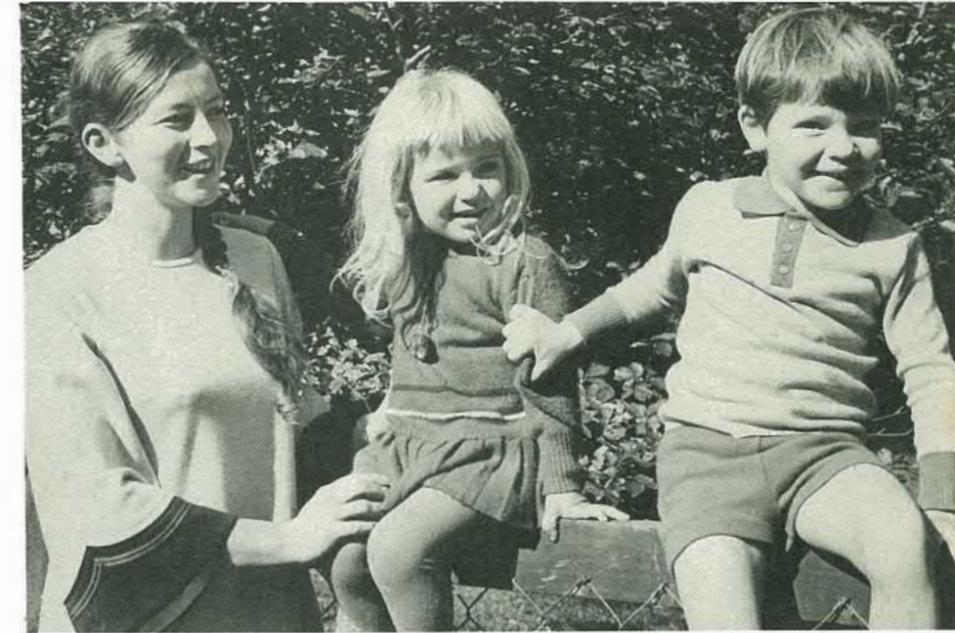
The stories of Wilf's first firings, retold with relish are legion. Barry Brickell helped build the first round, down draught, drip fed kiln at Reikorangi. 'Someone in the valley must be building a house' said Wilf's mother and sister as a truckload of two thousand bricks roared up the road, 'Is your name Wright? They're for you'.

'Barry came down for the first firing—and a great grey fog descended over the valley. The kiln was far too big for me, who could hardly pot at the time, to fill, so Helen Mason helped out with enough pots to make a kiln-load.'

When visiting English potter John Chappell wanted a place in New Zealand to work he went to Reikorangi and made pots for three months. Wilf was rouseabout and really started learning in earnest. Wilf acknowledges the tremendous

Janet with Samantha and Adrian

Photo: Barry Durrant



help given later by Roy Cowan in designing sophisticated kiln firing methods which took a lot of the guesswork out of the firings.

After visiting the Wright's country pottery in surroundings that meet their ideal, it seems appropriate to conclude this article with a thought that Wilf recalls

is attributed to Confucious.

It is not the distance one travels that is important but what one takes in on the way. A journey from the front door to the gate can be as revealing as a journey to another country to him who has trained himself to be aware of his environment.

A client makes his selection

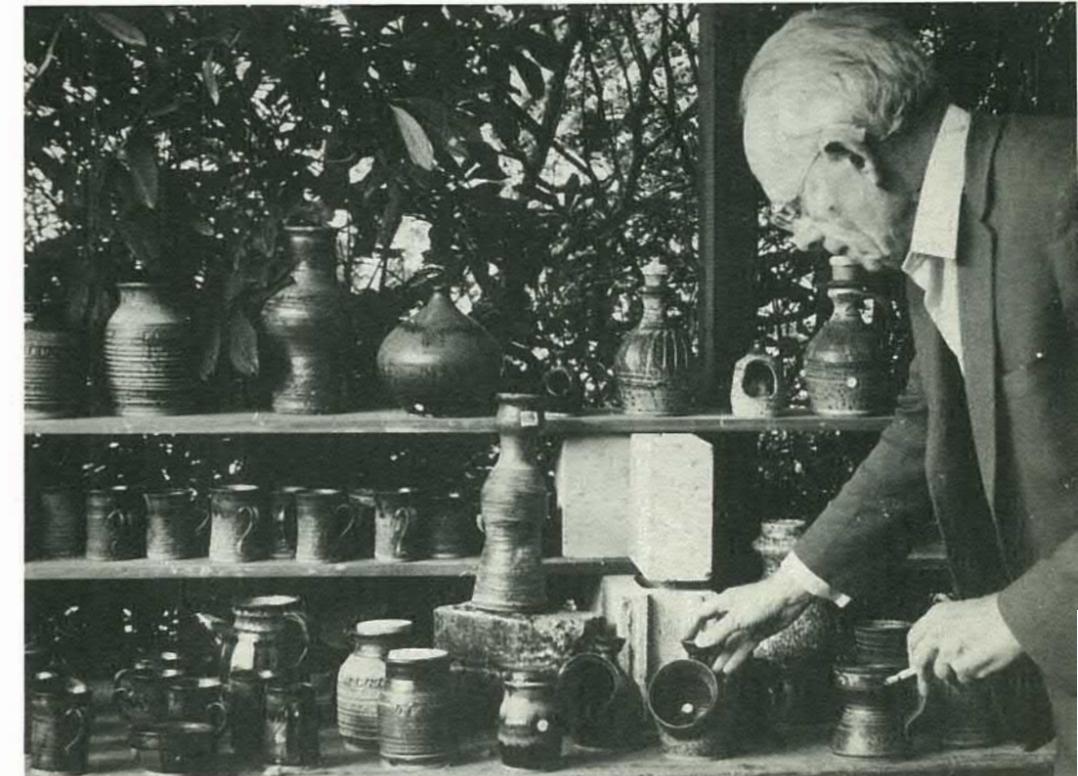
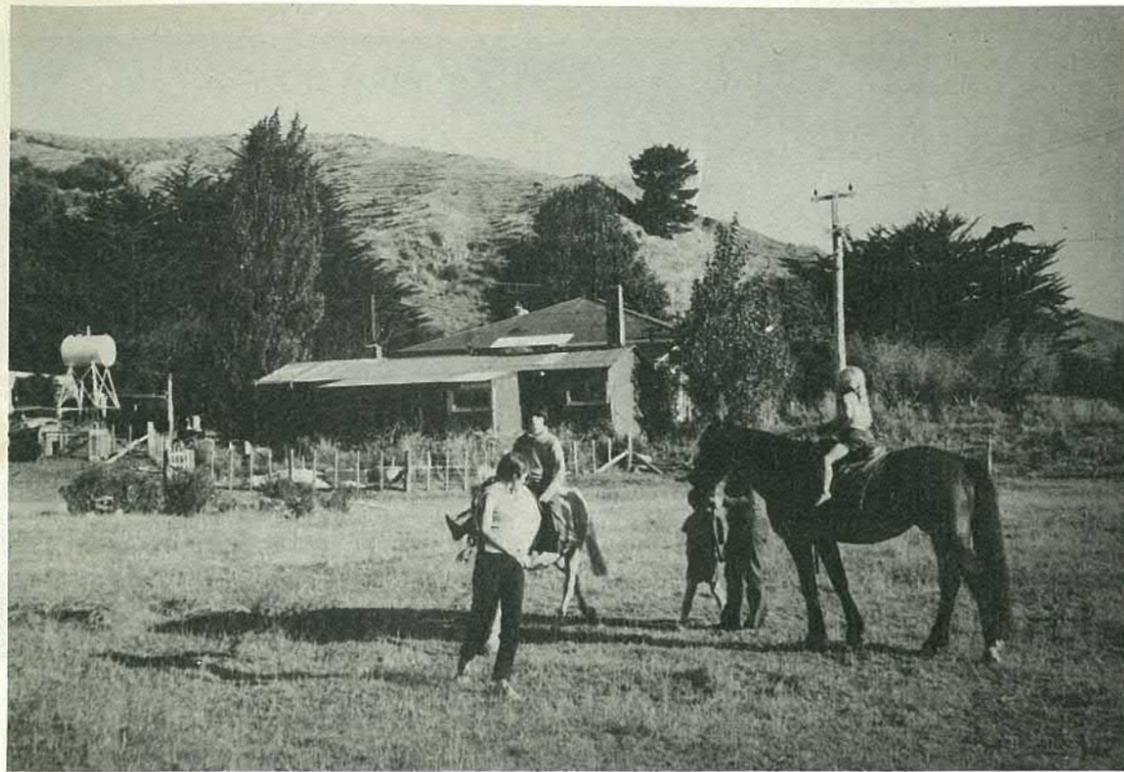


Photo: Roy Cowan



Photos and drawing
Roy Cowan

Preserving a house to make a home

By Margaret Harris

When Rhondda and Jim Greig were looking for a place in the country to settle, they found in the Wairarapa the right kind of area and people sympathetic to the idea of having a potter live amongst them. All round approval had an effect in an indirect way at local government level, of making it possible for the Greigs to buy a five acre property at Matarawa, three miles from Greytown, getting towards the foot of the Tararuas—in fact their road leads into Waiohine Gorge and the main mountain tracks.

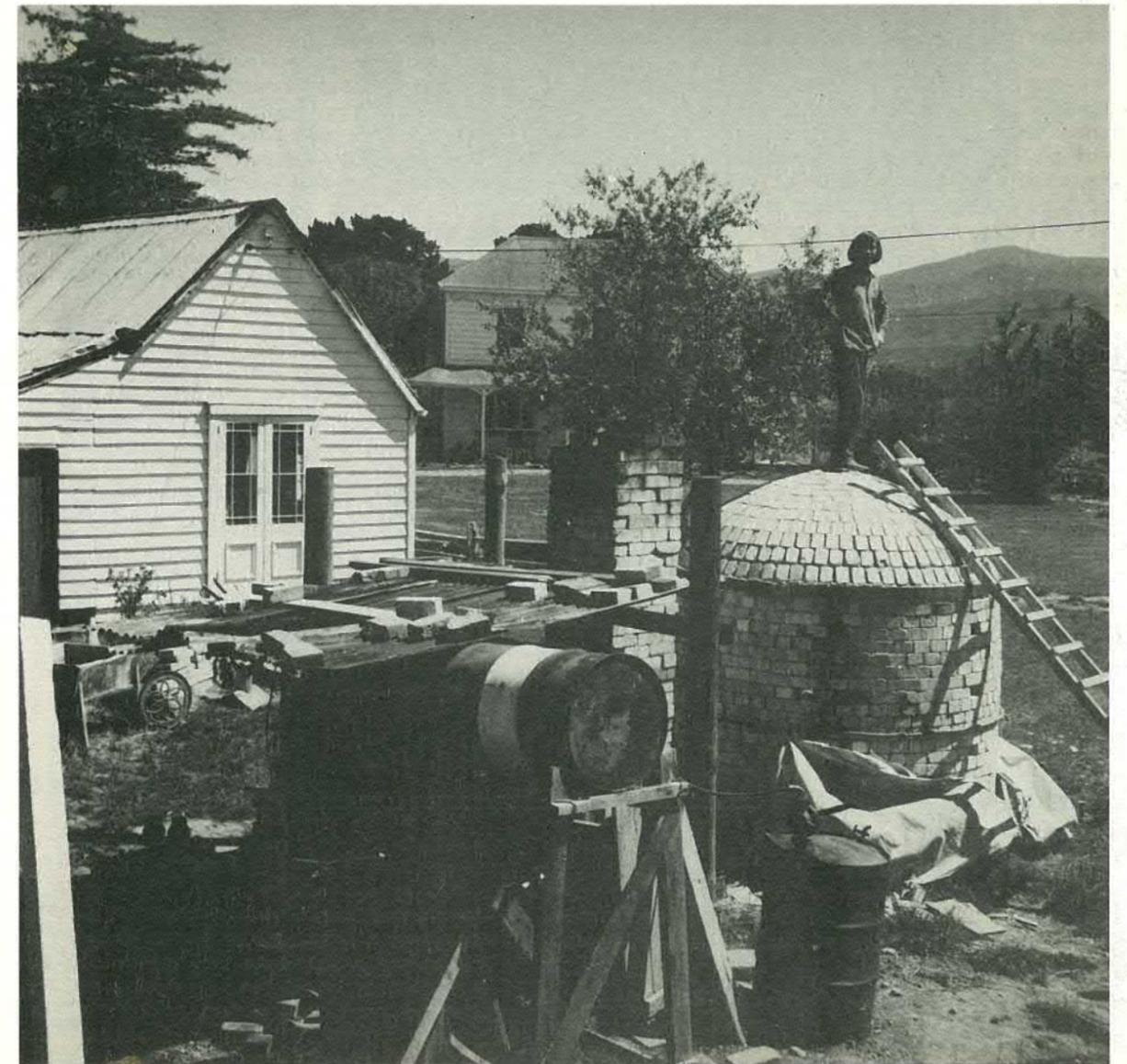
Here in this house and land the Greigs visualised how they could create an harmonious environment to suit their family—they have a girl and a boy. They would rear a calf for milk and butter. They

would grow their own vegetables and bake their own bread. For the Greig's did not choose to live in the country because it was convenient, but because the country life was the one they wanted to live.

They too have a big planting programme. Jim says that his planting will be of a mixed variety. He admits to being especially interested in natives but he will be planting anything that is right for the spot, creating 'a tapestry effect rather than a monoculture'. Two dry seasons and a shared water supply got the trees off to a slower start in their first year than they would have hoped for.

