

New Zealand Potter

Volume 38 □ Number 3 □ 1996

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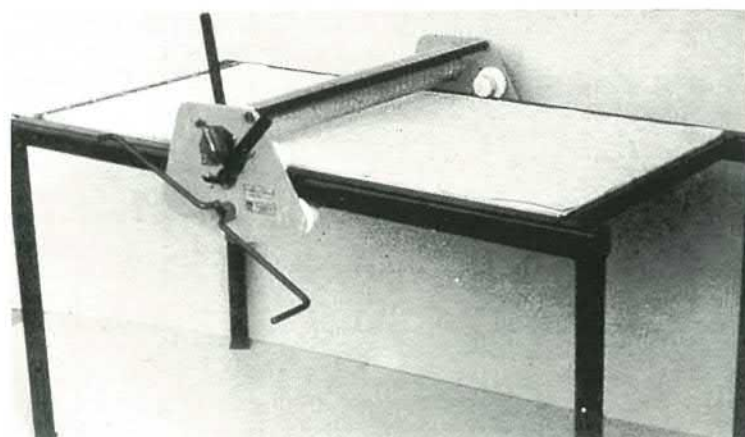
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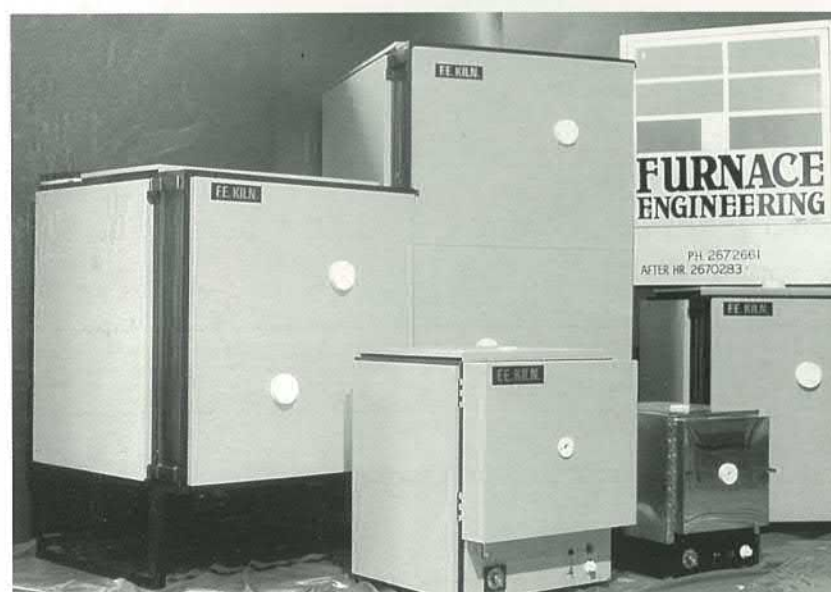
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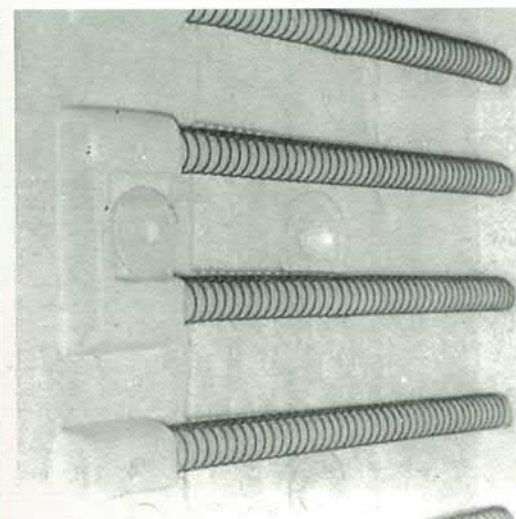


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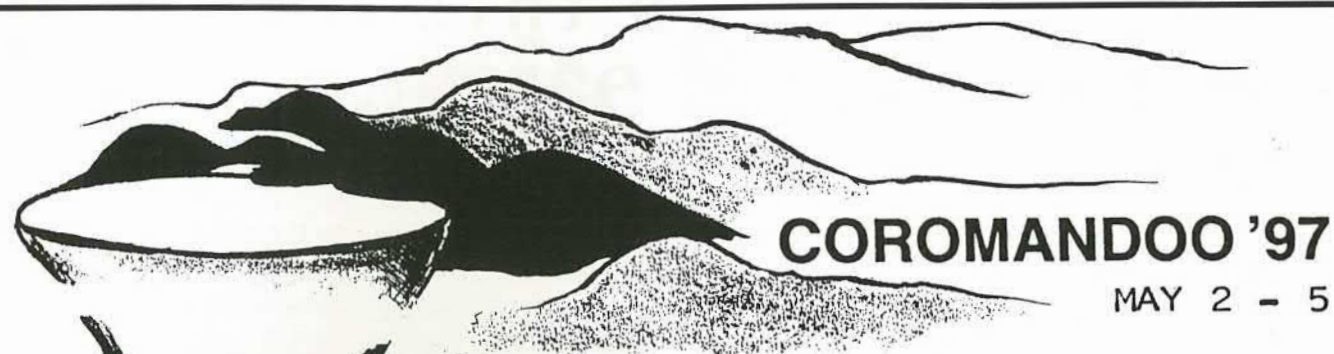
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Mat McLean with "Linkage"
in his Grey Lynn Garden
Photo by Kate McLean
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HIGH LIGHTS of Coromandoo **LOW KEY** Convention
40 Years On Exhibition. Helen Mason & friends
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NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF POTTERS CONVENTION

Are You Coming To Coromandoo? 2 - 5 May 1997

The NZSP annual event is to be held in and around Coromandel Township in 1997. An area of NZ renowned for its great beauty, especially hills and coastline, it also boasts some craftspeople, especially some potters, of note.

We, who have been entrusted by the Executive Committee of the NZSP to arrange an event for you, have decided on a laid-back sort of Doo, because frankly, that is how we are, especially compared with potters of nearby towns & cities. We hope to create some homespun magic out of how & what we are, and banking on a lot of you coming to share this with us.

Coromandoo will take place over the first weekend in May, the weekend before the Fletcher Challenge Opening on Thursday May 8 1997. This means that convention - goers who want to see this exhibition can continue on to Auckland & avail themselves of more magic & culture on their way home.

Negotiations between FCCA & your Coromandoo Committee about the availability of opening night tickets for convention attenders are in hand. We are already promised the appearance of the Judge of this prestigious affair as a guest at our own humble event, & hope that he/she will enjoy meeting lots of you from all over NZ

Sally Vinson

Forty Years On

Helen Mason, Coromandel



Patricia Perrin, 1971. Photo by Steve Rumsey

1997 is the fortieth anniversary of the *First New Zealand Studio Potters' Exhibition* which was organised by Oswald Stephens with the *Visual Arts Society* in Dunedin in 1956 and held in the *Otago Museum*. Fifteen potters took part by invitation.

The *Second Exhibition*, selected by a committee, was held in Wellington in 1957. It attracted an astounding 300 pots, of which 148 were accepted from 33 potters.

At the instigation of Oswald, Doreen Blumhardt, Terry Barrow, Lee Thomson and Helen Mason set themselves up as a Committee and in order to finance the venture sent out a circular to all known potters asking them for support by sending pots and also Ten Shillings towards the cost of the show. In return, contributors were promised a Newsletter so they would know what was going on.

Doreen said, "Why not make it a magazine?", and so *Vol 1, No 1* of *The New Zealand Potter* was born and published in August 1958.

Sales from the exhibition also financed a second issue in December of that year. From this time on subscriptions were just enough to keep the magazine afloat with myself as Editor.

The *New Zealand Society of Potters (NZSP)* was not formed until 1963.

Forty years on from First Exhibition the Annual Convention of the NZSP is to be held in Coromandel from 2-5 May 1997. This year the Exhibition will take different form with participants being asked to bring one of their own pots with them for display in an unselected exhibition at *Hauraki House*, the *Community Arts Gallery* in Coromandel, for the duration of the Conference. Any pots sold - and unsold pots can then be taken home.

At the same time in another room, we would like to hold an exhibition of the work of potters who took part in the first two exhibitions in 1957 and 1958 and we are inviting them to take part in this *Forty Years On* Exhibition. The names of these potters are:

First Exhibition: Otago Museum, 16-30 November 1957, by invitation.

Martin Beck, Auckland
 Len Castle, Auckland
 Olive Jones, Auckland
 Oswald Stephens, Dunedin
 Doreen Blumhardt, Wellington
 Helen Dawson, Dunedin
 Mavis Jack, Wanganui
 Peter Stichbury, Auckland

Mina Bondy, Wellington
 Grete Graetzer, Dunedin
 Helen Mason, Wellington
 Lee Thomson, Wellington
 Barry Brickell, Auckland
 Doris Holland, Christchurch
 Patricia Perrin, Auckland

Second Exhibition: Architectural Centre Gallery, Wellington, 20-31 October 1958, by selection.

All 1957 names, plus:

Ina Arthur, Dunedin
 Pat Brown, Auckland
 Juliet Peter, Wellington
 J L Stewart, Wellington
 Carl Vendelbosch, Christchurch
 Roy Cowan, Wellington
 Mary Hardwick-Smith, Auckland
 Hazel McCaughern, Christchurch
 Elizabeth Matheson, Wellington
 Hillsborough Group, Christchurch

Nancy Beck, Auckland
 R B Hall, Auckland
 Ray Rose, Wellington
 Terry Barrow, Wellington
 June Black, Wellington
 Inez Rennie, Wellington
 Muriel Moody, Wellington
 Hilary Thurston, Napier
 Mirek Smisek, Nelson

It will make it simpler to organise if pots from these people could be brought by, or sent with potters who are coming to the Conference. We would really appreciate your input so this can be a true celebration of the first two exhibitions.