The Greigs are also conserving a house. Although Jim quickly points out 'I'm not saving a house for

At Matarawa, Jim totally surrounded by work



Children, neighbours and animals



How many today? Wilf collects eggs and feeds the hens



In the absence of a photo showing all the animals, the drawing shows Farmer Wright at feeding time

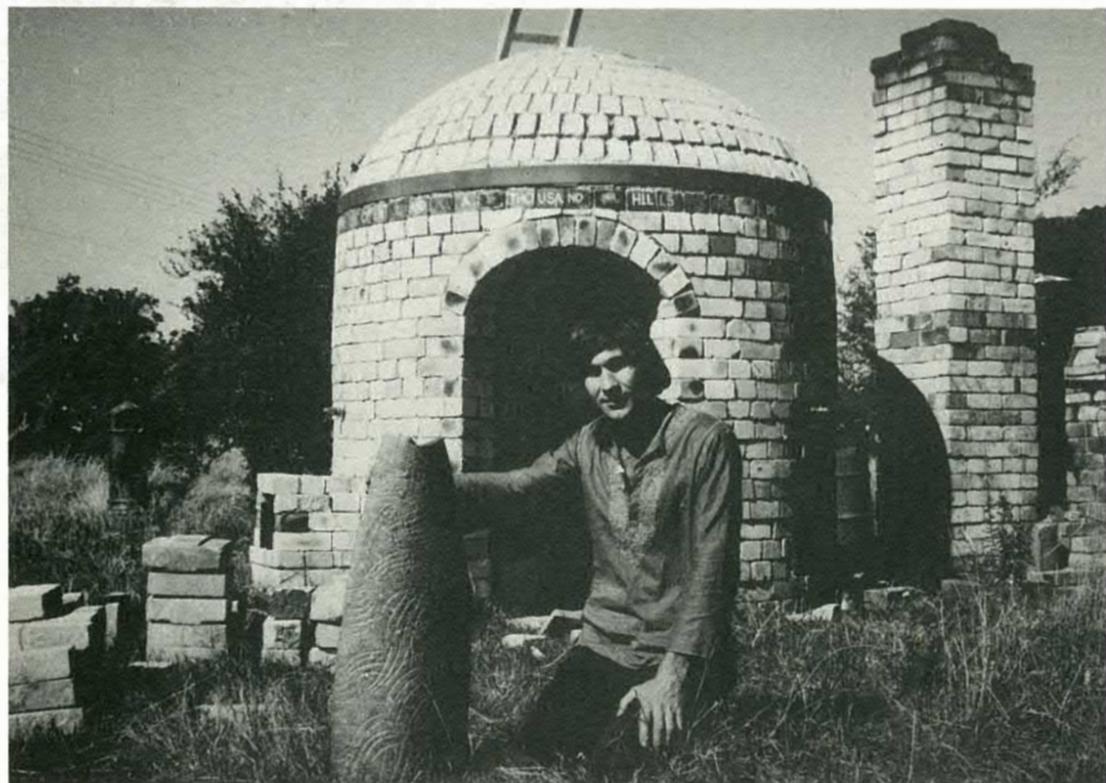


The Greig's new-old house at Matarawa

the sake of the house, but because it makes a suitable home for us.' Nevertheless to a former architectural student, an early New Zealand colonial two-storied house of regular proportions hinting of regency in the flared verandah roofing, called for some response. If the Greigs hadn't taken it over and given it new life it would soon have disappeared from the scene forever. After years of use by shearers and two years total abandonment it was already derelict, and rubbish clearing occupied the first months. Of the lawns and gardens that flourished in its Victorian/Edwardian prime, only

a few mature trees have survived the ravages of grazing sheep.

The task of recreating this place on slender means was a mammoth one, but one that appealed to an ideal they held of recognising something from the past that was good and adapting it to the needs of today. They are not 'converting' this house, giving it House and Garden treatment. Nor are they restoring it to appear as it was. Rather they are putting it back into running order again to make a home. Changes are minimal and low key, confined to such things as putting two rooms into one or



Jim with sculptural pot in front of kiln

Photos: Roy Cowan



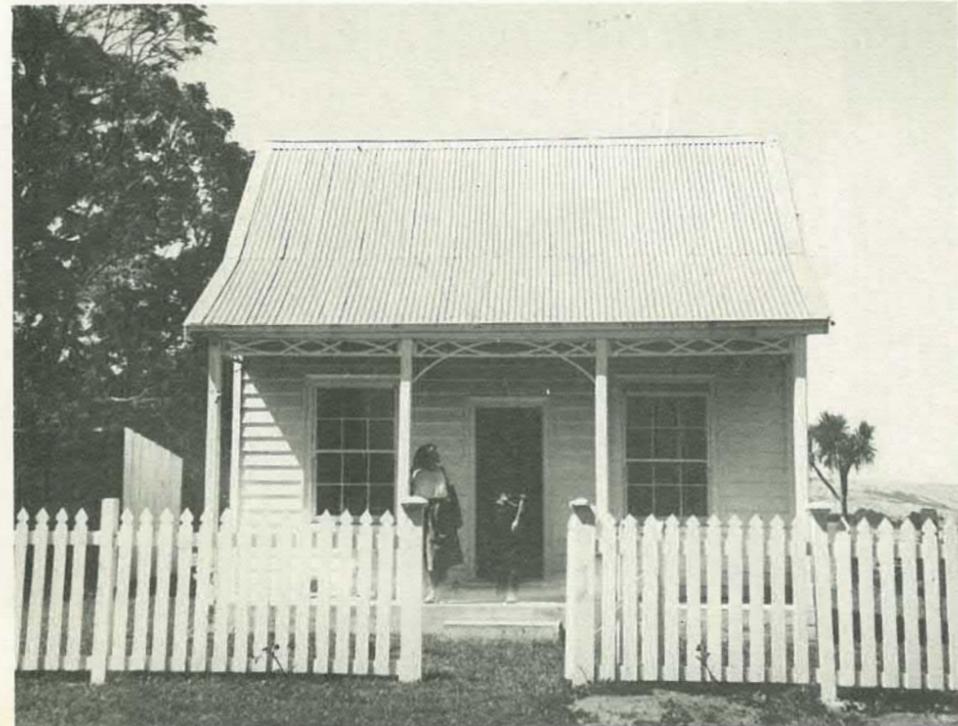
Rhondda and Jim with children Tanya and Ewan

Photo: Bill Beavis

letting in more light. The family makes things and rightly their interests are evident. Jim's kites, music and of course pottery, Rhondda's paintings and collection of peasant basketry.

The pottery is in the same style as the house and looks as if it has always been there. It hasn't. It was one of the first cottages built in Greytown

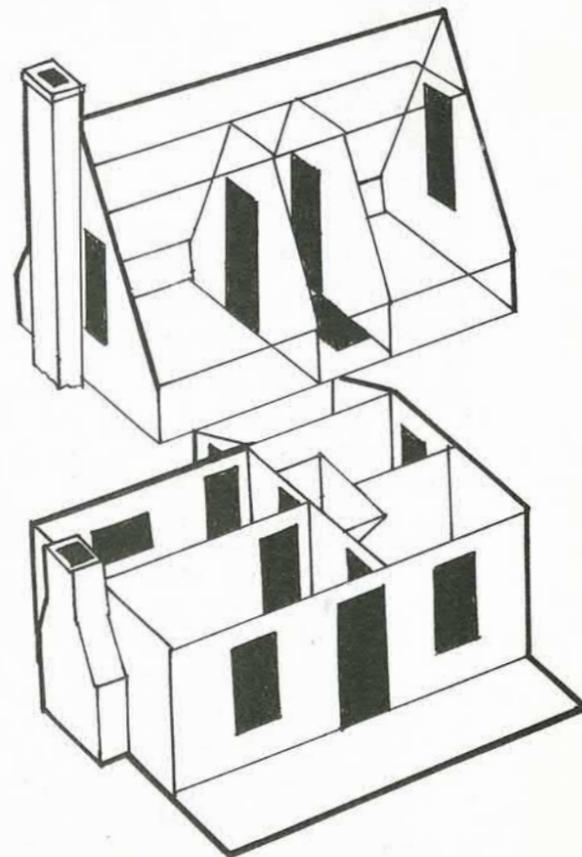
in 1856 and was rented there by the Greigs. They saw how they could put it to good use, so they had it taken to their new place, to the amazement of many of the natives, where it fits in so well. Nearby the new kiln (after Smisek's design but decorated with personal touches) waits for a steep pitched octagonal roof.



Photos and diagram: Roy Cowan

The cottage shown above was built in 1856. It was home to the Greig family from 1968 until August 1970; when they moved to Matarawa, five miles away. They took with them a smaller cottage doomed for demolition, from an adjacent site. It is now the pottery at Matarawa.

The fact that somebody was willing to take so much trouble to save an old building attracted local attention. The cottage left behind was acquired by the Jaycees, and re-sited as the centrepiece of their Cobblestones Museum in Greytown. In spite of its dolls house appearance, the interior is amazingly spacious. This isometric plan shows how its two living and four bedrooms were divided.



Jim Greig's work as a potter responds to this environment because he looks to the natural world for his inspiration. He is absorbed by the changing forms of plants as they grow and develop. Long term plans for the property are to create an environment which they hope would be a reflection of their own personalities. In a year they have already gone a long way towards achieving these aims.



A field of stubble, mounds of boulders, a line of struggling trees and the kiln shed. Behind the Tararua range

Paul Melser

By Roy Cowan

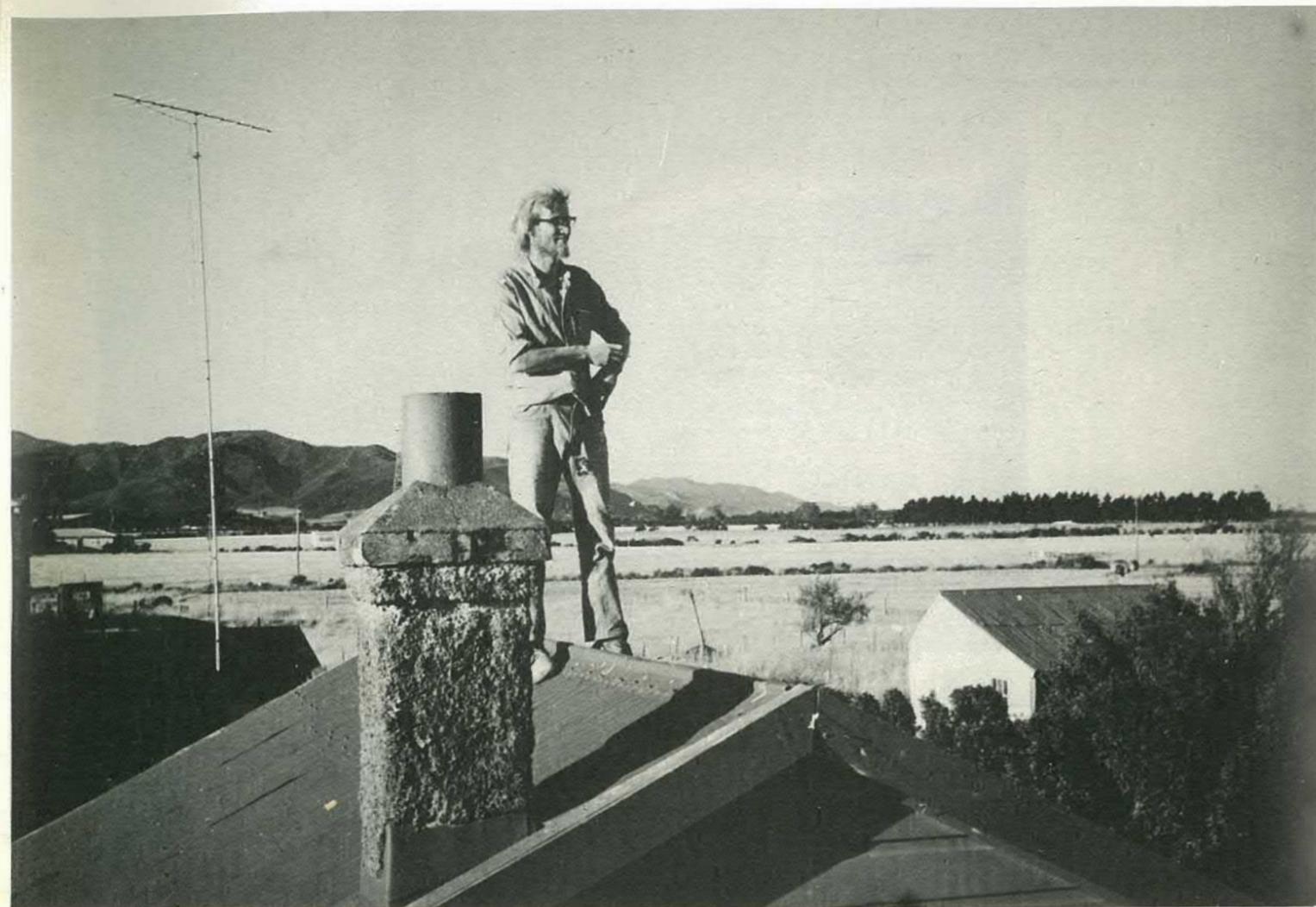
There is a wide plain, open to the North and South, bounded on the East by low regular hills rising to a high distant block of mountains and on the West by a continuous straight mountain wall passing over the horizon on both sides.

Two small cottages set close together in wide stony fields mark all that remains of a once vast military camp. One cottage is occupied by a widow, the other by potters Paul Melser and Anna Gandy.

Paul first began potting in Wellington, and soon showed signs of becoming, in a craft more noted for its followers of established models, one of the few who explore, and find new forms. He developed the methods of producing salt glaze to give enriched textures and colour, applied to both domestic wares and original sculpture forms. But his working

Salt glazed sculpture, referring to thrown ware organic forms, and also resembling the stacking and linking of molecular chains





From a stance on the roof, a sensation of limitless space. The contrast of the plain and the mountain wall a reminder of the constructive forces still at work in the region

Photos: Roy Cowan

conditions were informal to a degree that seemed to contradict the sense of style evident in the pots.

When he first moved to his present abode, conditions became if anything, rougher. Some previous owner had passed his time building massive concrete and boulder walls around, producing a fortress-like aspect. The cottage itself was in decay and the grounds a tangle. Seventeen rusted water tanks lay about. However the walls proved a point when the hurricane which struck in April 1968 did little more than strip off an unessential porch.

In this situation, with unlimited work urgently required on all sides, Paul's capacity to continue developing whatever was the core theme in method or style, no matter what the ambience, showed itself. Kilns were built, at first in the open, then under a canopy which ultimately became part of

a range of working spaces and enclosures of various degrees of protection, eventually forming with the restored cottage a sheltered court, which is in fact a plan highly suited to the region. Paul's working interest now extended to sculpture in wood and to the working, cutting and welding of steel, used both for machine construction and sculpture.

From a vantage point on the cottage roof, there is, in utter contrast to the feeling of protection and secure enclosure of the courtyard below, the strongest sense of exposure to the vast space lined out by the plain and the long ranks of mountains. Paul commented that he would like to put a room up here to be a studio and look-out. So, out of the scraps of some old buildings, indeed, nothing that a self-respecting home-builder would rec-

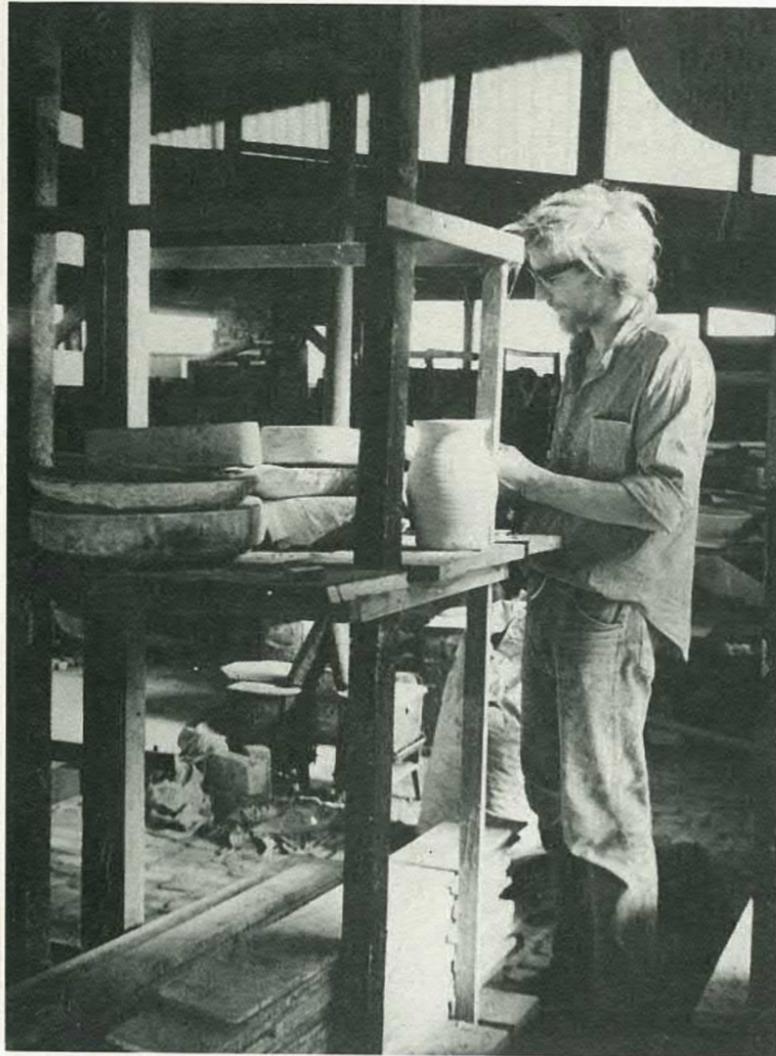
ognise as worthy materials, an architecture is being created.

Empty oil drums and tanks still stand around, but now sheltering seedling trees; towards re-establishment of some of the vegetation cover which our gallant pioneers so energetically erased from the plain.

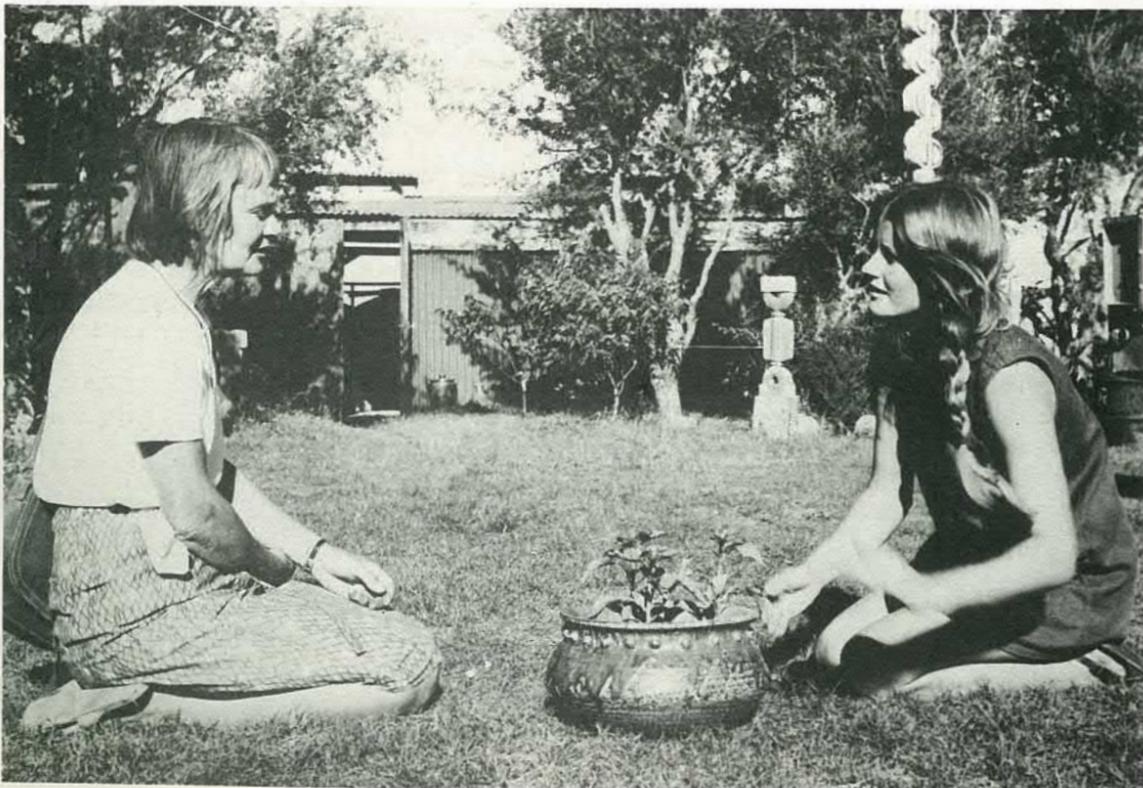
Life is ameliorated, but not in the direction of conventional suburbanism. The path crosses the ordinary road and the vision is turned another way, seeing alike what may grow from a massive block of steel or a struggling young tree, and the observer becomes aware that what is being perceived is seen with the same of the freshness of discovery a child is supposed to possess and which artists would hope to recapture.

Paul Melser on the roof of his house





Paul handles some press mould in the pottery. Stoneware and saltglaze kilns at the rear



Juliet Peter and Anna Gandy, with one of her planters, in the garden enclosure

Potter and environment

By Barry Brickell

Environment-making is an escape from potting. Gardening for instance, is a relief because it is not a money making occupation. Making pots of domestic stoneware pottery can be a most tedious business, especially when you have money making in mind. No matter how beautiful may be the potter's working environment, it will not help this problem. Making domestic pottery can be splendid, joyful. You need good clay and a good wheel and no thoughts of the future. What you are doing now, immediately, is what counts. But I have observed in my travels that most of this country's established potters have great or well tended gardens and have spent some time in creating beautiful surroundings in which to work: self included. Now how does this affect their work? Generally speaking, the work of these potters is often beautiful visually and aesthetically, but deadly serious if lacking in qualities of animation and more personal involvement of the person's real nature. This seems to me a characteristic of contemporary New Zealand craft pottery, although I suspect that it is a characteristic of the world-wide modern merchantile training and attitude. Well, a materialistic system of education will be bound to encourage 'thing' pots rather than 'how' pots. People are basically walking 'hows', not stereotyped 'things'; each with his or her own spirit or nature.

Getting back to gardens and environment then, I believe that a potter's garden, workshop and pots (maybe house, wife

and kids too) are ultimately an expression of his own nature and that this is the cherishable thing. What I see in a fellow potter's garden and created environment I also see in his pots. This does not mean that a beautiful garden goes with beautiful pots! Let us distinguish between the visual or the aesthetic and the real or true. I have seen truly splendid pots come out of a chaotic ruin of weeds and grime, but by inevitability rather than by design. What then, do we mean by environment? Thing or how?

Most individual potters have well founded and positive ideas about aesthetics. This applies to all things, or some things, depending on their own native intelligence or humour. These ideas apply to politics, gardens, sex, animals, etc., as well as to clay. These are the things which make up his total environment, which for convenience, I shall call internal and external types of environment. I am talking about the head (cranium) not about the studio.

As for myself, I have strongly developed my external environment, over the past ten years to the point where it is beginning to get the better of me. I hunted for an old colonial kauri house way out in the country where I could set up workshop and kilns. Basics of work and living installed, then the rot set in. First of all a dog (suitably patient and calm), a blasted cat (to cope with rats supposedly) and then some chooks. The latter I began to find much more entertaining than productive as we found that after all we had an

awful lot in common. The garden was a mass of rank weeds and Englishy shrubs and trees. Things like privet, hydrangas, gorse, paspallum (especially wretched), boxthorn, blackberry and anything spinous and thornic. Tiring. Not even one manuka nor tree fern. Slightly more attractive of the exotics were bamboo and a huge Norfolk pine but even these things grow rank in our gentle equable climate. The only acceptable answer for a well-mannered, dignified and peaceful garden was to go native and strongly so. This has cost me a vast amount of potting time and sheer hard work, but every bit of it has been justified as home is at last beginning to feel like home. Then we had to have a narrow gauge railway (a personal idiosyncrasy) to bring oil and coal and clay to the pottery, and presumably pots out of the pottery. Also it stopped cars and people-out-of-cars from getting at my sanctum because I installed a very awkward little sleeperless bridge (a people stop) on the line.

Of course, the railway had to be beautifully engineered and to a suitably high aesthetic standard, with the right authentic feel about it. The mind boggles at the amount of perfectly good potting time that went into this lot. By this time, the house was starting to pack up, which meant new verandahs, windows, parts of roof, piles. all to a suitably high aesthetic standard of course.

On top of all this, I decided that modern roads and driving was both a too hazardous and too mundane way of getting

about; the tedious cop-infested highways past pretty pink, blue and green bungalows with their safety-first gardens, the dreary miles of Auckland's utilitarian south approach lost out. I took to the sea. No diligent potter should ever own a boat longer than ten feet. My present one is thirty-three feet. It is a thoroughly frightening or else terribly soporific way of travel. For any collectors of ceramics, there is a trail of broken Brickell-brack across the notorious Hauraki Gulf because all boats roll, even mine. But nevertheless what fun. Its got me now. Boats of course have to be looked after. More hours of potting time go into painting and fixing and checking their various ills than in using them. So we can see what a potter's external environment can cost him. Presumably, for other potters, wives and children are suitable substitutes for trains and boats. I hope dealers will read this chronicle as it might explain why they are not getting as many pots as they ought.

I notice that many of our younger potters have their kiln, wheel, minimal working space and tend to buy in their clay which is simple and expedient. Their environment is 'peoplic'. People and politics provide the necessary diversions rather than things. Creatively they get their input from contact, intercourse and involvement from either their own age group or from

those in authority over them. Television, radio and newspapers are the 'garden' which they love to tend and weed. Like the clay, all provided, you just pay the price. For this reason, the peoplic environment has much to recommend it.

The iron-bespeckled, thick tessha-glazed, drip-fed-oil-fired, squat and 'muggy' coffee mug of the young studio potter, I find to be rather an endearing object. If it does not display much fineness of technique, it generally makes up for it in sheer mug-giness. A plain coffee mug. There is some sort of awareness brewing that to copy the style and decoration of an established coffee mug does not ring true. There is no reason why a coffee mug cannot be a work of art. This is, I feel, the basic awareness of many of the youth and I see it as a sort of pioneering stage. Something more valuable than prosperity and security, and yet involving the social and peoplic environment.

The beginnings of stoneware craft pottery in New Zealand centred largely around Bernard Leach's 'A Potters Book'. I can recall an article in the New Zealand 'Arts Year Book' of about 1947 by Mr R. N. Field on stoneware pottery, and in fact drawing attention to the beautics of the craft as Bernard Leach interpreted it. This was Len Castle's starting point and to a large extent, also mine. So from

the beginning, the outlook has been Japanese-orientated. The large, glossy colour-printed books on Japanese gardens, architecture and pottery have had a fairly profound effect on the more established potters here. This is strongly environmental in that it has offered us a stepping stone to refined use of all the material of our own land to create an indigenous man-made environment. I shall make another sweeping assumption; that it has been largely through this kind of approach to pottery that a strong pride and awareness in our native flora has taken place among the youth. Fascinating. While it is not necessary for potters to create a beautiful environment, I can scarcely think of one who is lacking in awareness of quality environment. Quite an interesting little revolution.

Having navigated around now in a full circle, I hope I have in some way linked pottery making with environment. If we regard pots as 'things' they remain inanimate. If we see them as 'how' we perceive, and if we are normal and happy unhung-up human beings, we also enjoy their spirit and give birth to a 'work of art'.



MORE ABOUT LEAD GLAZES

By Gwyn Ace

In reply to our article on the dangers of poisoning through using vessels made with lead glazes, Gwyn Ace who has been arranging for the testing of a wide range of lead glaze formulations, has this to say.

To the Editor, New Zealand Potter:

It would appear that Wilf Wright has had little contact with earthenware pottery for his comment that 'no professional potter would use low fired,

low solubility glazes' is confusing and misleading. The dangerous glazes are of course high solubility glazes.

Of their nature low solubility lead glazes are manufactured to be absolutely safe when fired to their proper temperature on a mature body. In Wenger's catalogue, all their clear glazes are listed as low solubility or leadless. They are a reputable company and their products and those of Podmores and similar suppliers should be safe for all normal usage. It would be desirable for all companies marketing glazes in New Zealand to sell only those prepared lead glazes which are certified by their manufacturers to be 'low solubility' to the British Government standard test or more stringent requirements.

The main glazes which are always potentially dangerous are those containing:

- (1) Lead Monosilicate
- (2) White Lead
- (3) Red Lead
- (4) Any Lead Frit with raw borax.

This includes most raku glazes and some low firing on-glaze enamels. The use of these on the interior surface of any vessel which can contain liquid or food, can be dangerous or nearly lethal. It is doubtful whether the use of raw lead glazes can be justified under any circumstances as their use produces an unknown hazard and I for one consider their use to be irresponsible.

From information available, any potter should produce work which will be safe for all purposes if he follows the following points.

- (a) Use low solubility prepared glazes from reputable manufacturers only
- (b) Fire all glazes and bodies to maturity
- (c) Never add borax powder to, or onto any lead or unknown glaze.
- (d) Use lead to compound glazes in the form of Lead Bisilicate and Borax in any lead glaze in the form of Borax Frit only.

From recent information it would appear that the addition of oxides to a normally safe glaze can affect lead solubility, but no details are given as to the extent this can happen, or whether the change is a major one, however the use of a suitable colourless or white glaze for the interior of any vessel can avoid the problem if only oxides are to be used for colouring, until more detailed information can be obtained on this point.

The observation of these points should give a level of safety similar to the results of recent tests in Australia where fired glazes formulated with Lead Bisilicate and Borax Frits in various proportions with normal kaolin, silica, rutile, tin stain and whitening additions gave solubilities of less than one part in a million.

References: Ceramic Glazes, Singer and German Ferro Corporation (Aust.) Pty Ltd., S. Eley, A. B. Searle.

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POTTERY GALLERY AVAILABLE FOR EXHIBITIONS

THE FIFTEENTH

The exhibition committee of the Wellington Potters' Association have accepted the task of staging the Fifteenth National Exhibition because they consider it's purpose has not necessarily been outmoded. Accordingly the following guide lines have been enunciated to remind both the potters and selectors of the purposes of the exhibition as they exist.

—to the New Zealand Society: It is the point around which the Society has its being. As yet no one has offered an alternative of importance to the individual potter or a point of interest, without which the Society would probably disintegrate. This is regarded as a key point and involves the basic issue of whether there should be a New Zealand Society or not. It is considered that the attitude of abandoning the exhibition (just because it has outlived its usefulness) without substituting something else in its place, is to dissolve the Society.