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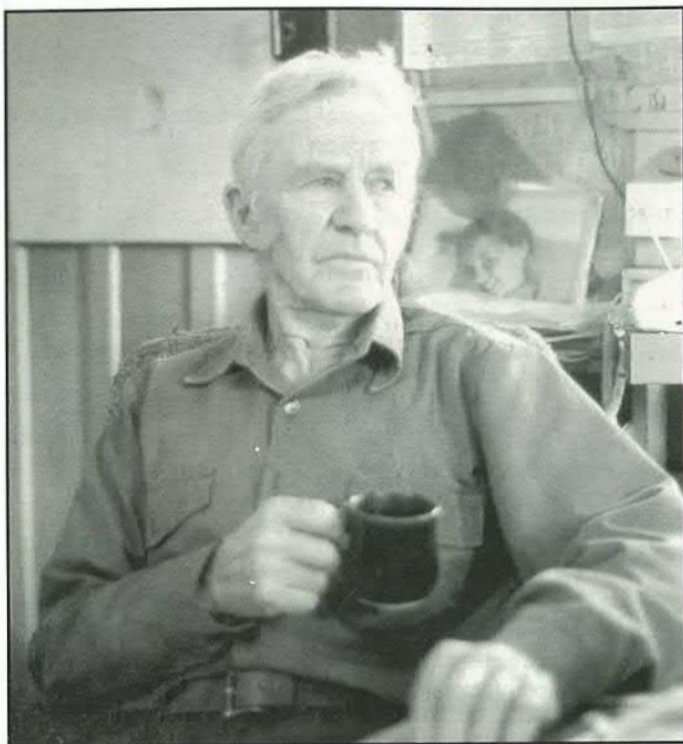
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Obituary Jack Luckens 1914 -1996 Memories

Barry Brickell, Coromandel



I cannot recall when Jack Luckens entered my life, but it would have been at least 20 years ago.

He travelled widely throughout his country from time to time in his mobile home, an old, travel-worn *Kombi* van, fitted out with bunk, library, stove, writing bench and not least, his copious "cuppa" apparatus for enjoyment at wayside stops.

This distinctive unit would suddenly arrive of an evening and camp discreetly in a quiet corner of my yard. After a well-cooked dinner, out would come spinning wheel and Jack to entertain us with easy and abundant conversation into the night.

Twenty years ago this amiable helper of hundreds had already taken an interest in pottery. Typically this was no shallow affair. With his very practical disposition, coupled with a sense of pioneering adventure that never left him, Jack not only "made pots", but became thoroughly embroiled in researching, testing and notating raw materials for glazes and bodies. He made many ingenious small kilns using old bits of iron, brick and *Kaowool* cleverly, yet casually assembled, that made my early kilns seem modern by comparison.

At the time I felt this work was not being appreciated enough at large and wanted to include it in my *New Zealand Potters' Dictionary*. Crestfallen was I, when the publisher decided to omit it because the colour photos required would make the book too expensive.

Jack had a good working knowledge of machinery and a good understanding of geology. His ancestral few acres at Luckens Road (on the edge of Auckland's sprawling urban north) consisted of a high-firing creamy, plastic clay, just below the surface. On my first visit it was no surprise then, to find him clay-making for other potters as well as himself. Battling away with home-made contrivances he enlisted the "assistance" of his legendary

horse *Tuppence* and that damned butting ram, for some of the more manual tasks. These guardians of the estate were, I was reminded, among his best of friends.

Jack had built a ribbon blender machine for batch-mixing the clay body ingredients. The resultant easy-to-use, plastic stoneware clay was then sometimes dried in copious piles with old newspaper, or bagged directly into plastic, then inspected by the above-mentioned members of his staff before delivery in the *Kombi*, converted for freight haulage.

This whole operation was carried out in a rambling collection of old sheds overshadowed by large macrocarpa, pine and sum trees, with lush grassy areas, all now virtually swallowed up by suburban development.

The potteries itself was a former barn, truly Jack-built, made partly with the handsome old salt-glazed stoneware equivalent of modern concrete blocks. Frugal and inventive by training, but generous by nature, he had collected these blocks second-hand, realising their unique character, which was probably not appreciated sufficiently at the time to be regarded as collectors' pieces. One of Jack's old stamping grounds close to home was the mangrove-rich estuary beside which *Clark's* brickworks operated early this century, turning out huge quantities of salt-glazed wares.

His wheel was not just home-made, but very home-made - when I tried to use it, it defeated me, yet its master considered it quite satisfactory.

It is important to know that Jack Luckens was much more than the good old practical, jovial, fix-all Kiwi stereotype of his generation. Although he had worked at many trades and occupations throughout his varied life, there was a healthy and strong intellect as well. His library alone testifies to this. It indicates a seeker and holder of an enormous range of knowledge of his country I suggest few others could equal.

Geology, geography, botany, biology, palaeontology, agriculture, forestry and New Zealand social history are subjects he steeped himself in. His quest for local knowledge saw him exploring almost every back road and many tracks throughout the country. Many were the folk, close and remote, whom he befriended - people from all walks of life from the nitty-gritty to the academics. However, I don't think he cared much for politicians or bureaucrats - a trait that those who do not want power over others, and are thoroughly practical, would support.

A conversationalist supreme, joke-master, humorist and "recounteer", one had no excuse to be bored in his seemingly easy company. Yet sometimes I felt he was a man alone - many acquaintances, but how many true friends? I detected a certain reluctance to divulge much about his earlier personal life.

Jack's research into moa (gizzard) stones is legendary. His recent scientific paper on this fascinating subject has become a respected reference work for scholarship.

I accompanied him on some of his 3 - 4 day trips in "Wagon" re-exploring Northland (his favourite haunt) and the Waikato. Every valley, stream, landscape and bush patch meant something. One had to keep on going back to take notes, do more fossicking and meet someone missed on a previous visit. Yes, I learned a lot about my very own country from this indomitable man.

After setting up his home computer and printer, Jack spent increasing time in later years, writing. From short, humorous articles they became narrative booklets. These he generously scattered among friends. They are chronicles, and though written in light vein do provide us with an insight into the mind and nature of this remarkable individual. They are also a window on this land and its people through daintily coloured glass.

That figure in the khaki shirt and shorts, knee socks, boots, sheath knife and hat, I can clearly see right now. At the alert and ready to go, I know he will never leave me. ■

Obituary Siddig El'Nigoumi

A letter from England to Pots of Ponsonby reads:

"It is with sadness that must inform you that my father Siddig El'Nigoumi passed away on October 8 following a short illness.

I know that he thoroughly enjoyed his visit to New Zealand in 1991 and was overwhelmed by the friendship and enthusiasm which greeted him. I am sure Nigoumi would like me to extend a final farewell to all the people he met and to wish you all well.

In memory of my father I would like to attempt an inventory of his work in both public and private collections at home and abroad, and when things have settled down a little here, perhaps I could contact you again to seek your help with this matter.

With very best wishes"
Zainab Nigoumi

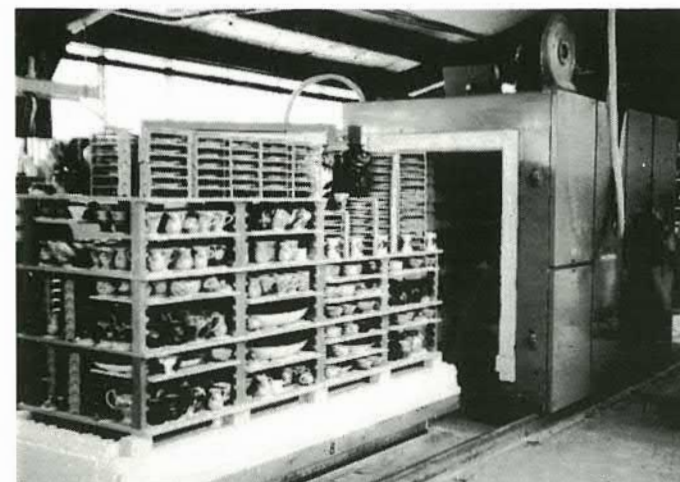
As Siddig El'Nigoumi held his main solo exhibition while in New Zealand at *Pots of Ponsonby*, 298 Ponsonby Road, Auckland, we ask anyone who has work by him to please write to them c/o Robin Paul, 145 Eskdale Road, Birkenhead, Auckland, giving details and if possible a photograph. They will compile these and send a full list to Zainab to help with her inventory. We also extend on behalf of those who met him, our sympathy to Zainab on the loss of her father. The burnished terracotta piece illustrated was in the 1991 *Pots of Ponsonby* show. Editor