—to the Potters: It is a vehicle of communication on many different levels. Every few years a regional group is engaged in intense activity in mounting the exhibition. This involvement focuses attention on the New Zealand aspect of pottery in this country. Exhibition time itself provides the venue for potters from all parts of New Zealand to gather. Inevitably there is an interchange of ideas and information. This is viewed as a valuable stimulus all around. A concentration of pots from all over New Zealand focuses attention on 'what is going on'. Because the venue changes from centre to centre each year, a four year gap (at least) between one exhibition and the next, it gives perspective to development and trends.

—to the community: As for the potters, it shows 'what is going on' and because of the standards imposed, acts as a pointer to good quality.

—to the aspiring potter: Each year the exhibition is the time when new potters are admitted to the Society. It is significant to note that there has been no diminution in numbers wanting to join. Some 30 to 40 applications are usually received. Admission to the Society is obviously held in high regard signifying a standard of achievement and competence.

—to the public institution: The New Zealand Society has built a sound reputation. Its projects are usually supported because there is confidence in the conduct of it's affairs. This response is not lightly earned and should be held on to. The exhibition is the visible sign of the operations of this society, and can be regarded as it's shop window.

Contrary arguments can be offered on the various points made. But on balance, both the existence of the Society and holding an exhibition is regarded as worthwhile. The staging of the exhibition involves a two-fold responsibility—the support of the Society members on the one hand, and exhibition organisation to ensure that the purpose of the exhibition is fulfilled as far as possible.

It was agreed that the exhibition should fulfil its purpose by showing the best of what is going on in New Zealand. While standards are important, a highly exclusive showing is not seen operating within this context.

The last few years has seen the pottery movement developing on a broad front. It is acknowledged that in some areas of this development it may not be as strong as in others. However, if we show the best of what is being done in all areas of expression, the overall purpose is being served. It is considered that to exclude one aspect of activity (i.e. wall panels) because the standard is not as high as another (i.e. domestic cooking pots) is not fulfilling the purpose of showing what is going on.

Yvonne Rust annual Pottery School: Parua Bay, Whangarei

Christmas 1972, ages 16 years to 25 years

\$40 for 7 days tuition; board, clay and equipment. Sleeping under canvas (bring sleeping bags, lylovs, etc). Held in Yvonne Rust's perfect holiday surroundings. The two best pupils from each week's course may stay on free for the remaining period of time. Ten pupils on each course.

Dates: 1st course 17th Dec. to 2nd January, 1973
2nd course 4th Jan. to 10th January, 1973
3rd course 12th Jan. to 18th January, 1973
4th course 20th Jan. to 26th January, 1973

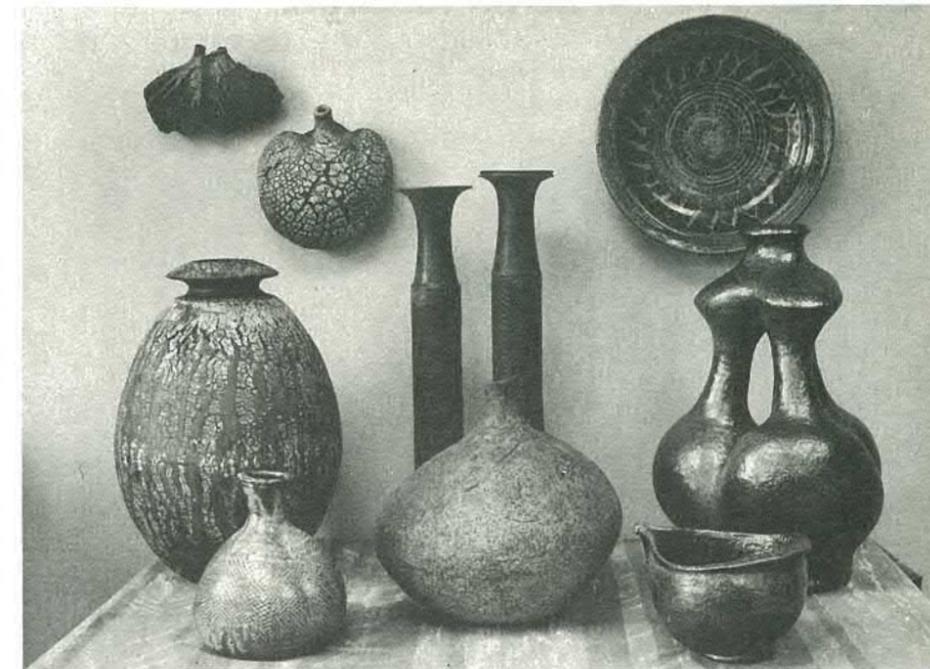
Time of arrival: Evening before.
Time of departure: Morning after.
Write for application form by July, 1972. Applications close August 31st, 1972. \$20 to be paid by August 31st. Remaining \$20 on day of arrival at school.

You have all the year to save for this if you want to learn pottery in studio conditions.

Photo: National Publicity Studios

For the Victoria and Albert

This photograph will give you some idea of the pieces as finally selected. On the wall at the back are two hanging bottles by Len Castle and a 16" decorated dish by Mirek Smisek. On the left the large Tri-columnar pot and "Boat Shaped" pot—two salt glazed pieces by Barry Brickell. At the back, two tall (26") cylindrical pots, impressed and in peacock colours by Graeme Storm. An unglazed, heavily textured floor pot by Brian Gartside and a large textured pot by Margaret Milne and down in front another Castle—a "Shino" glazed bottle of the characteristic pinkish colour.



These ten pots from New Zealand have been selected for display at an exhibition held in conjunction with the Congress of the International Academy of Ceramics at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, from 7th June to 23rd July. The congress is held every four years. The particular pieces were chosen to make a balanced display.

Transport and insurance costs for the New Zealand exhibit have been paid for by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who have further plans for the collection after the congress is over. It is intended that they will form a display (against white marble)

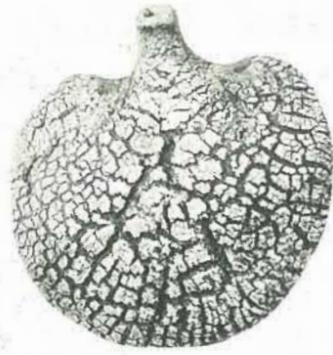
for the opening of the new New Zealand Chancery in Paris—then go on to other European missions. Finally, the pots will be divided among the missions as part of their own permanent collections.

It is interesting to hear the officer from the Ministry in charge of this assignment say that it is a pleasure to buy pots. He says that pots are always acceptable and people here and abroad always like them. Whereas paintings are difficult to choose. Nobody likes them and there is usually an outcry in the papers afterwards.

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LEN CASTLE
two hanging bottles, 9½" high



BARRY BRICKELL,
salt-glazed, boat-shaped bowl, 9½" long

The pottery was selected by the New Zealand Society of Potters and assistance is being given by the Government towards freight costs

Photos by Stan Jenleins



MIREK SMISEK,
platter, 15¾" diameter

NZ at the V and A

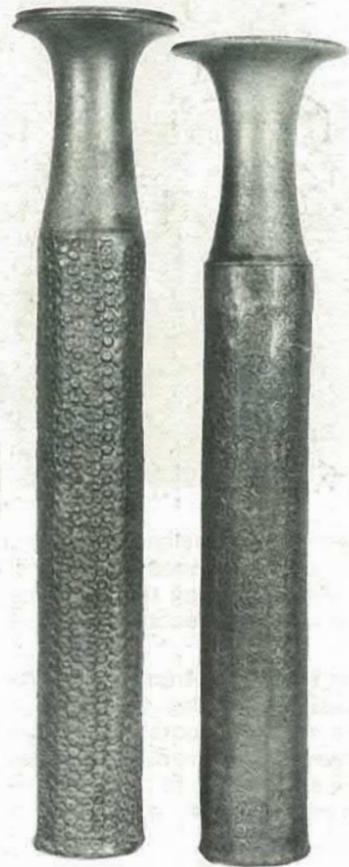
NEW ZEALAND POTTERY DISPLAY FOR BRITAIN

LEN CASTLE,
shino bottle,
9½" high

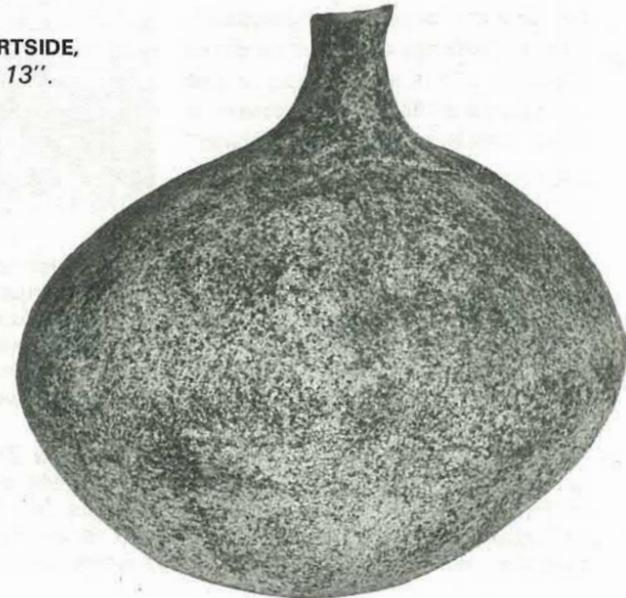


MARGARET MILNE,
19½" high

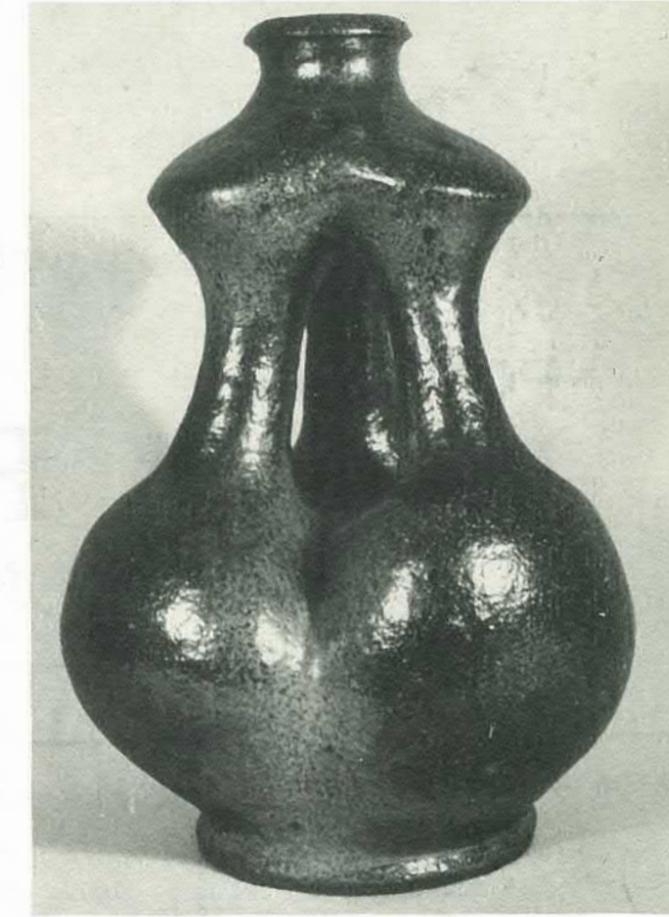
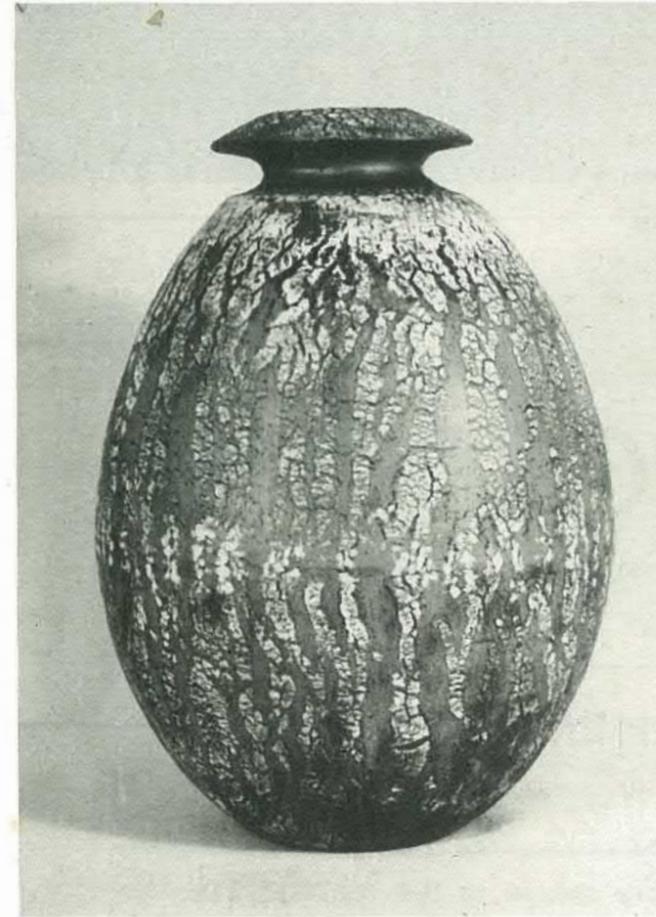
BARRY BRICKELL,
tricolumnar salt-glazed pot, 21" high



BRIAN GARTSIDE,
floor pot, 13".



GRAEME STORM
24⅝" and
23⅞" high



For Fiji

Rosemary Low of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council with a small part of the collection of pottery being sent to Fiji for exhibition. The pottery shown includes three white figures in the foreground by Bronwyn Cornish (Waiheke Island), a spice tree by Yvonne Rust (Whangarei,) a bowl by Wilf Wright (Waikanae), Chasm, left back, by David Brokenshire (Christchurch), and Hexahedron by Peter Yeates (Auckland). Others represented were Patricia Perrin, Peter Stichbury, Barry Brickell, Anneke Borren, Michael Trumic, Frederika Ernsten and Doreen Blumhardt.



Photo: Evening Post

Is pottery designed? Or does it just happen?

The first of a series
by Roy Cowan

In studying the history of the arts and crafts there is fascination in tracing the ways in which ideas born in one medium or place have spread to affect others. A way of doing things, or a motif, such as the famous Cretan octopus, originates as an insight and then enters the main stream of ideas, is transformed, becomes a routine, and may eventually fade out as a convention drained of life, but in its travels it will trace out the course of communications and the rise and fall of cultures. Such indicators, possibly some quite unremarkable thing such as the way of making a handle, are like trace elements to the archaeologist and historian.

An example of transfer of ideas from one medium to another comes from the cloisonnee jewellery worn by northern royalty in the early Christian era. Itself linked in style with ancient Asian styles, it appears to have inspired the intricate convoluted style of manuscript illuminations familiar in the Book of Kells and the Lindisfarne Gospels.

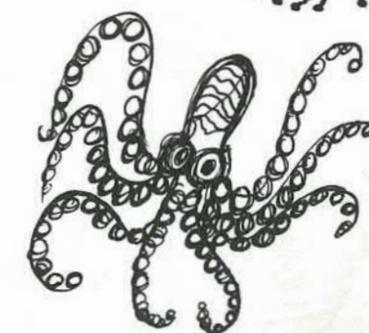
This kind of emulation of the modes of a higher group in a social hierarchy occurs repeatedly in the history of pottery. A common style of Stirrup-jar (wine pourer) from the ancient Near East is a ridiculous object to be made in earthenware, but the key is that it is a poor man's copy of originals made in precious metal plate. Even the rivets are there. In the Georgian period in England, silverware reached a high point of excellence and prestige. The rising industrial potteries produced, for the middle

classes, technically adept imitations, with all the sharp forms characteristic of metal, and with silver glaze. Note that in both cases, extraordinary potters' skills were made to serve ends which ran counter to what we would think the natural style for the medium, but we may be sure that the buyers of such items were being well satisfied by other values than the 'honest' use of clay.

There have been times when ceramics sat at the top of the hierarchy of values, as in the Sung dynasties, or were produced unselfconsciously in the natural mode of clay, as with medieval pottery. Probably the Cockney potters 'ad never 'heard of art. Well the modern potter certainly has and has frequently taken on the manners and attitudes of high art.

Perhaps the greatest recent example of the overwhelming of native styles is that of the spread into the crafts of stained glass, tapestry, and pottery decoration of the image flowing from the development of representational painting which took place from the 14th century onward. From the viewpoint of integrity the three crafts concerned were better served by the limited conventions and place given to designing the surface of the old system, but such a blaze of energy went into the art of painting that the other mediums were swept up.

In the case of pottery and tapestry quite considerable progress was made in converting them into vehicles for minor



Stirrup-jar, earthenware after metal; a 'silver teapot'; manuscript decoration influenced by cloisonne jewellery; the Cretan Octopus in a late debased form and as originally seen

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Three potters' cliches



forms of painting, and one may concede that productions such as eighteenth century European porcelain have charm, but to the modern potter's eye the charm is enhanced when the thing falters a little and the wayward ceramic nature of the material comes out. The legacy of the practice of treating pottery as a base for some form of painting, or printing, is still with us.

In the case of stained glass attempts to render painterly values resulted in a serious loss of vitality. The early stained glass workers had only the simple list of oxides familiar to potters, with which they could make a handful of strong and discordant colours. They were therefore forced to get down to designing in those terms permitted by their materials, achieving in their best work results of fire and brilliance. Later, more representational glass could not be designed this way and the jewel-like intensity vanished. By the nineteenth century, observers could note this loss, but the idea of representationalism in art had become so dominant that people could not conceive how the old glass could have been made. and the myth arose that the early glass workers had secrets of making glass now lost.

Certainly, ageing had contributed certain enrichments, but, as any potter knows, no secrets had been lost.

One of the gifts of the modern movement in art has been to restore understanding of the place of conventions, such as the use of limited means within a discipline, and so modern stained glass, tapestry, and decorated ceramics may be produced with the strength of the best works of the past. In pottery, a great recovery of the sympathetic approach to the use of clay, glaze and decoration, as instanced by the life and work of Leach,

Hamada, and their generation, has taken place. The subsequent great spread of the movement need only be mentioned, but one might note that concurrently pottery has moved from the mainly domestic basis to far under the shadow of modern sculpture. That trend, repeating the phase of 'succumbing' noted as characteristic of pottery, would provide a study in itself, but for the present I am concerned with the ideas and attitudes ruling in main-stream pottery ware for use.

What kind of people are potters? They show great energy in advancing their methods and skills; the enterprising individual is in evidence in their ranks. The great paradox is, I believe, that for the vast majority, this progress is towards a thoroughly conservative position. When the production of any piece involves so many steps, all demanding equal skill and care, and equally critical for final success, the ruling pressure is for stabilisation of methods and forms, and of course repetition is part of the nature of pottery.

Not only do potters' methods tend to crystallise around their familiar forms and their successes, the whole pattern of their ways show convergence upon those that are known of potters of widely separated cultures. The conservatism is of a more total degree then, than the limited sense in which the term is used in politics.

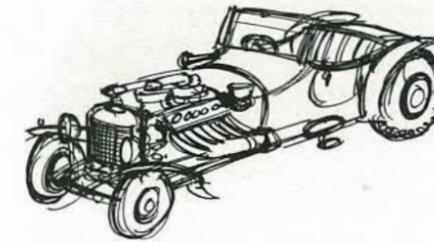
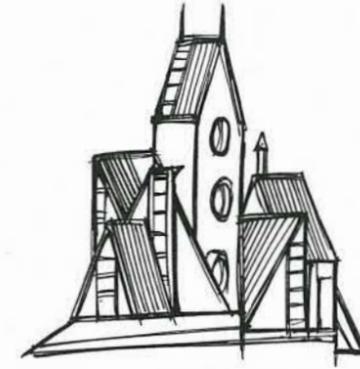
When the pioneers of the present movement were entering the field, they acquired a set of forms which are still in evidence, having, so to speak settled in on us as the archetypes of studio pottery. Do we have here an enclosing situation in which a persistent habit of thought blocks the development of new ideas.

Some of the archetypes, all objects related, at least, to use, are shown here. You see them in every craft shop and exhibition, at every degree of competence from the beginner's efforts to ever more brilliant renderings of the theme by our master potters.

An innocent anthropologist might well be astonished that these were offered as objects for use, and were viewed by their makers as being personal expressions for what he would see would correspond from his historical studies to Ritual Vessels, having, as in the past, a symbolic relationship only to use.

Although the present movement has revived some forms and methods from the past, they are now made with an important difference in attitude. Originally, hand manufacture was the normal industrial process. It now exists in opposition to or as an escape from, the normal methods. No need to review the reasons which are obvious enough, but two other points could be made: while an industrial technology rules, the crafts will flourish:

concurrently, the idea is extending to embrace activities once left to specialists or industry. Two examples are sketched. Note that neither represents a true, one-off piece of originality. Rather, they are types standing for Personalism, forming a sub-culture which conforms to itself.



Expressionism in house design and in the special car

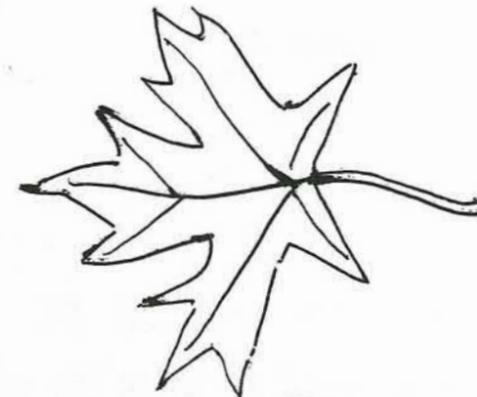
Each type, too, exacts a certain extra cost as the price of expressing individuality.

These rules are, I suggest, true for pottery too, and they give rise to some contradictions between beliefs and practice.

One of these is entangled in the relationship between hand-made domestic ware and the design process. The suggestion itself, that there should be a relation, may cause unease in some. Design is industrial, probably coldly cerebral, suitable for transistors or Bauhausian refrigerators, but not for objects of feeling and warmth such as teapots.

This is wrong. Design is human, and should be the main concern of potters. At present many of the forms are not the result so much of design as of conformity to ritual, and are imposed on people who seek something personal. To prove this, I propose in the next stage to go into both the ritual and the design approach to making teapots and coffee pots in detail. As potters are conservatives, this won't alter anything, will it?

Important show in Canada

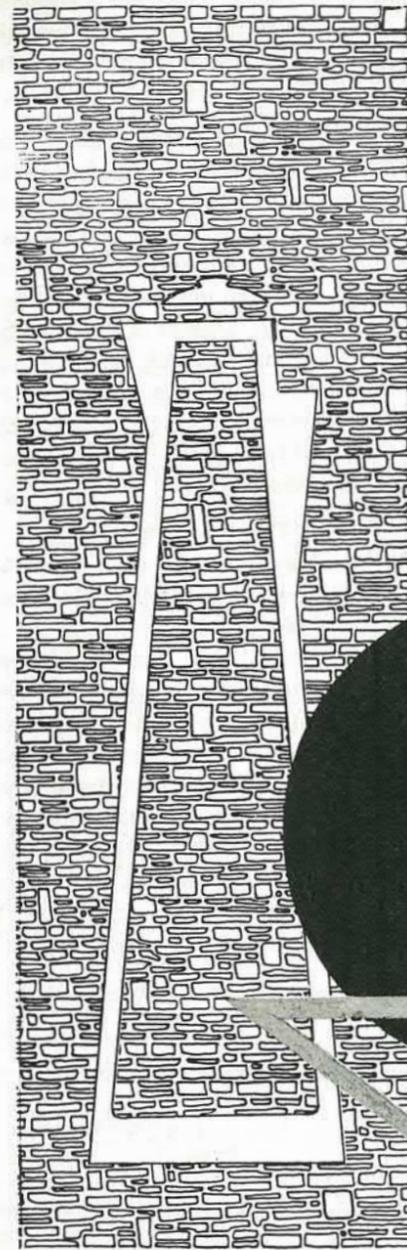


Next years' exhibition and conference of the International Academy of Ceramics (like this years at the V. & A.) is to be held in Canada. August 1973 is the time set at the Banff School of Fine Arts and the University of Calgary.

The initiative for nominating Canada for this gathering was taken by the recently formed Alberta Potter's Association and through the encouragement of Arts School and University.

Judging will take place on March 1st, by an international jury of seven. You are invited to submit work for selection.

Information about the show is available from:
International Ceramics '73
University of Calgary,
Alberta, CANADA



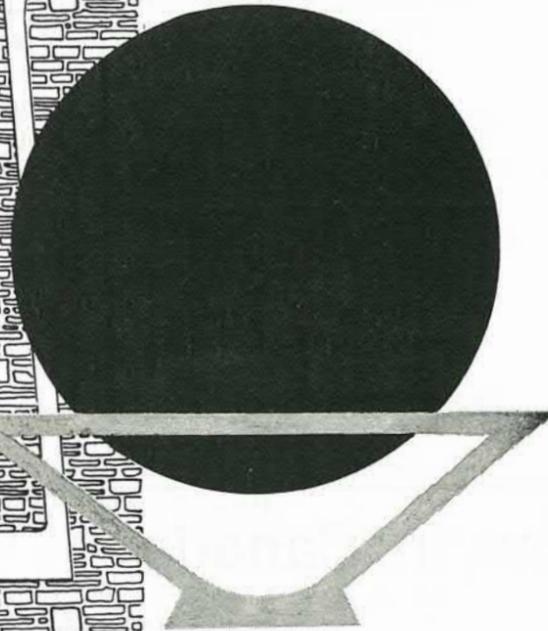
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Please reply c/o Editor, N.Z. Potter.

DOING AS THE ROMANS DO

A pottery teacher in the south of England has been using a kiln built by the Romans 2000 years ago. The kiln was discovered by archeologists at Chichester, and the potter, John Gunn, said he had only to put in new firebars and it worked extremely well. Using clay discarded by the Roman craftsmen, he was able to fire more than seventy pots similar in design to those in use at the time when the kiln was built. The fire was stoked with wood, in the same way as the Romans did it, and the kiln reached a temperature of between 850 and 900 degrees centigrade. The pottery it produced ranged from almost pure white to a warm pink.

However Mr Gunn admitted that his pottery was not as thin as the stuff made by the Romans. He found it a humbling experience to be using materials and a kiln made so long ago.

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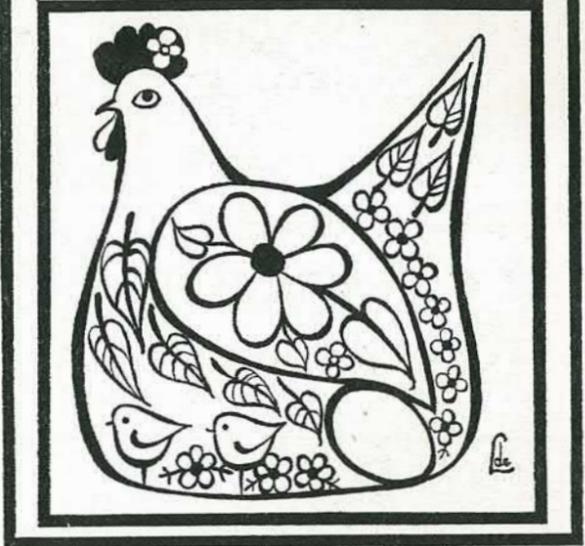
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Drawing by Gennie de Lange for her exhibition in Christchurch in November

Lower Hutt's Dowse Gallery to specialise in pottery

This gallery intends building up a comprehensive collection of New Zealand pots both sculptural and domestic, according to the Director, D. P. Millar. The intention is to have a systematic collecting policy, which will eventually enable the gallery to have an exhaustive selection of pieces for exhibition and study. The emphasis will be on New Zealand pottery. When this is under way they will then decide how to branch out into pot collecting from other areas or times.

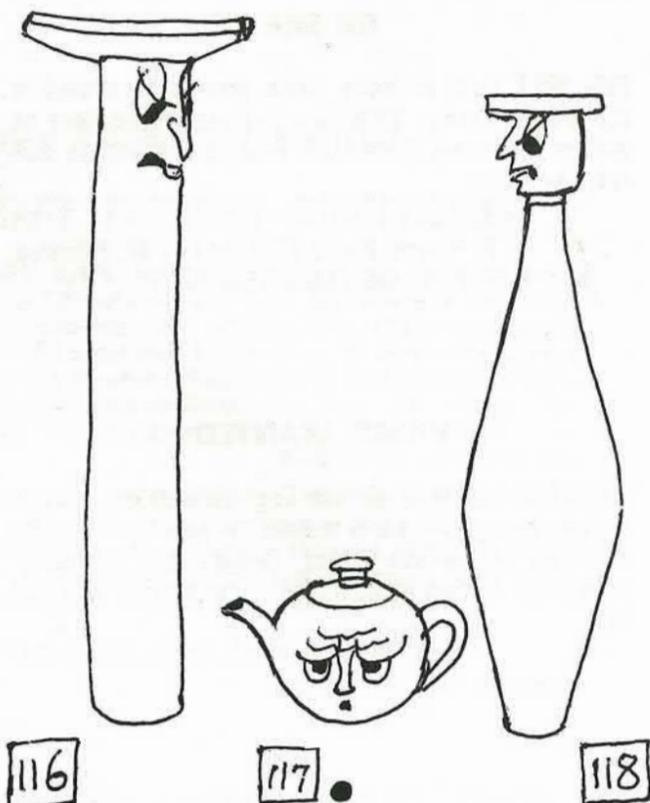
To give the policy a good start, the following potters have been invited to exhibit in June: Mirek Smisek, Peter Stichbury, Barry Brickell, Crewenna, Graeme Storm, John Fuller, Juliet Peter, Roy Cowan, Doreen Blumhardt, David Brokenshire and Len Castle.