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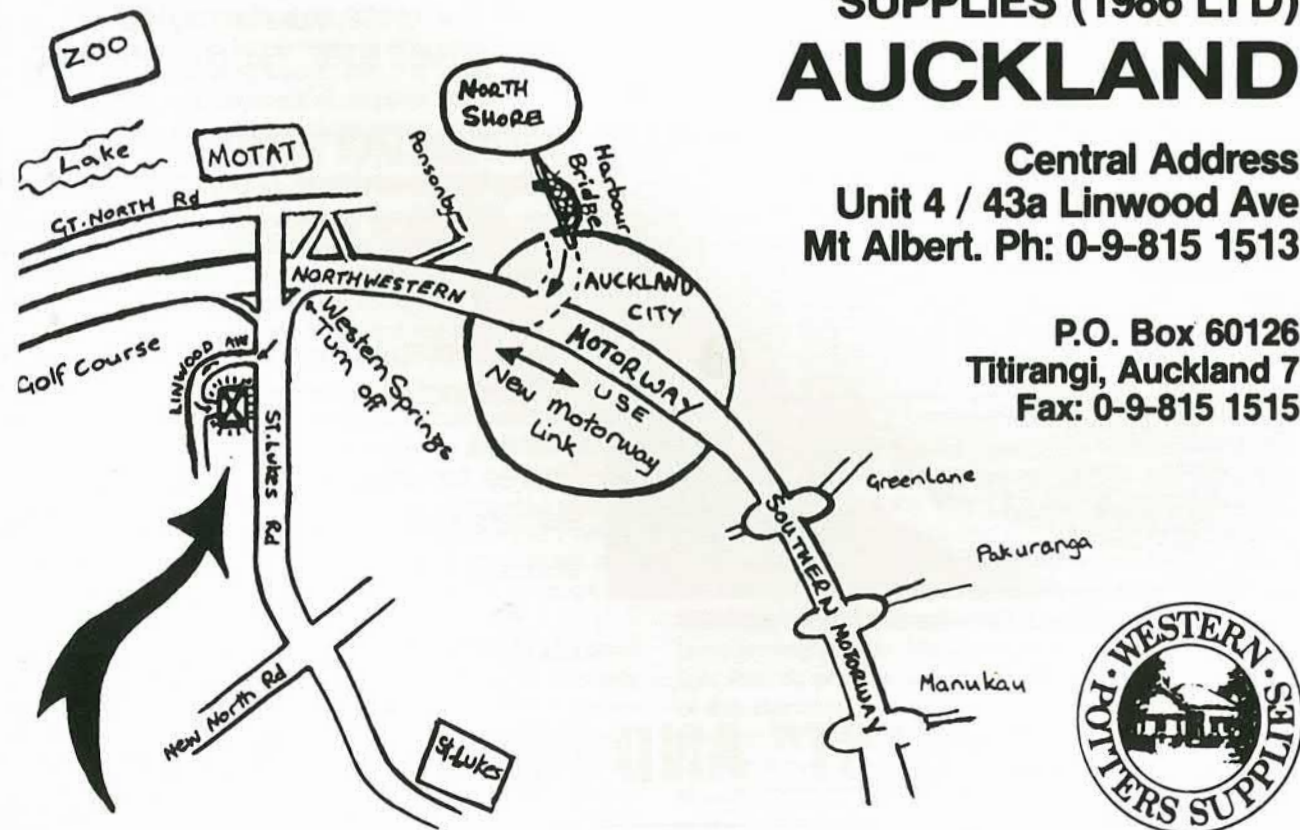
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James Robb: Artist

Howard Williams, Auckland

"I bought a *Leach* kick wheel at first - as everybody did in the '70s - but soon gave that away and bought an electric wheel instead. Being an avid skier, I realised that all this exercise with one leg would overdevelop it to no good - I would eventually find it hard to keep an equal edge on my skis and would likely finish up skiing in strange lopsided curves!"

As a child **James Robb** was interested in drawing and painting and was encouraged at school, drawing mostly pictures of ships or "galleons sailing in my imagination". His greatest concern was always his own interpretation of things or scenes which excited him, leading him to experiment with ways he could draw to make them his own - different from anyone else's. He admits to being a bit of a loner, perhaps a little eccentric, but it makes his work satisfyingly unique to him.

Leaving school he forgot about art for a while, because he could not imagine making a living from it, and went into the army from 1957 to 1962 where among other things he learnt to ski - a skill which was to take him around the world.

For a time he was a winter ski instructor in Squaw Valley, California, while in summer he attended a radio training school in San Francisco, becoming a professional DJ. This took him to Europe where in 1968 he was a DJ on the famous pirate station *Radio Caroline* off Frinton on the Essex Coast, commuting to work from a base in Amsterdam. However, he was soon sacked from this job as he had taken with him tapes of funky West Coast American music which he continually played on his air time.

As this suggests, another of James' loves is music - also in slightly eccentric vein. He plays self-taught harmonica in his own extemporising style and always carries several of the instruments with him (in different key settings) so he can sit in on sessions wherever he finds a guitarist or jazz group jamming. His music is like his art; colourful, textured and full of experimental expressive stuff.

More work followed as a ski instructor in France where he DJ'd in a nightclub, the owner of which then transferred him to a nightclub in Berlin (complete with strippers who finished their act in the heated swimming pool) then back to the States as a DJ for *KMPX* and *KBRG*, alternative music FM stations in San Francisco.

This work eventually took him to England where with a friend he organised the first major rock concert *Glastonbury Fair* in the Vale of Avalon. In UK he met and married Penny and in 1972 they returned together to Auckland, where James took a job as a gardener at *Green Bay High School* for a year.

It was some time during this year James was on a ferry from Waiheke Island when he met a potter (he hasn't a clue who it was!) carrying bowls he had made to sell in Auckland. Impressed by this James suddenly he knew what he really wanted to be - a potter, living a laid-back country life-style, making beautiful pots to sell in a city gallery. (This was the early '70s, don't forget) And he did it - at first on his *Leach* kick wheel.

Totally self-taught through dedicated reading and practise, but with great encouragement and inspiration from **Len Castle**

who lived nearby, he began selling through open days, then from a stall at *Cook Street Market*, and in 1978 held his first solo exhibition at *Durham Arts Gallery* near the old 12B studios. From *Durham Arts* he sold pots for many a year, mostly "high-fired, thick and heavy brown casseroles, many of which are probably still embarrassingly in existence!"

After a year at *Green Bay* James and Penny shifted to Awhitu on the south side of the Manukau Harbour where he built, tore down and rebuilt his own kilns, learning how to fire them by the suck-it-and-see method, with wonderful successes and disastrous meltdowns and living, it seemed, covered in brick dust, soot and diesel. One incident he recalls with clarity.

"Towards the end of a firing which was to supply some desperately needed cash, the pyrometer appeared stuck; the temperature just would not go any higher no matter what we tried. Eventually, in the middle of the night, an exhausted Penny burst into tears and suddenly the gauge needle began climbing again. 'Keep crying, Penny - keep crying! The temperature's going up!' I yelled, and she did, and it did. We finished up with a wonderful firing - and maybe a lateral way of 'soaking the kiln!'"


Tired of the "old brown pottery" he talked to Len Castle about optical blue glazes and was given a Chun recipe to try. "I thought I did everything Len said, but my blue fell flat into some awful white gunk. Not deterred I burnt tons of toitoi (pampas grass) for its ash and eventually developed a beautiful light blue glaze. Findings like this kept me going."

James' next big change in direction came when he and Penny separated in 1988. He just went out and bought heaps of water-colour materials and started painting local landscapes - again totally in his own style. He got hooked by the effects gained from floating colour onto wet paper - experimenting, finding new techniques, a loosening-up process having nothing in common with accepted usage of the medium. His new paintings started to sell and he also began exploring landscape photography.

"NOW! How can I get these colours and textures onto my pots?" So came another period of extensive experimentation to produce uniquely textured "landscape" pots that echo the paintings.

James is an artist whose psyche is excited by his surrounding world, driving an urge to explore and savour, evaluate and emotive; to capture and then communicate that excitement by way of whatever medium is best for the occasion. Living now at Orua Bay on the Awhitu Peninsula puts him in a farm environment

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Large White Dog, 1990. Barry Lett.

edged by beach with lines of rock and sand layering into sea.

Such a 'scape he portrays in a semi-abstract fashion, choosing strong colours and textures redolent of botanical and geological structure. Some paintings are drawn with a realism that informs exactly which corner of which beach is being depicted, but others are essenced down to distil the atmosphere of the area, eliciting an emotional reaction rather than specific visual recognition. Rocks are indicated using crumpled waxed paper to print textures as a resist, over which colour is brushed and line-work drawn to show crevices and lichens, salty grasses and native epiphytes. Overpainting with mixed media suggests details of sand and shells with sea dissolving into skies about to unleash a summer storm. Wet-paper watercolour builds drifts of clouds and streaky rain; scraping back to the paper gives a sparkle of sunlight on the water.

Bringing his art off the wall and "into the round", James adapts his painting processes to a unique method of decorating on his pots. At the leather-hard stage when the unfired clay is still damp, though too stiff to deform, his thrown vases and bowls are wrapped in crumpled waxed paper. Liquid clay-slip is poured down through the interstices between clay body and paper, drying into a naturally random, crinkly skin.

In this stucco-like texture, shapes of the landscape - hills, trees, rocks and rivers - are later "visualised", picked out and enhanced by painting with glaze and stain. The white earthenware clay is fired in a gas kiln with no reduction through multiple firings from

1100°C down, and then comes post-firing painting with oil paints, inks and sgraffito. Accent touches and rims of gold offset solid colour interiors. Swatches of white clay are bravely left uncoloured in a painterly, not potter-like way, connecting the vessels' clay with the land to which they refer.

These vases and bowl forms are not for everyday table use. Classical in their simple outline, they are really vehicles for textural paintings in the round, echoing the concerns of the abstract landscape paintings on the wall. They successfully blur the boundaries between art and craft and both media bear a signature style unique to the artist. The illustrated examples of these paintings and pots were in James' recent solo exhibition at Gallery 16, Huapai, near Auckland.

Being also interested in sharing his love of all the arts has led James Robb into his latest project, *The Art Farm* at Orua Bay, facilities for which are near completion. Its inaugural *Summer Art Camp* starts November 19 for 4th formers from *Pukekohe High School* and from January 4th 1997 there will be two workshops for adults giving courses in raku and pit-firing and then a school in creative writing tutored by an internationally known writer.