Under floodlighting and in a darkened gallery, it is hoped to show off the pots in a dramatic manner. The gallery will be considering pieces for purchase for its own collection.



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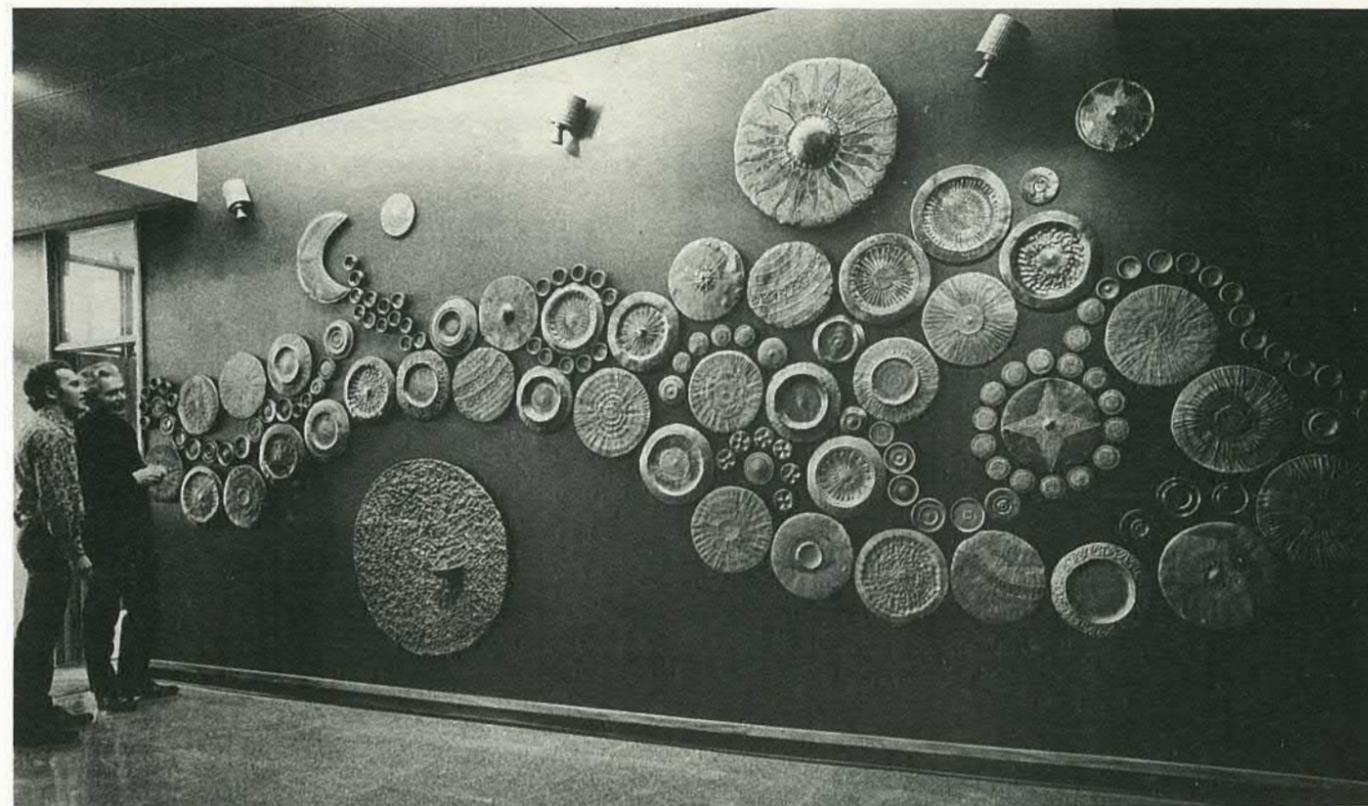


Photo: Steve Rumsey

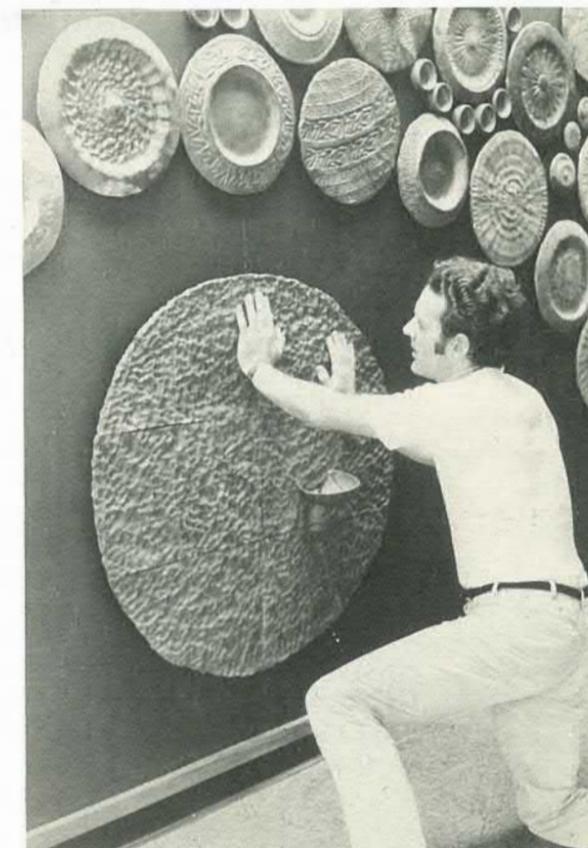
Graeme Storm and Kees Hos view the finished mural at the Communications Satellite Earth Station, Warkworth

Galaxy of Ceramic Planets

Ceramics have proved to be a successful material for the entrance foyer mural of the recently opened Communications Satellite Earth Station at Warkworth. Visually it is good. Furthermore it can be handled and since the mural is used as a teaching aid for visiting school parties, this is an advantage.

It was made by Graeme Storm with the collaboration of Kees Hos in the initial stages of design.

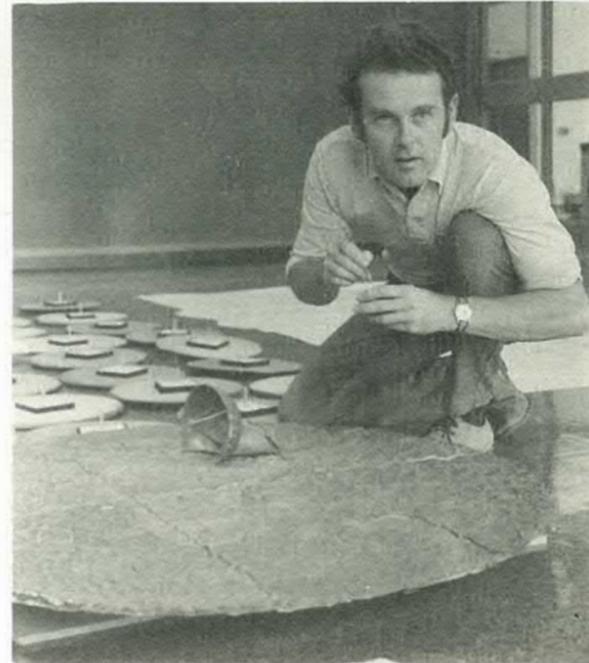
Graeme Storm says: 'The wall to which the mural is fixed measures 20 by 10 feet and is midnight blue for the lower two thirds grading to solid black at the top. The stoneware pieces vary in diameter from three inches to three feet, and in colour from blues and purples to greens and turquoise, with occasional reds and yellows in the hot position near the sun. They are arranged to float independently like a galaxy of stars and planets with the earth lying below, the sun and moon above and riding over these the three satellites.'





Technical difficulties of so large a project were overcome one by one

Graeme Storm at work on the mural



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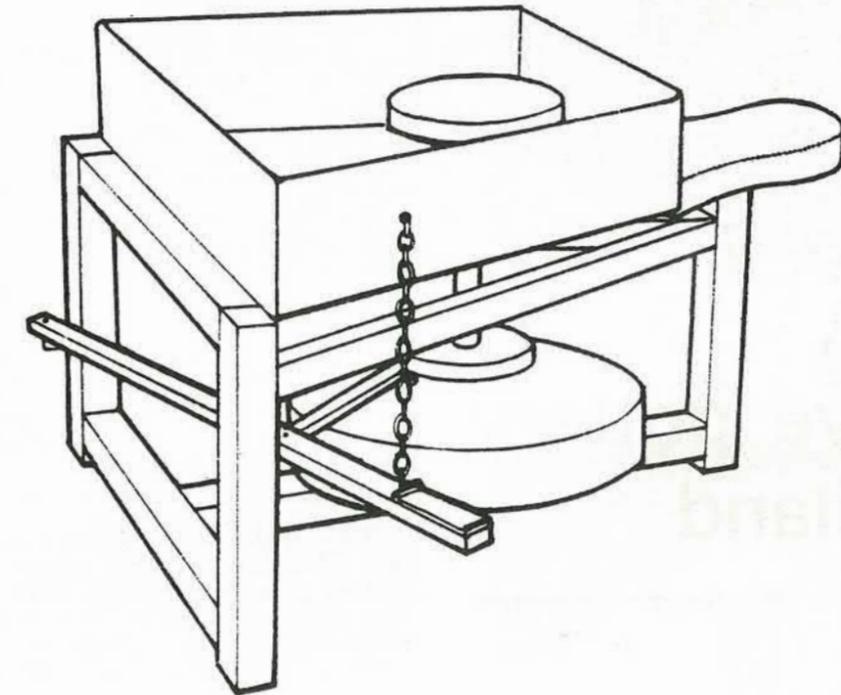
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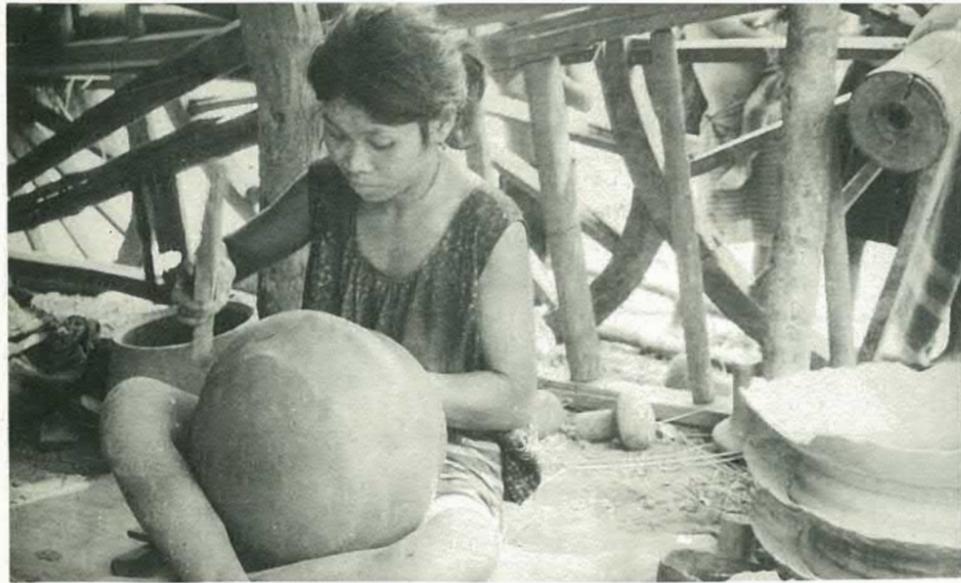
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*Paddle and anvil action
Note four anvils
behind the potter*

Primitive pottery in Thailand

By Angela Stapleton

An archeological research team from the University of Otago studying the making and use of pottery is not what you would expect to come across in Thailand. Angela Stapleton was a member of such a team. She writes.

'Fifty of the eighty households in Ban Mor (village of pots), Thailand, devote all their time to making pots. In December 1969 I went there with two other archeologists from the university to do three months reconnaissance work. I remained afterwards to collect data for my master's thesis. The topic was concerned with the uses and breakage patterns of pots within a village today. The village of Ban Mor was unique in that it specialised in pottery making and the others didn't.



*Some of the pot
forms made*

Women play the important roles in making the pots. The children help by collecting the clay from a nearby oxbow lake. The men often assist with the firing. The women work in family groups of two or three and one woman may specialise in a particular skill, such as forming the rims. Training begins when a girl reaches puberty and continues for two years. The method of making the earthenware is common to the area. Clay is stored in damp sacks, or in ground hollows until it is needed. Ground rice chaff is mixed with clay and formed into fist sized balls which are then fire baked outside. When cool, these are ground into coarse powder and used as temper for the clay. The first stage in making the form, is a thick cylinder which is placed on a thigh-high tree stump. Then the rim is made by holding a banana leaf over the cylinder top and applying thumb pressures while at the same time backstepping around the stump. The rim is sun dried, then the body is shaped by paddle and anvil technique. The women sit crosslegged turning the pot with their knees. The final touches are given when the pot is leather hard and it is sun baked.

At least twenty-five different vessels are produced, each with a specific form and function. Most have rounded bases and impressed shoulder designs. No glazing or painting is undertaken. Firing takes place at family plots in the afternoon when the atmosphere is driest. The pots are stacked two to three deep rim down, on a wood pile. Rice straw is heaped over the pile and lit. The process lasts about three hours but uneven firing results in high breakage.

Finished pots are distributed to towns by car and to villages by foot, men do the driving, women do the walking, carrying the pots. Trading methods have not changed over the last thirty years. Potters trade for food. Rice straw and wood are also acceptable exchanges. Money is now coming into the transactions—a trend that will continue.

The future of Ban Mor as a potting village is limited. To date the villagers have resisted change or improvements offered by the Thai government such as foot wheels and fire brick kilns. But improved transport throughout the region has brought metal, glass, plastic and other vessels to the villages some of which have replaced the traditional earthenware pots. Accordingly earthenwares are now in less demand and the local craft may face extinction.'



Stacking pots for firing



Collecting clay

Pottery in Australia

Published by the Potters' Society of Australia, twice yearly in spring and autumn. The yearly subscription is \$A2, and the magazine may be obtained from the Editor 'Pottery in Australia', 30 Turramurra Avenue, Turramurra, N.S.W. 2074, Australia.