Courses in pottery, painting, sculpture, writing, music and photography are planned for this Manukau Harbour beach-side 66 acres which can also offer fishing, sailing, swimming and horse-riding - though no snow skiing, says James, ruefully. It is part of his dream to integrate for others, all forms of art as he does within himself: "My pots, paintings, photography - they feed each other, and I just dance around them all with my music."

James Robb

Exhibition Pots at Gallery 16, Huapai

Photos by Howard Williams



Coastal Colours

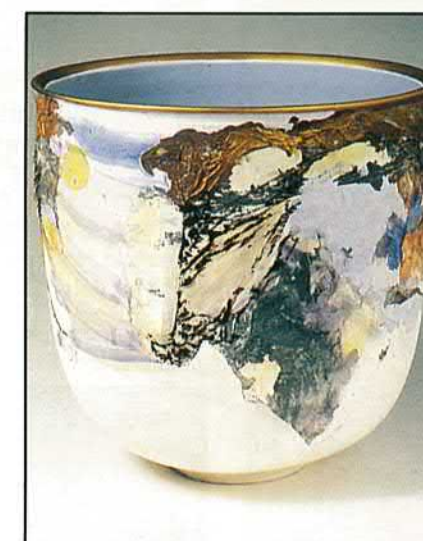


Thermal series: works on paper, ink and water colour
Orakei Korako, Rotorua. 210x113cm

Photo :Rees Osbourne



Awhitu Seascape
Blue on Gold



Manukau Moon
Awhitu Dream

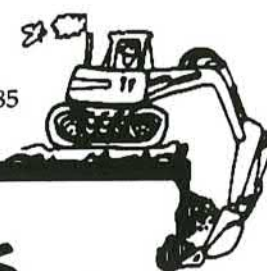


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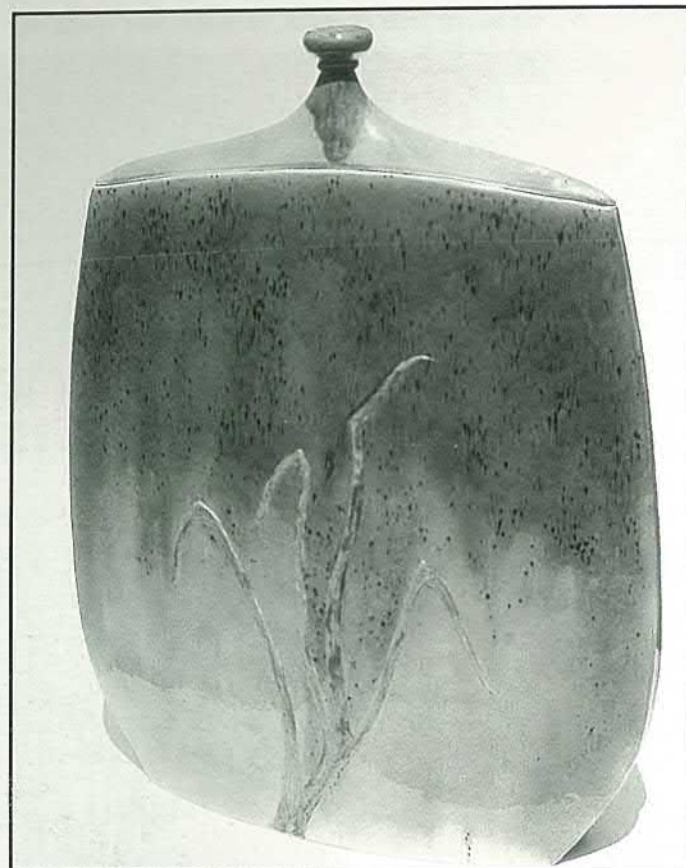
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Ian Firth: 50 Years a Potter

Howard Williams, Auckland

Photos by Howard Williams



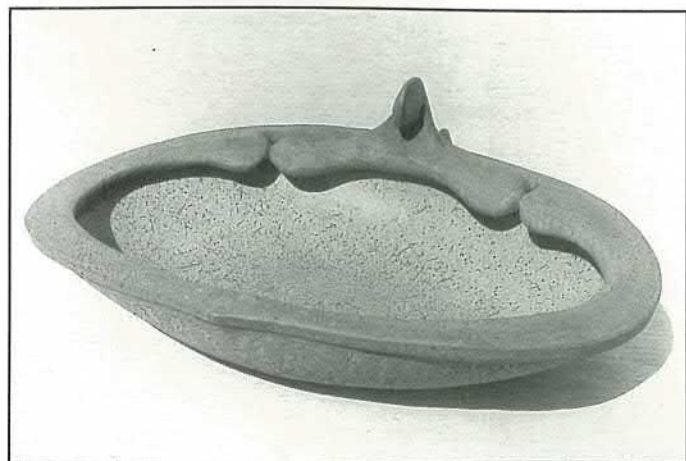
"Moody Blues" 1996

It all started when he was a youngster living in Royal Oak in Auckland. It was 1942, war-time, and with the possible threat of an invasion, people were digging air-raid shelters in their gardens all over the city. Ian Firth helped his dad with this chore and together they dug nearly two metres deep through the rich volcanic topsoil into smooth, plastic clay.

Ian loved modelling with Plasticine at school, but he discovered this clay was excitingly different. Dad kept on digging - Ian modelled animals and figures and pinched out little pots. A tiny beginning to a dedicated career.

Somewhere - he cannot recall precisely where - Ian had learned

Kotiate Bowl, 1970. 60x40x18 cm h



that pots were even better made from clay spun on a sort of fly-wheel so he contrived one, tipping an old grindstone on its side with its geared handle underneath. Being right-handed he turned the handle with this hand and 'threw' his clay lump on the top, with his left hand.

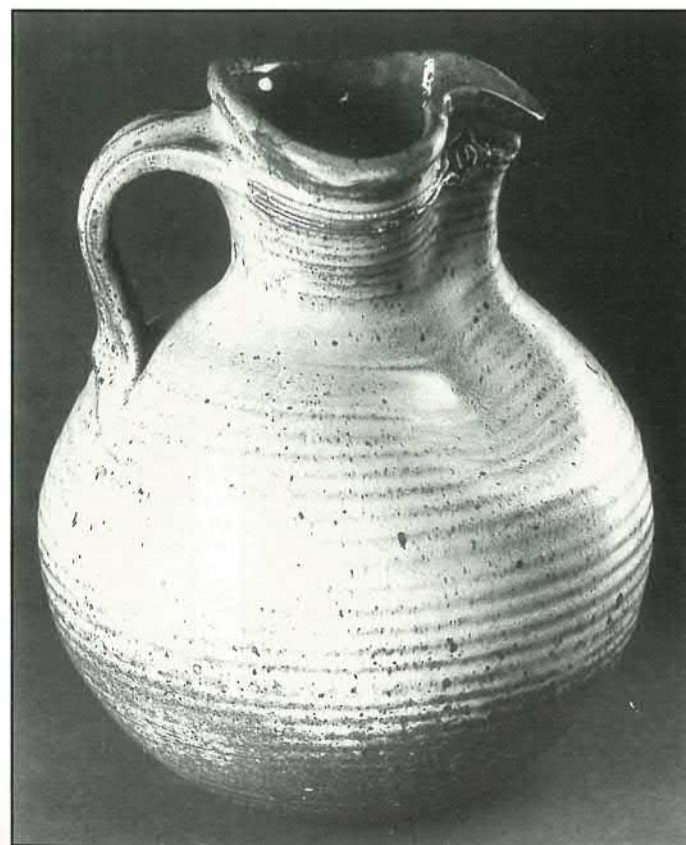
Ian's engineer father reckoned this was probably not the best way to do the job, so he designed and built an electric motor driven wheel which was far superior. However, having never seen pots being thrown, Ian continued as he had started, throwing one-handed with his left hand, wondering what to do with his right!

He was hooked. With youthful enthusiasm and perseverance he taught himself how to control the clay and kept making pots - and squashing them up - until he decided he must have a kiln to fire them in. In 1945 he biked to Onehunga to see the potter **Olive Jones**, but although he saw her kiln, built into a 300 gallon iron tank, it had starlings nesting in the main chamber so he couldn't see it working. He then rode to see **Briar Gardner** in West Auckland, but she didn't have a kiln - her pottery was fired in the industrial kilns at her family's factory, *Amalgamated Brick and Pipe Co.*

So, like his first wheel, Ian built his first kiln. Knowing that pumice was a good insulating material, he obtained a block of it and hollowed it out from the bottom to make a chamber about 9 inches high (23cm) and 4 inches in diameter (11.5cm). This allowed a Primus blowlamp (called the *London Furnace*) to be vertically fired up into the flue-less chamber.

Ian had by now met **Dennis McClure**, a chemist at the *Clark Potteries* (later *Crown Lynn*) who gave him much advice and two

Dimpled Jug 1977. 480 cm h



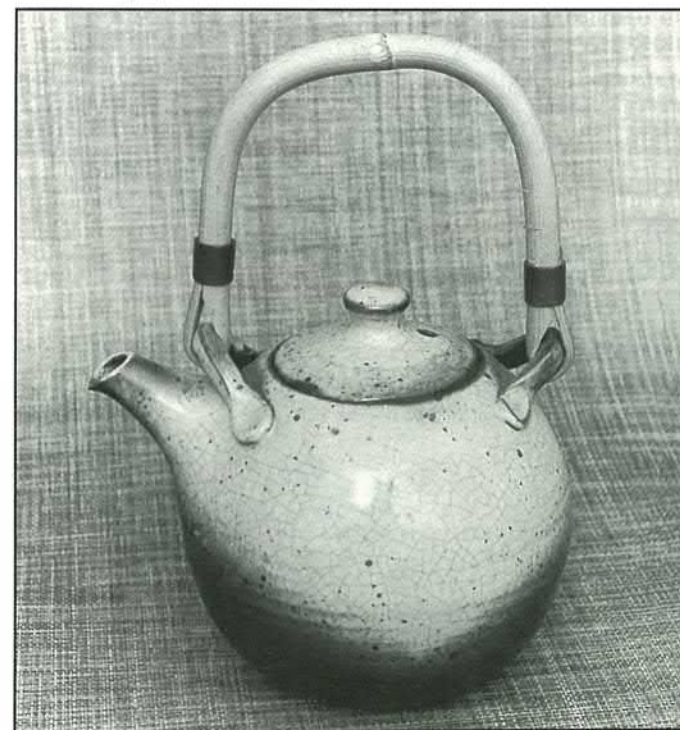
Multi-pot. Landscape Form, 1978. 20 cm h

pyrometric cones which he put into his kiln to see what temperature he could get. Cone 010a (900°C) soon began dripping down onto the burner and then cone 10 bent over - 1300°C could be reached within half-an-hour! He was on his way to firing pots successfully and soon could fire two coffee mugs in a firing taking one hour from cold to cold; three firings in a day and he had a set of mugs to sell!

Every firing didn't use cones. Ian opened a spy-hole in the side of his pumice kiln and, poking a piece of wire in, learnt by experience how it reflected in the glaze to indicate when a firing was complete.

Glaze was another fascinating area for experiment. The outside of the pumice kiln remained cool and unaltered; the inside gradually melted into a skin of fluid richness, blues and purples flowing together as if it were lined with paua shell and changing through successive firings. What caused this effect and could it be utilised on pots? From here began the fascination for glaze

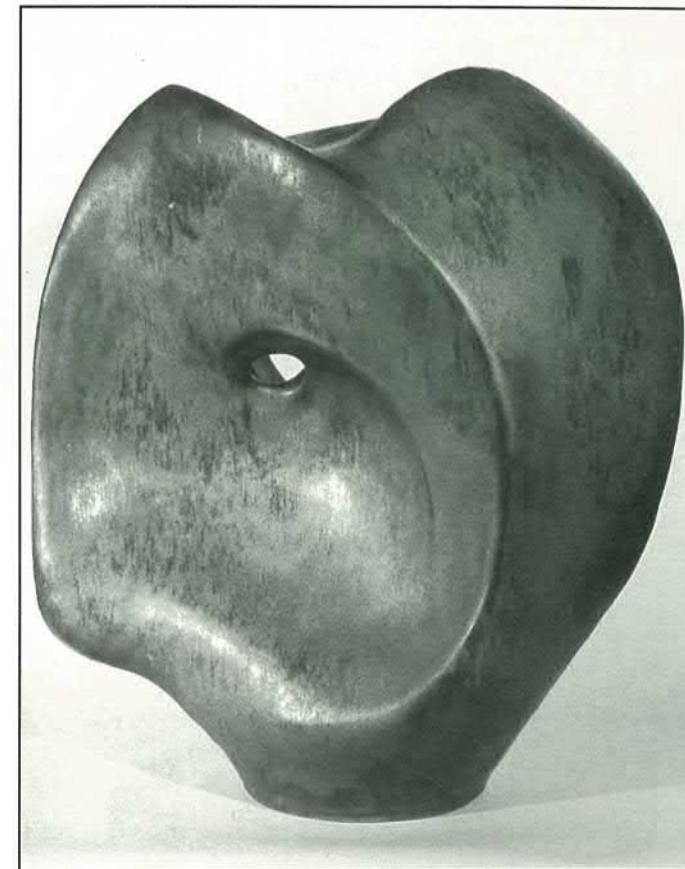
Shino Teapot, 1982. 18 cm h



formulation and to this day every kiln fired contains a range of glaze tests. Now Ian has a vast inventory of his own developed and documented colours and effects.

This kiln was of course too small and Ian's next experiment was to build a wood-fired kiln, the plan for which was drawn by **Francis Heuber** and published in the American magazine, *Popular Mechanics*. Somehow he could never get it beyond 1220°C, but undeterred, he altered his glazes to suit this temperature. He also remembered his pumice-produced colours and after much experimenting used one part whiting, half a part titanium dioxide and three parts pumice dust, which under his firing conditions produced a beautiful dark blue/purple glaze.

Ian attended *Elam Art School* from 1946 - 50 hoping to become a painter. The school had a potter's wheel, but nobody taught pottery (and as far as Ian knows they haven't to this day)



"Tangaroa" Bronze glazed sculpture

but one of his tutors **Ida Eise**, had a selection of drab dark green and brown pots which she used for still life paintings. To Ian's comment on how boring these were, Ida replied, "If you don't like them, make your own." So he did...and deciding he was having more success with clay than paint and that it would be difficult for him to make a living as a painter, he determined to become a full-time professional potter.

In 1951 Ian and **Peter Webb** (now *Webb's Art, Antique and Estate Auctioneers*) were both making pots and decided to see if any others were interested in forming a club. They advertised with the *Auckland Star*, calling a meeting in Albert Park, which over 300 people attended - all wanting to know where they could learn! This was the inaugural meeting of what was to become, in Devonport, the first studio pottery society in New Zealand.

The *North Shore Society of Potters*, starting with 30 members, held monthly meetings and weekly teaching classes and its membership grew to around 100. Ten years later, 1961, this club evolved into the present *Auckland Studio Potters Inc.*

Ian and Peter Webb formed a partnership, making their pot-

Auckland Studio Potters 32nd Annual Exhibition

The Language of Clay

Auckland Museum

Photos by Howard Williams

Selector: Andrew Van Der Putten



Guest Exhibitor: **Ian Firth**
Pink Mist - Set of 5 slab bottles



Carolyn Hodgson
The Pup



Matt McLean
Jug: Salt-glazed, Wood-fired
Rod Davies
Jar: Salt-glazed, Wood-fired



Helen Adams
Leggo Vase



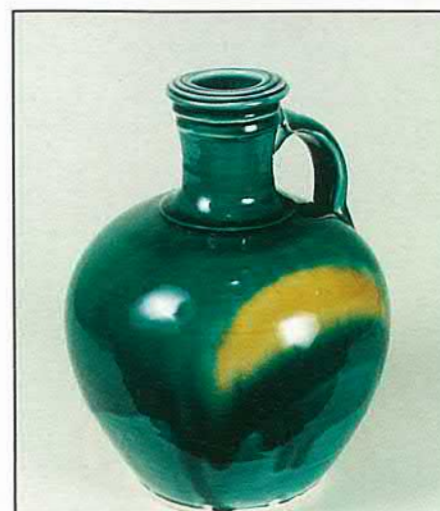
Peter Lange
Salt-glazed Bowl



Nicky Jolly: Exhibition Designer
The Language of Clay



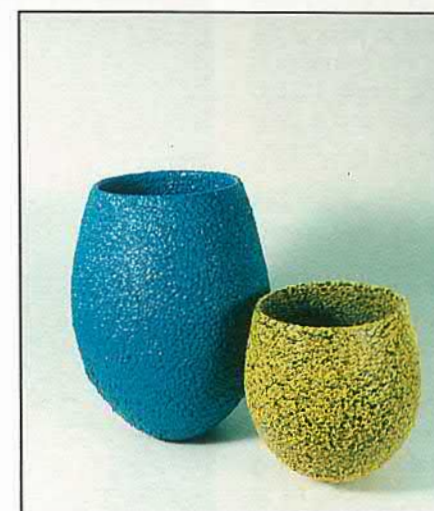
Ennis Oliver
Oval Fish Dish
Judy Wood
Oval Serving Dish