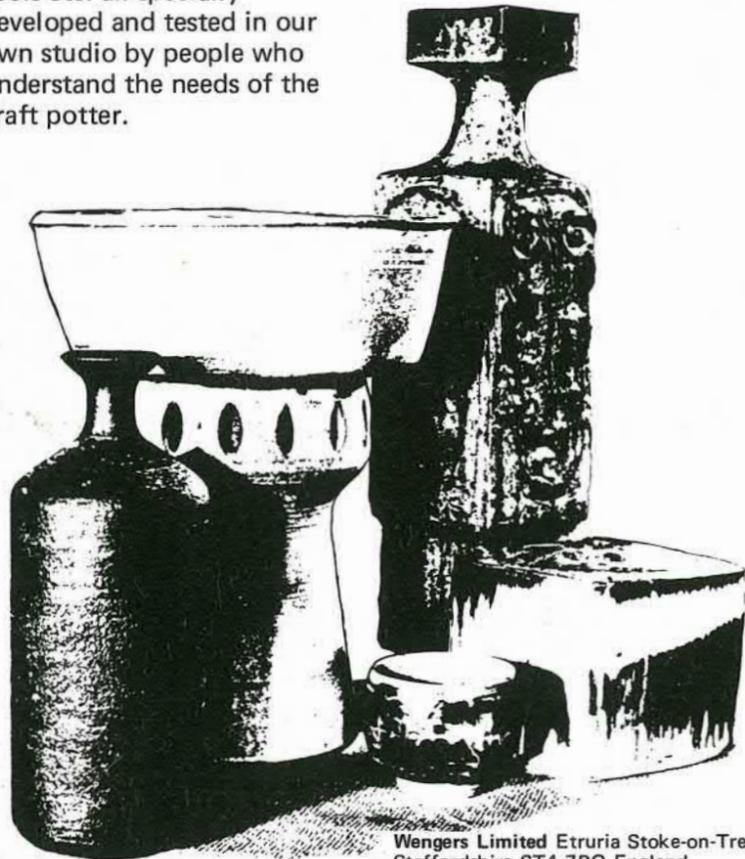
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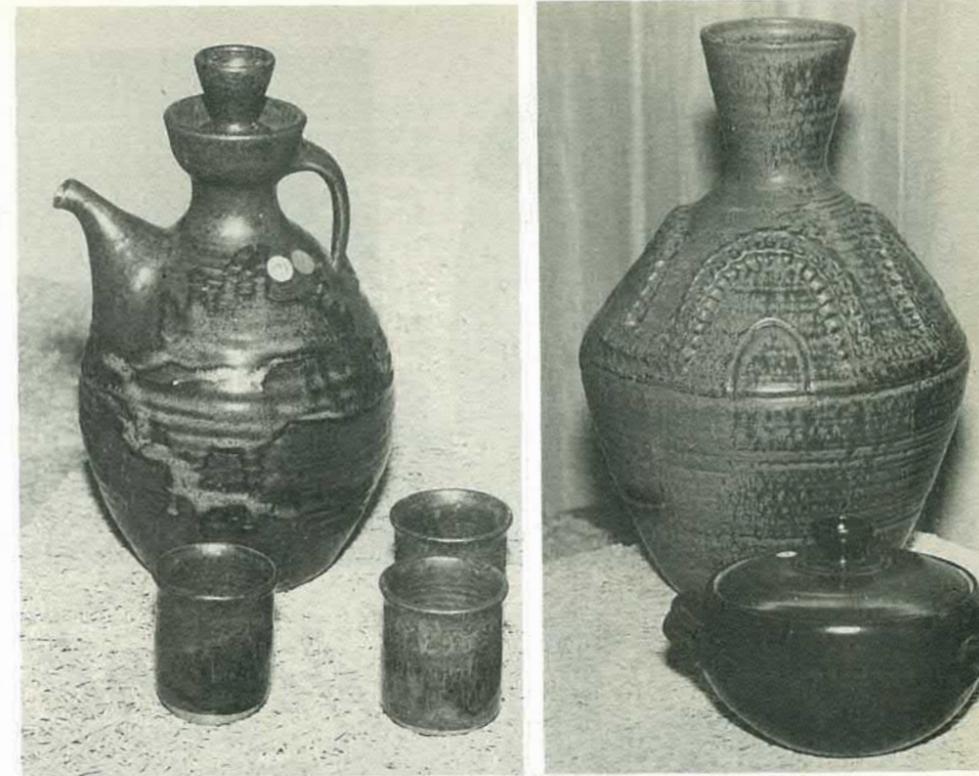
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Mellis van der Sluis exhibition at Rothmans Gallery, Wellington, in March, 1972

Wine pitcher, beakers, branch pot and casserole



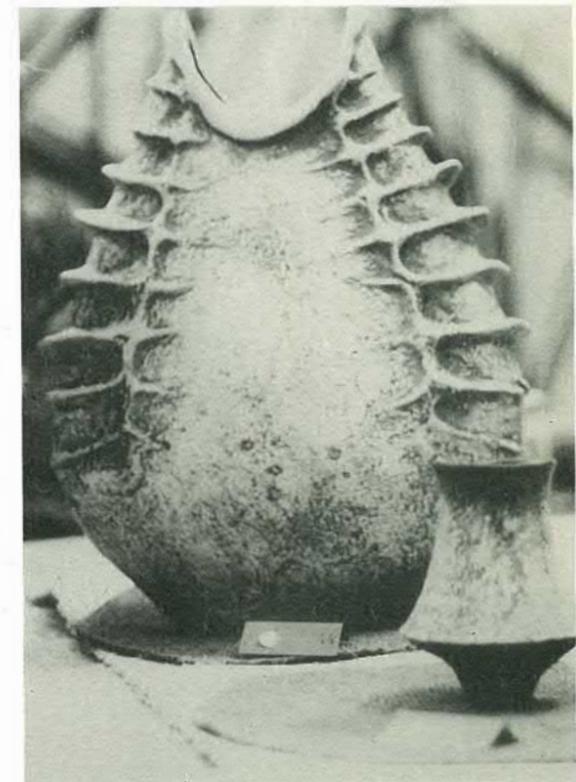
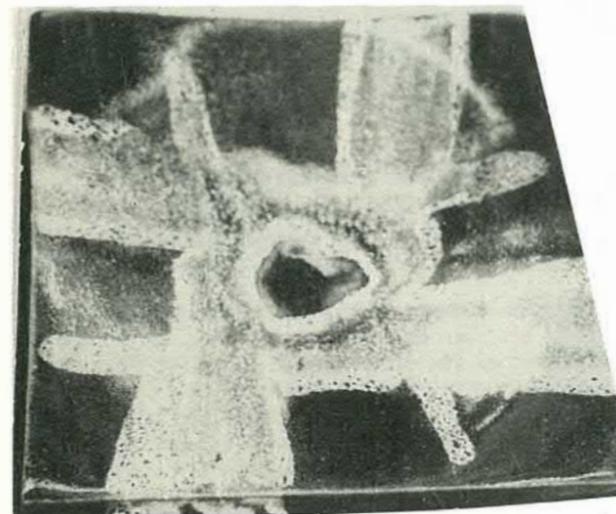
EXHIBITIONS

On this and the following four pages the POTTER reproduces work from some of the exhibitions held since our last issue went to press.

We hope that this may become a regular feature — depending on the supply of GOOD photos of GOOD pots!

From the Manawatu Pottery Society's last exhibition. Vase by John Fuller and porcelain slab dish by Stan Jenkins

Photos: Peter Wilde

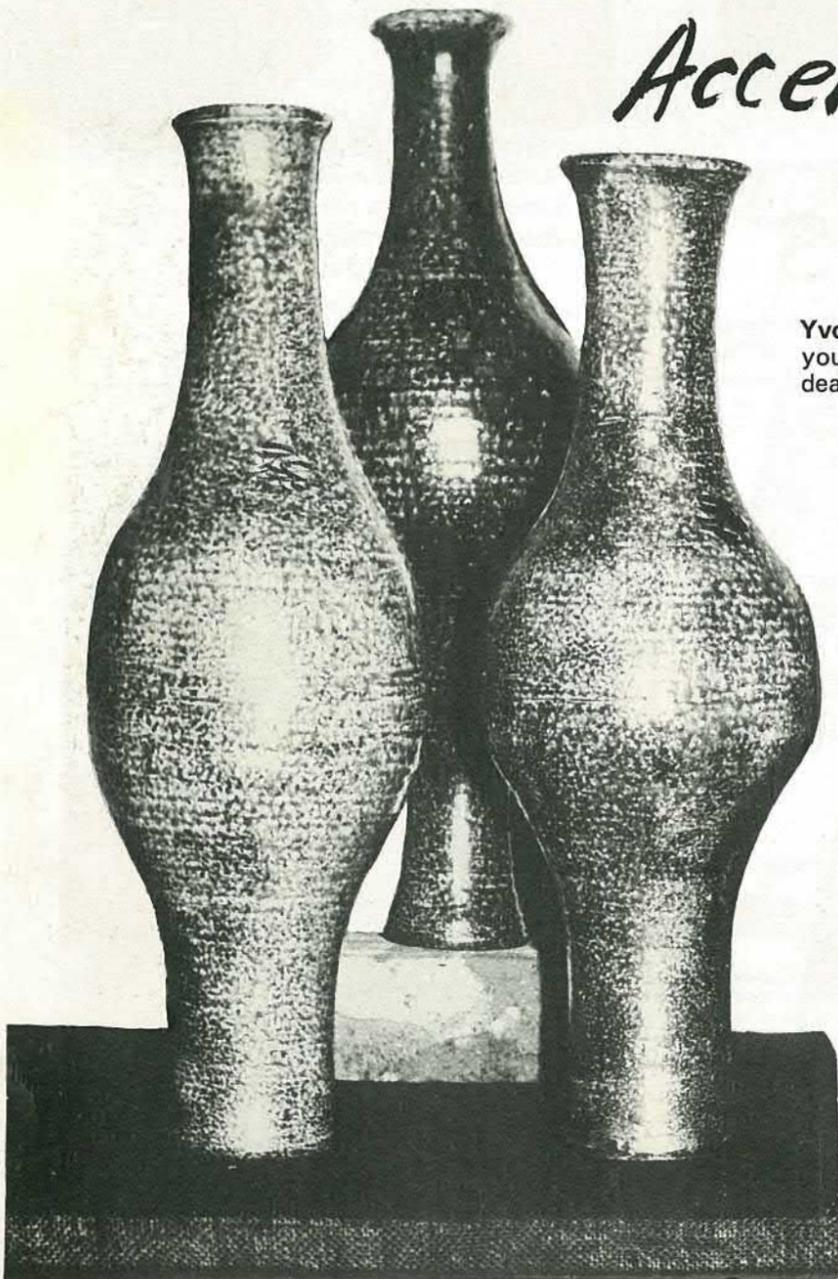




Platters and salt glazed vases
by Anna Gandy

Accent on youth

Yvonne Rust reviews two first exhibitions by young potters who both appear to have a great deal to give



Group of tall vases
By Anna Gandy
at Antipodes Gallery,
Wellington, November, 1971

Photos: Suzanne Gandy

ANNA GANDY at Antipodes Gallery

The first word that came to mind at this exhibition was vigour. What an amazing exhibition for a first. The pots were mostly utility ware but each bowl and jug had been made with love and care. Anna Gandy's work has the timeless quality which is desirable for utility ware. Pots that call out for continuous use and will not just rest on a shelf. The exciting rich glazes had been fired in Paul Melser's salt kiln in Featherston.

The show was massive both in quantity and range. The catalogue listed 223 items which took

no account of sets and there were four dinner sets of platters, small plates, casserole, servers and mugs.

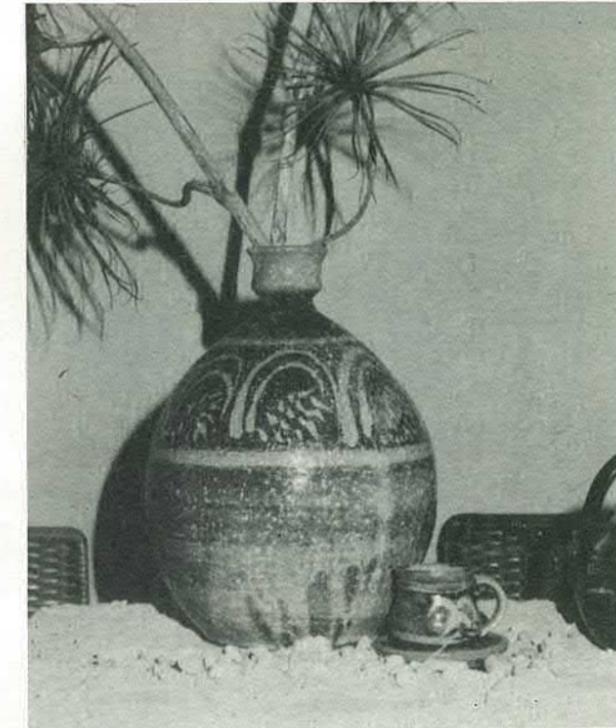
Apart from the excitement of the pots and preview the exhibition itself was a memorable event—in fact it had the air of happening. Most of the viewers were young and in trendy gear. There were several babies. Also attending uninvited, but made welcome, were several dogs and a party of Japanese sailors. Quite late in the evening a group of the young were still sitting on the floor discussing the pots, such was the atmosphere that the Antipodes Gallery provided.

John Crawford at Chez Eleo, Nelson



The emphasis here was a little of this and a little of that in a well organised display which showed off the versatility of this potter. It made me feel as if spring was in the air.

A hanging vase filled with jasmine was the centre piece of the exhibition making an exciting ornament for a high ceiling. A circular wine vat hanging on the wall provided something both ornamental and useful. But besides these items there was ordinary domestic ware. A dinner set of four pieces is a challenge to any young potter.



John Crawford is a confident and accurate craftsman, and the imagination shown in mounting this one-man show says much for the future.

These two young potters each in their first year of potting continuously and exhibiting for the first time, both show promise. One wonders of they will continue to say as much in subsequent showings of their work as they have done at their first show. Young potters face the challenge of matching the work of New Zealand's Top Ten, a task made difficult by buyers who continue to buy a name instead of buying a pot.