Andrew Van Der Putten
Earthenware Bottle



Jim Palmer
Syracuse Horse Vase
Peter Shearer
Fruit Bowl



Peter Collis
Egyptian Paste Glazed Earthenware



Phillip Luxton
Wall Fountain
Belinda Paton
Functional Teapot



Graeme Storm
Purple / Blue Pot



Jan Cockell
Lustre Bowl, Box and Bottle
Rick Rudd
Vessels



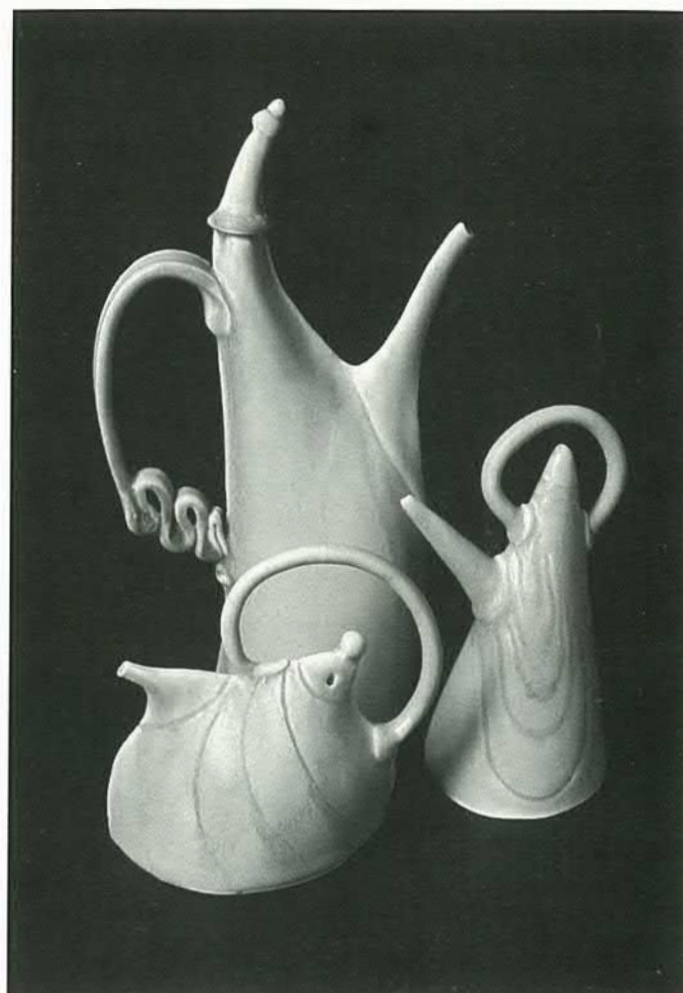
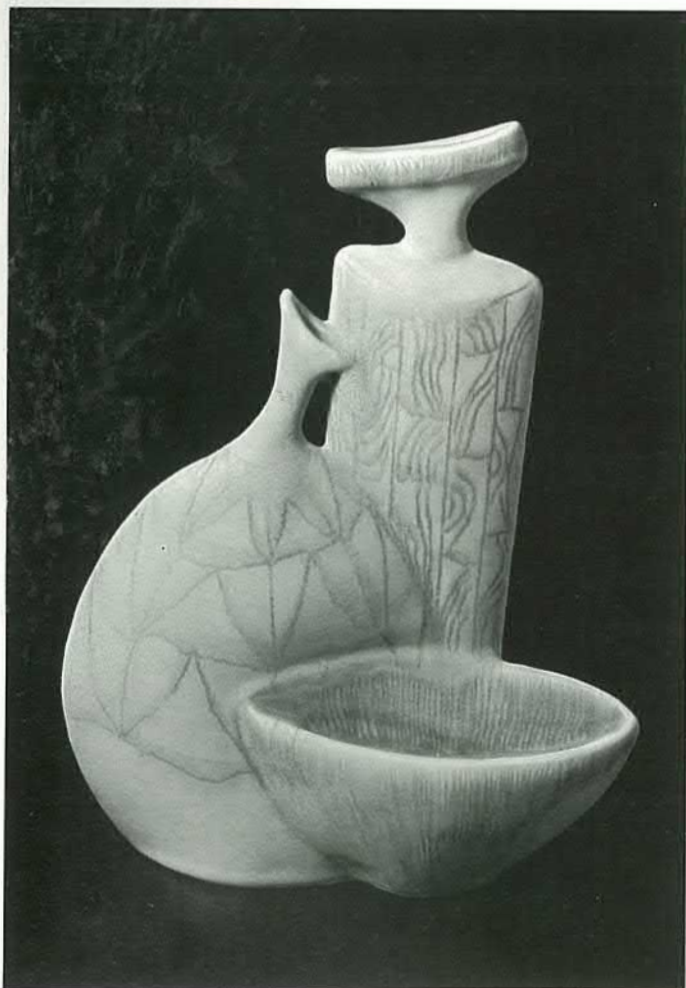
tery - they bought one of *McGregor's* first electric kilns - from a shop in Upper Queen Street, though Peter went to work at the *Auckland Art Gallery* soon after and Ian moved into premises in Devonport. Here he was throwing and slip-casting, mostly 1150°C ware decorated with brightly coloured underglaze and a clear body glaze, although he also made some stoneware and experimented firing with coke, oil and wood.

Kiln designing and building became another acquired skill with the help of **Neale Robertson**, an engineer who potted professionally for many years in Milford.

Ian sold his work through **Dan Pearce** of the *Art of the Potter* in Victoria Street, **Kees** and **Tina Hoss** of *New Vision Gallery* in *His Majesty's Arcade*, and through **Eunice Chick**. He also met and compared notes with other working potters like **Pat Perrin**, **Len Castle** and **Peter Stichbury** - and **Barry Brickell** whom he first met collecting disused bricks from the *Devonport Gas Works*. Barry, being a confessed pyromaniac, was building and firing kilns. He fired a little kiln with five bricks in the chamber, as at that stage he had not started making pots himself. Later, Barry built a bag wall into Ian's kiln so it could be opened earlier after a firing, with the pots shielded from cold air entering.

In 1954 Ian married **Lorraine**. She had been working with him and became a very competent maker of platters in her own right. For many years through the '70s she managed their Birkenhead retail outlet which became well-known as *Ian Firth's Pottery Shop*. Ian sold most of his pottery through this shop which also stocked work from many of the country's best potters.

Ian Firth became president of **Auckland Studio Potters**, 1975-77, during which time he was instrumental in establishing the society's club rooms and teaching centre at Onehunga. He was "*Still Life Blues*" Sculpture, 1993. 370 cm h



3 Teapots 1995. Tallest 358 cm h

also originator of the idea for a major sponsored exhibition/competition and set up the first discussions between **ASP** and **Trevor Hunt**, then managing director of *Fletcher Brownbuilt*. The consequent inaugural exhibition of this was in 1977, a successful beginning to what has now become the internationally prestigious *Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award*, one of the top three such events world wide.

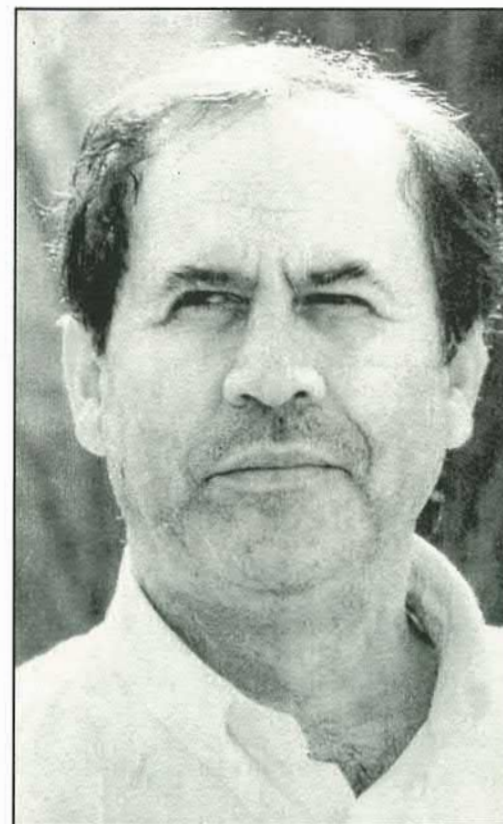
Ian and Lorraine shifted out of Auckland in 1978, building a house and studio - and yet another kiln - further north in Mahurangi where they lived and Ian potted - and built his own magnificent furniture - for eight years.

Their final move was back into Birkenhead where they re-established home and studio (and a gas kiln) Ian continuing as he does today, a prolific full-time potter, with never enough time to explore all the exciting ideas he has.

For fifty years Ian has been making and selling pots and since his first exhibition with the *North Shore Pottery Society* in Devonport, 1951, he has regularly taken part in solo and group exhibitions. Examples of his work are in collections and museums around the country, as well as in Australia, Canada, USA, UK and the Republic of China. In 1993 he was awarded a major creative development grant by *QEII Arts Council* and he has been made an honorary life member of both the *Auckland Studio Potters* (1977) and the *New Zealand Society of Potters* (1992).

Ian Firth's contribution to pottery in New Zealand was honoured by his being the Guest Exhibitor at the *Auckland Studio Potters* 32nd annual exhibition at the *Auckland Museum*, November 1996. In his opening speech he said that after 50 years, pottery was still just as exciting to him - he wasn't intending to stop yet!

Pottery from Jordan



Muhammed Saddiq

Jenifer has travelled extensively and lived for many years in Europe and the Middle East. She recently returned to live in Auckland and, having formed a close relationship with two studio potters in Jordan, **Daad** and **Muhammed**, has imported their work to sell in a newly opened shop, *Crémart*, in Newmarket.

Here she introduced me to their work, and gave me a brief history of pottery making in the desert regions of the Middle East where ceramics, both as an art form and for practical use have an extremely long tradition. Editor. Photos of pots by Howard Williams

"The contemporary practical aspect of Middle Eastern pottery is immediately obvious to even the most unobservant visitor to Jordan who, on travelling from the airport to the city of Amman, can hardly fail to notice the numerous displays of cheap, traditionally-shaped pots at stalls scattered along the highway.

These pots are produced in out-of-the-way areas, mostly because rubbish (quite literally mountains of it - paper, pampers (used nappies!), broken toys and dolls and plastic buckets) is used to fuel the kilns and the smoke which billows from the chimneys is black and foul-smelling. (This confirms the old saying "One man's rubbish is another man's treasure.")

The kilns themselves seem almost ancient in construction, built with mud and brick, half above the ground and half below. They can fire up to 100 pots per time.

Having visited workshops in Italy which have been producing terracotta pots for 400 years, and comparing the different methods used, one can't help but feel that time has stopped still in these Jordanian workshops.

These pots have traditionally been made by city potters throwing on wheels and the shapes have changed little over the years. The quality is not great and breakages in the kilns are numerous, but they have a charm of their own.

The more curious visitor will probably discover the older, more strangely shaped and heavier pots which have traditionally been the work of the Bedouin and farming women. They are more primitive in design and shape, yet each had a specific purpose. I liked these pots and was told there was still one woman living in the hills outside Amman who knew the art and actually produced them in limited numbers, but although we searched, we never found her and almost believed she was a myth - but she isn't, as we have heard she makes these pots for local royalty and special collectors.