Yvonne Rust

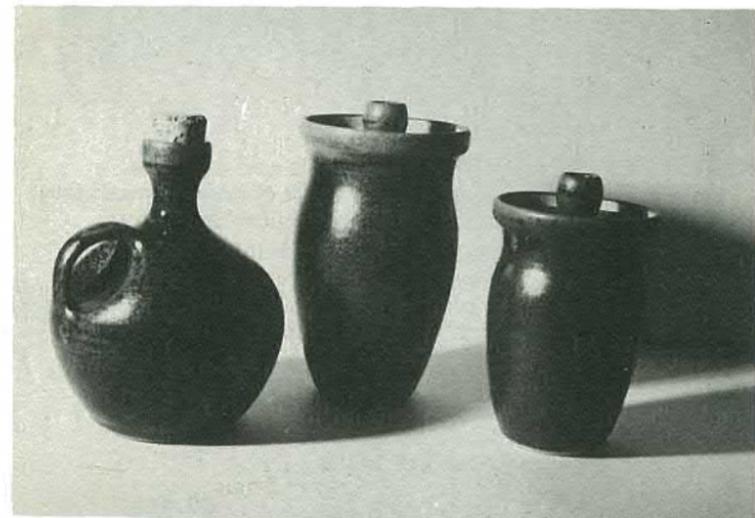


GUILD EXHIBITION

SENTINEL GROUP
by Jim Greig



PART OF CHESS-SET
by Gerald Greenwood



PART OF GROUP
by Frederika Ersten



CYLINDRICAL VASE
by Janet Wright
about 18" high

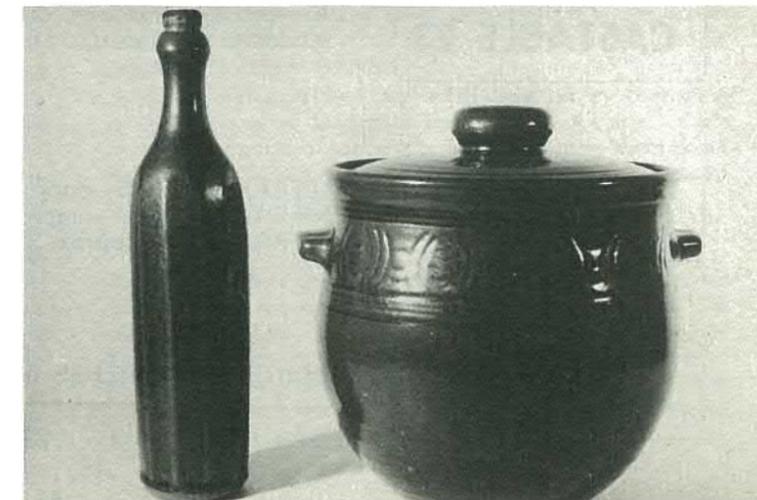
Those taking part were: Barry Brickell, Anneke Borren, Frederika Ersten, Gerald Greenwood, Jim Greig, Jack Laird, Helen Mason, Jo Munro, Mirek Smisek, Michael Trumic, Carl Vendelbosch, Janet Wright, Wilfred Wright

BOTTLE AND KITCHEN JAR
by Michael Trumic

N.Z.POTTERS GUILD
2nd. Exhibition
Antipodes Gallery
Wellington
Nov. 14th-26th.

Our photographs show a few pieces out of a catalogue of one hundred and ninety-six items

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INTERESTED

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Arts Council recognises potters

Yvonne Rust has been awarded a \$2500 fellowship from QEII towards establishing a workshop for herself, which she intends opening to other potters and pupils from time to time.

Yvonne retired from teaching last year after a six year stint on the West Coast. 'I went there to secure the clays and glazes, to let people know they were there and teach them to appreciate them, to make people pot on the Coast and to find myself as a potter.' She has returned to her native Northland with six tons of West Coast clay and an equal amount of enthusiasm for building her new house and workshop. We wish her well.

Jim Greig too has an award from QEII for work on ceramic wall panels and to enable him to develop some ideas for architectural applications. The photograph is of a relief panel 'tree' approximately four foot six inches high. 'I hope to extend the principal ...behind ...this ... (interlocking ...curvilinear blocks) and also develop some other ideas for use of ceramics in buildings.'

Wall panel 'tree'
approx. 4' 6"
by Jim Greig

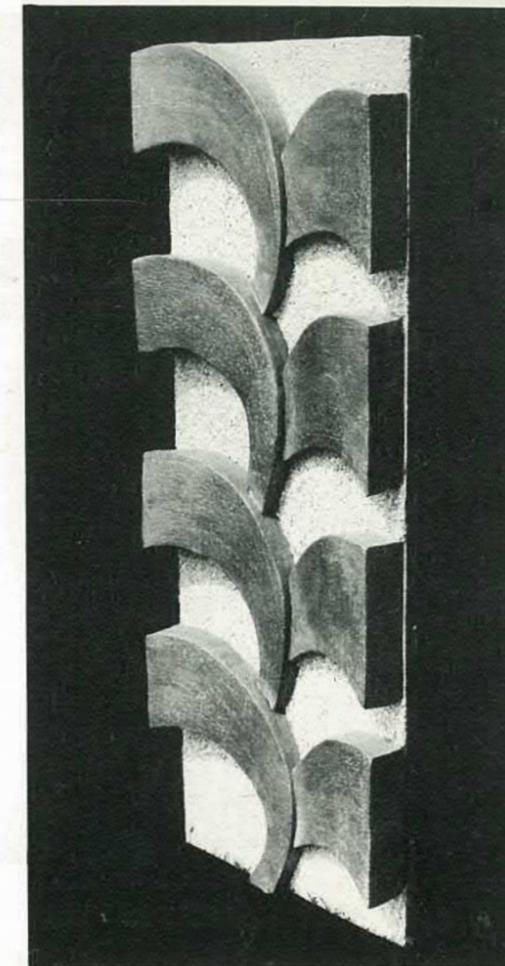


Photo: Bill Beavis

New galleries worth a visit

A new gallery making a colourful addition to the Wellington scene is the Red Cottage Gallery, run by artist Ellinore Ginn. And colour is the word to be emphasised. You literally can't miss the pillar-box red cottage at 9 Kelvin Grove, off Abel Smith Street.

Kelvin Grove is a hangover from the last century. The double row of workmen's houses—picket fence, verandah, three rooms deep—are in correct scale to the street, and the uniformity of having all the houses the same has a pleasing effect on the eye. (What is wrong with terrace housing anyway? Houses can look the same on the outside and be wildly individual on the inside!) And this can be said for the Red Cottage. Ellinor Ginn's strong feeling for colour shows up at once on the blue and white hand-blocked hall wallpaper, on the lampshade, on the mantle-piece group of Bristol blue bottles, on the orange enamel kettle, on the Victorian graveyard dome of white ceramic flowers. She herself could have come from the pages of Brian Wildsmith's Mother Goose. The Gallery sells paintings and some pottery.

The days of the Red Cottage are numbered because Kelvin Grove is in the path of the foothills motorway, and Mrs Ginn must house her gallery somewhere else. There

is a strong case for preserving or recreating streets of older houses such as this, preferably in an area with existing buildings of historical interest like Wellington's old St. Pauls, because they provide a welcome touch of humanity in our increasingly clinical cities. It's up to the conservers to get behind such schemes and come to agreement among themselves as to the order of priorities so a united front is presented to the authorities.

Potters and craftsmen are doing their bit by cherishing old houses and so helping to preserve the character of our country. It's good to see artists such as Ellinore Ginn doing the same. A visit to the Red Cottage certainly brightened up a Sunday afternoon walk in the city for us.

* * *

In Auckland, Bob and Greta Osborne are making use of one of Remueas grand old houses as a picture gallery. The downstairs rooms, lighted, heated and fireproofed, provide space for paintings, the garden, sheltered by high hedges is ideal for out-door sculpture and the upstairs provides a home for the owners. This gallery is also open at weekends making a family visit a possibility.

M. M. H.

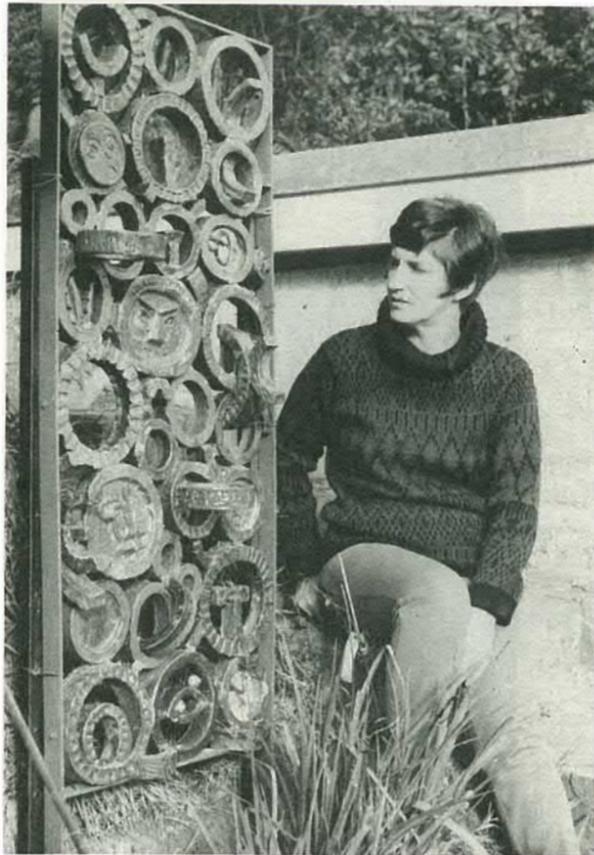


Photo Evening Post

NEWS OF PEOPLE

Wellington potter, Flora Christeller beside her ceramic garden screen. Flora is president of the Wellington Potters group this year.

In late November she held a one-man exhibition in the downstairs foyer of the new National Bank building in Featherston Street. A striking exhibit was a 30 piece dinner service in a rich black glaze.

Guild Summer School

The first resident school run by the New Zealand Potters Guild was held at Wai-mea Potteries, Nelson in January. The twenty-eight people attending were divided into three groups spending two days working with each instructor, Jack Laird, Jim Greig and Barry Brickell. No standards were set for entry so this course was available to beginners, and appealed to people from widely differing backgrounds including several young men and a nun.

Since the usual short weekend courses are limiting for teaching pot making the Guild considers that there is scope for major courses such as this one, where field trips and lectures were part of the programme. Even so it is difficult to cover all aspects such as firing and glazing. Perhaps specialisation is the answer. If sufficient interest is shown in residential schools, the Guild promises to find some way of helping to provide them, perhaps in conjunction with other groups such as the New Zealand Society of Potters.

After the school, various members of the Guild met for a two day seminar to recharge their own batteries.

M.M.H.

Forty years ago Elizabeth Matheson began working as a pioneer potter, preparing her own clay before any facilities existed for obtaining it in any other form. She still prepares her own clays, some of which she finds locally and this entails drying, grinding, soaking, sieving and kneading. In this way she obtains the clay to fit her glazes. All her work is in earthenware which she makes with characteristic bright coloured glazes. In recognition of her contribution to the craft of potting, she has been awarded the British Empire Medal.

POTS & EVENTS

New Station in Wellington

Doreen Blumhardt starts on a career as a fulltime potter. Doreen has retired from her position as Head of the Art Department at Wellington Teachers College. She looks forward to being able to devote her full attention to making pots. In preparation Roy Cowan has been helping to enlarge and improve her kiln. She has also taken steps to improve the access to her pottery. Anyone visiting Doreen's Northland house in the Wellington hillside suburb of Northland will have remarked on the grade of the path and the difficulties of humping heavy materials up and down it. (The flourishing garden of trees, shrubs and terraces was once a steep bramble bank). In anticipation of humping on an even bigger scale, an arrangement has been made for sharing a neighbour's funicular. 'Doreen's Station' is at the pottery showroom level. Doreen will be keeping her teaching hand in by taking pottery classes throughout the country.

In Christchurch

Also potting fulltime is Hazel McCaughern, recently pottery tutor at Risingholme in Christchurch. She will continue to take a few private students.

Doris Holland in Christchurch reports, 'In March we had a whirlwind visit from Sydney potter Madeleine Heather, touring New Zealand with her husband and son in two vintage M.G. cars. In the short time available she visited my studio Risingholme, Rosemary Perry and Nola Barron. And went pot buying at Several Arts. We were delighted to talk to Madeleine who is a member of the Ceramic Study Group touring New Zealand in April. We feel contact is already made. We wish the Heathers a trouble-free trip in their twin old cars.'

Manawatu Raku

Manawatu Pottery Society held a very successful raku firing at Fielding to finish their year. Zoe Bendall says 'Members arrived by the carload—from Palmerston North, from Marton and Taihape, Wanganui, Levin and even Masterton—and they brought their weather with them. It poured. The specially prepared glazes became more and more diluted, decoration drib-

bled and the ground became a trodden and sodden mass of mud and charred newspaper from the smoking kilns.

The large down-draught kiln, built and duly tested during the morning was fired with a large pot burner. It went like a bomb—almost literally, but managed to cope triumphantly with half a dozen pots every hour or so. It was topped with two 'bake oven' arches. A second simpler and smaller up-draught kiln with a drip feed almost functioned successfully.

The results varied of course—some body mixtures stood up better than others but the best pieces to come through were not at all bad. In fact their owners were quite proud of them as they left, wet-footed, diesel-smoked and clutching their precious porous and probably poisonous pots'.

Dunedin

In Dunedin Bob Munro reports 'The highlight of the year was the annual exhibition which shifted its venue to the Otago Museum where more space and a recently installed complex lighting system gave Ian Gray-Smith scope for an excellent lay-out. The pots were systematically placed among dark brown cork, crayfish pots and rusty anchors making a pleasant change from impersonal concrete block structures used so often. For the first time the exhibition was not 'carried' by a few of the established potters. Perhaps it was the general improvement in our own work that made that of the guest potters a bit of a letdown. We usually look at the invited potter's work for inspiration but this time it was for a comparison. One gets the feeling sometimes that the pots sent to Dunedin, are leftovers from something bigger and better. Best exhibition story comes from Griff. As a primary school party passed by the exhibition on the way to see the permanent museum displays, a small boy broke ranks and dashed excitedly to the Nola Barron sculpture to get, as he explained to his impatient teacher, a closer look at the giant's tooth.

During Dunedin's Festival Week, the public had the opportunity to see both the group workshop and the Whare Flat Pottery. The pleasant drive to the old converted schoolhouse at Whare Flat was made by hundreds during the week where they were given demonstrations, explanations and a cup of tea served from a tent on the lawn.'

True confessions : Now it can be told!

Potter readers are invited to make a clean breast of alarming or funny incidents

GOOD HEAVENS!

By Humphrey Colefax

It was so warm that day. A cone 10 sun blazed down from a sky of molten blue. A mesh of sound arose from the cicadas in the kanukas behind the kiln complex. It was all very peaceful as I worked and communed with myself alone in the glost chamber.

Suddenly, above the clack of the cicadas I heard voices. Poking my head out of the wicket I saw women, lots of them! All dressed up in hats and handbags and all that goes in between. At that moment I remembered that I was totally without clothing of any kind—

I had discarded my briefs in the house earlier in the day.

"Go away" I shouted at them: "I've got nothing on". At that they all began to charge towards the kiln, just like a mob of heifers. I saw that clothing was going to be a must, so, saying, 'Excuse me', and clasping a fire-brick to my person, I stepped out of the kiln and legged it for the house.

Uncharitable people say I encourage visitors and then complain when they come. On this occasion I felt no complaint could be too strong.

REMEMBER— *smoke* **MUST**
be washed...

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