In past times, the craft was usually the work of women, especially in farming areas, where it was traditionally undertaken in the late spring. It was always a communal effort - an excuse for the women to get together and enjoy themselves.

Ancient slab and coil methods were used in country areas, though in cities potters more often used wheels and glaze. Clay was fetched and carried by donkey, screened, cleaned and crushed with wooden beaters, then wetted to a state where two or three women could knead it with their feet. After final kneading it was stretched over basket-work to dry and stiffen until it was the right consistency to build pots by coil and slab. The pots were then left to dry for several weeks before being fired in a hole in the ground packed with dried dung. Firings usually took two to four days.

In some villages *Khabyeh*, the largest of all pots formed part of a bride's dowry and these particularly large vessels, passed down from generation to generation, represented a continuity and unity in the family.

Each area, and therefore tribe, had its own distinct regional style in shape, design and colouring. Stain from roots of oak trees was often used for colour and ground basalt, sherds and goats' hair were mixed with the clay to improve durability or to increase the length of the coils. All was learned by trial and error.

This custom is no longer practised and today almost none of the generation of women with pot-making skills is alive. However, ancient pots can still occasionally be found, dating back over a hundred years and these rare pieces are treasured by the locals.

One traditional pot known as the *brig* is used for drinking water. It has a small spout and broad handle and the water, allowed to seep through the porous clay is kept cool by its slow evaporation. Legend has it that any water remaining in the brig overnight "will be sweetened by the stars". The custom was to leave these pots of water outside the gate for any thirsty passer-by to drink from, though nowadays handbasins and taps with running water are more common.

Historically in the Middle East, ceramics were not only important as practical utensils, but had a long tradition in artistic expression. The ancient cities of the region were once great cultural and artistic centres of the vast Muslim Empire, Baghdad in particular being one of the greatest. Because the desert life was a mobile life, influences on the works of the area have been vast - the Middle East has been a melting-pot of cultures for centuries with strong African and Roman influences for example.

Now there are classic studio potters who continue to produce the traditional designs in plates, bowls and jugs and these are distinguished by their hand-painted designs. The avant-garde are rare - in fact the only adventurous ones I found were Daad and Muhammed.

In this cultural tradition, Daad is a rarity, showing how time can transform the common to the unique. Unlike her ancestors she works with clay not from necessity, but desire - and is criticised by many females for doing so.

Daad and her studio partner Muhammed, are professionals. She graduated with an MA and teaches fine and contemporary art at university level. He graduated with a degree in Fine Arts



from Baghdad University, a Masters from the University of Carolina and a PhD from Florida State. He has followed an academic life - being professor of Fine Arts and dedicating much of his life to the promotion of education - has acted as a consultant for the Ministry of Education and UNESCO and has published several books on education and art media. Both of them continue to teach and are dedicated to promoting art and encouraging youth art in a country where necessity - the struggle of everyday life - makes professional and commercial art a luxury.

Muhammed has exhibited his paintings in both solo and group exhibitions in the United States, Europe and the Middle East. Together, their ceramics are sold in exhibitions held locally and in Europe. They have a fixed clientele from the larger Middle East region and these people usually buy for private collections.

Muhammed's and Daad's contemporary ceramic studio is rooted in the present with modern equipment such as electric kilns, but aims at linking present with past. Their work is local in that it draws inspiration from the desert surrounds - pays tribute to the beauty of the Bedouin and village traditions of pot making. In a sense it is a tribute to all those women who once kneaded the clay and personalised their pots with particular designs - each area had its own design, but this was adapted by the individual - a primitive form of artistic expression where no paper was available. Poetry was another, where women wrote long verses in their heads and memorised them. This was and still is a very respected art.

The work is usually shared. One is better at colouring; the other at design, but it is not governed by any set rules - consultation is the name of the game. Style is both traditional and contemporary, though it is mostly traditional in form. There are around

80 recognised traditional types of pot, but the shape of the old cooking pot and the oil jar are frequently used. Pieces which are dedicated to the Bedouin reflect their desert environment and the designs of their jewellery as well as the practical considerations.

Each piece made is different. Some have applied motifs, the surface of the pot being scratched to ensure firm adhesion. Many different colours are often used on the one pot, requiring hours of tedious masking with tape before the glazing. They describe their work as 'primitive' when compared with western methods, though language makes it difficult to fully understand what they mean by this.

Clay is obtained from the desert. Different areas have different clays and the use of each depends on the particular piece they are making - firings are also adapted and durability quality varies. Glazes are sometimes traditional minerals and organics and sometimes imported from Europe. Firing temperatures also vary according to the desired final effect, but it is usually around 1300°C.

Their pots are considered very unusual in the region, uniquely reflecting an imagination which appears limitless. They teach and consult on art, but most of their time and energy is for their ceramics which include large tiled wall designs for houses and other buildings.

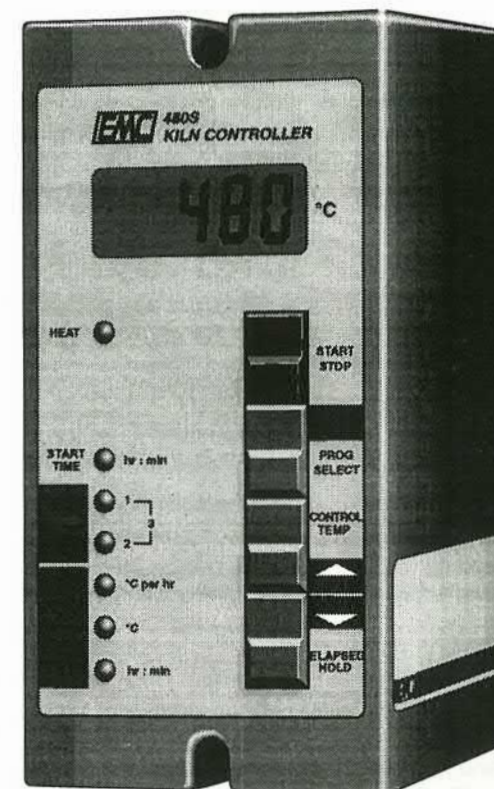
My meeting them was an answer to a long cherished dream but my aim now is to bridge the cultural gap between nations - hence my opening of *Crémart* - to expose both art and artists to a foreign audience...to mix and mingle one with another and to share a small piece of what I have seen, discovered and appreciated, with those who have not."

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More To Works Of Art Than Meets The Eye

For the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind

Christine Dennis, Auckland

There's a lot more to the works of New Zealand potters and artists than often meets the eye - what you see as finished pieces on display is but a part expression of the artist's story. To complete the picture then, we have profiled the work of two artists, both of whom have a unique story to tell.

While both artists deserve recognition in their own right, their work also highlights the excellence and achievements of two members of the *Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind (RNZFB)*. Theirs and other members' achievements were celebrated at the Foundation's recent 1996 Braille Week aptly named *Make a Blind Bit of Difference*.

Roger Bagshaw

On the "Leaping Joy of Creativity" (Bernard Leach)

When **Roger Bagshaw** talks about his life as a professional potter, it's impossible to separate his work from his passions - his lifelong love of art, especially printmaking, painting, sailing, trees and the wonderful New Zealand coasts and mountains.

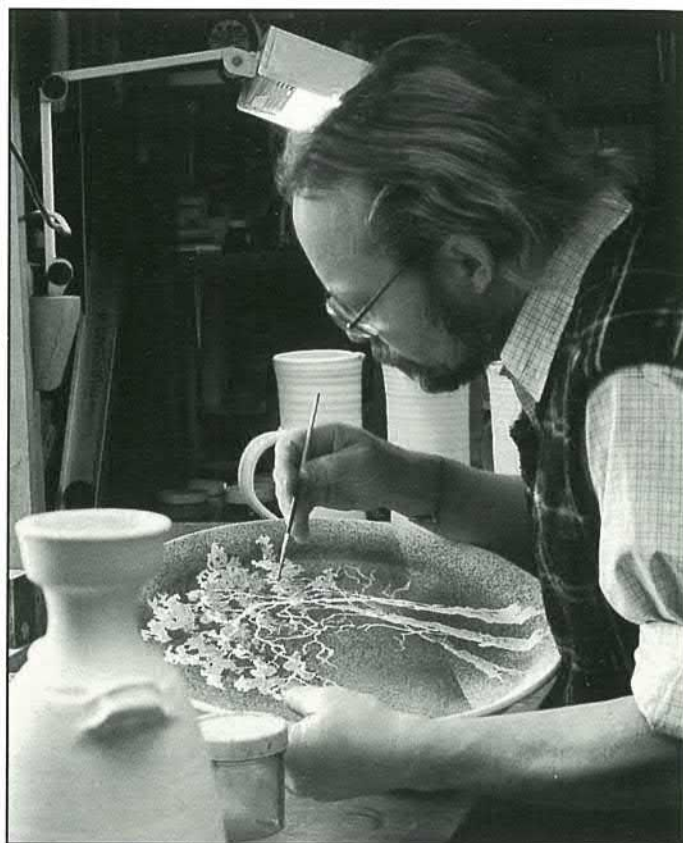
It's also difficult to ignore the effect that Roger's colourful and varied background has had on his work today. Because of poor health since childhood, for example, he was unable to enter many of the types of work open to others. This meant he took on a variety of labouring jobs in forestry, saw milling, truck driving and net making. Poor health has also meant that Roger has had severely impaired vision for the last twenty years of his life - an issue he dismisses by stressing that he has found ways to live within the limits this imposes on him.

But there's always been time in Roger's life to pursue his creative work in timber, leather, rope and fibre, drawing, painting, printmaking and finally clay. He's gained degrees in anthropology and art history and his research has been in such things as symbolism, pacific art forms and human creativity. All these activities continue to influence Roger's work today.

Roger describes how in 1983, potting began to play a major part in his life. "I was attracted to pottery because it seemed to provide a way for me to link some of the things that are of most significance to me - a hands-on manufacturing process, applied chemistry and geology, painting, printmaking, rope work, experimenting - they are all there. Consequently, I spent two years on an *Otago Polytechnic Ceramics Course* which was a great learning experience, but too brief - I didn't want to finish," he says.

Now committed to clay, Roger had set up his own pottery workshop in his tiny garden in Petone, surrounded by native trees, shrubs and ferns.

Since then, except for an occasional set of wire-cut tiles, all of Roger's work has been thrown on the wheel. Most of his work is stoneware - fired under reduction to cone 10 in a 10cu ft natural gas kiln and highly decorated using a combination of techniques from painting and printmaking, with some spraying and sgraffito. He particularly enjoys brushwork even though some of the larger pots and platters may take up to several hours to decorate. Also, Roger's work is almost always done in series where similar themes are followed through on a number of pieces.



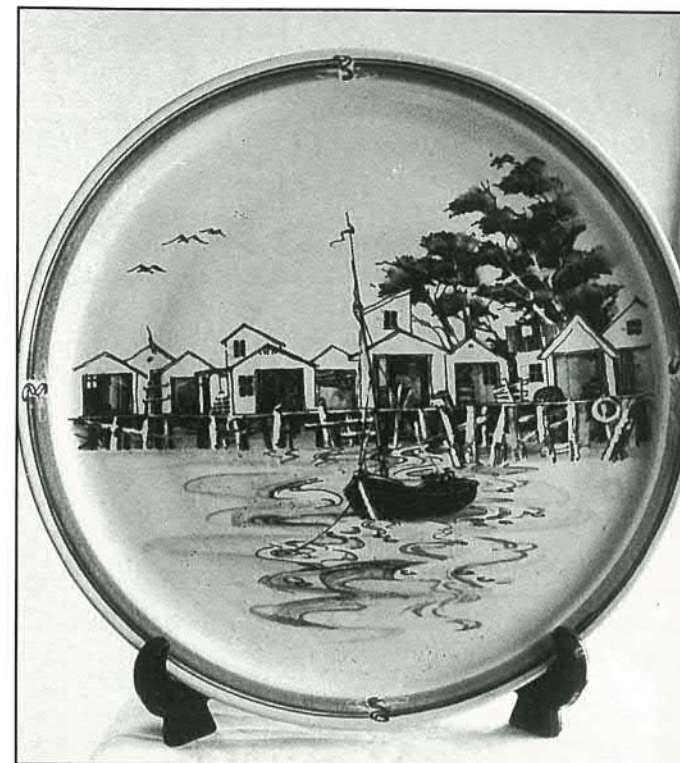
Roger Bagshaw in his Petone workshop

Roger talks about how the inspiration for his work comes from everywhere and anywhere - old buildings, Wellington City and the waterfront, Coromandel landforms, trees, water and boats. In his own words, there's never a shortage of subject matter as the world is full of patterns.

He normally begins decoration by dipping his work in a satin white, feldspathic, base glaze. The process is continued by using a combination of resist technique with brushed or sprayed colouring oxides or stains. He uses a limited range of colours, usually black with red, orange, green or blue as a contrast to create an effect which is often quite dark but rich. "Often the more simple forms and decorations are the most attractive, but also the most challenging. Whatever decoration I'm doing, I'm constantly aware of the tendency to over do it," says Roger.

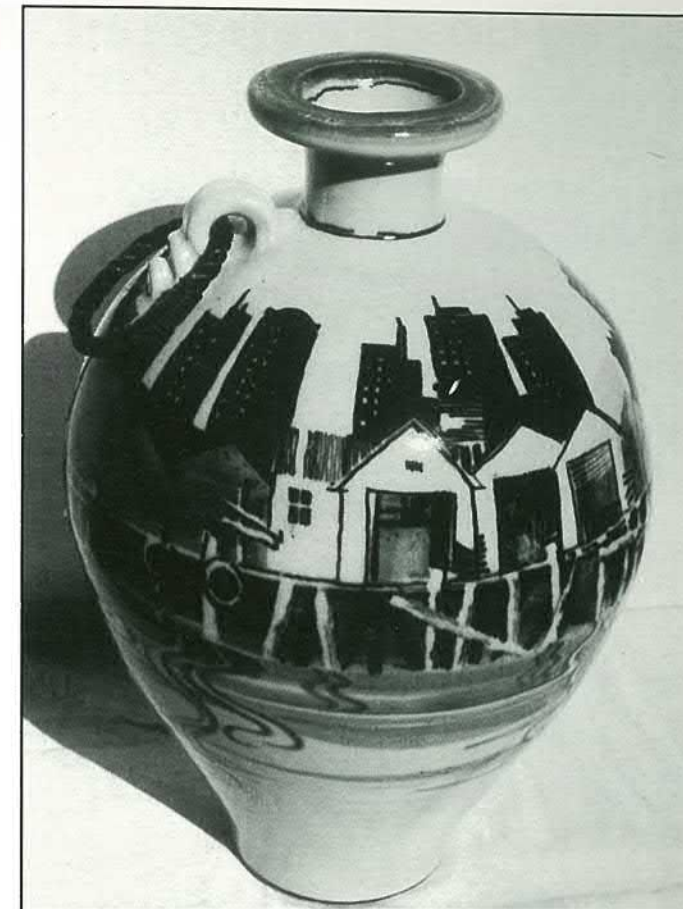
"I have a preference for pottery that balances simplicity with function. What I seek to achieve is a generosity of form, a richness and sensitivity of glaze and decoration and a 'touch me' kind of appeal. I want my work to show the warm and compassionate side of human nature - if that's possible in a pot..."

After firing, Roger often completes those pots which have a waterfront or nautical theme with the addition of rope handles. The rope is manila clothesline soaked in Stockholm Tar - a pine resin extract and preservative which darkens the rope and gives it a distinctly smoky, boaty smell. These add atmosphere to the pots, as well as being very practical. Splicing and the tying of fancy knots or grommets (rings) are skills that Roger previously used in the net making trade.



Waterfront Platter by Roger Bagshaw

Waterfront pot by Roger Bagshaw
Photos by Roger Bagshaw



"While some people love the smell of the rope handles, others aren't so keen. But for me - they're an essential part of the pot as well as a reminder of my love of boats and affinity for the sea," says Roger.

Throughout his life, Roger has been influenced by a number of artists. He regularly attends exhibitions where he gains inspiration from other artists' printmaking, painting and fabric work and their daring and expressive use of colour, line and space. He is also inspired by oriental and western art and the work of such potters as **Michael Casson** and **Hans Coper** for, in Roger's words, their generosity, originality, simplicity, beauty and balance.

From a philosophical perspective too, Roger has his own views about what it takes, and how difficult it is to make good pottery and experience what **Bernard Leach** described as the "leaping joy of creativity".

"Getting the potter centred must happen before the clay is centred on the wheel. The potter needs to be able to work gradually and with patience. There's simply no sense in rushing into a piece unless you are in the right frame of mind. I also believe, and this is the scientist speaking, that there's no worthwhile experiment done without notes. In my work, I have to rely on my ability to repeat colours, features, motifs, or effects and without some records; this would be very difficult," says Roger.

Today Roger Bagshaw works full time as a potter and is a member of *The Wellington Potters Shop Co-operative*. He sells through the Co-op's central city shop and in the last 3 years has regularly exhibited his work at the *New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts* and a range of venues in the North Island. For the future, Roger would like to travel while continuing to hone, explore and challenge his artistic ideas, and work with other artists sharing the mutual enthusiasm and inspiration that comes from working creatively in pottery.



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Donald Gibson

Sense of Touch Opens up a Whole New World



Donald Gibson with his pottery tutor David Lewis at the Risingholme Community Centre

Donald Gibson of Christchurch was born with *Usher's Syndrome* which left him totally deaf and with limited vision. He lost most of his sight before he was 10 and knows he will be totally blind in the near future.

Unlike other people then, Donald has for the last 37 years of his life experienced a very different world. It's a very silent and dark world that few people who aren't deaf and blind could appreciate, nor perhaps fully understand. But it's this world that has moulded Donald as a person and created an artist with such a special sense of touch.

Creatively Donald's world began to open up in the late 1980s when he started painting at some classes organised by the *Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind*. Donald's communicator **Maree Bone**, explains how in those days Donald could by concentrating and focusing, achieve good acuity and how this often resulted in quite detailed landscapes.

"Donald generally worked from photographs. He loved photography and on many occasions took himself off from his Christchurch home on sole biking and camping tours of the South Island. The photographs taken on these trips provided the basis for a group of paintings which were exhibited in 1994. This story not only illustrates Donald's artistic beginnings, but also his fiercedetermination to achieve personal and financial independence - his determination and goals led him to pursue an artistic career," said Maree.

But it wasn't until 1994 when Donald's sight had further deteriorated and he first met Maree Bone, that he began to fully explore his artistic potential.

"I had been employed by the *RNZFB* to help Donald with his communication skills. This meant working on his sign language as well as developing his speech abilities. As part of the process we both went on 'see by touch outings' to allow Donald to explore other artists' work and expand his own creative ideas - all these activities continue today," said Maree.

"We both knew that his eyesight would continue to get progressively worse and that he couldn't rely on painting as his primary creative outlet. He had to develop new skills and move on. That's why, when the opportunity to start clay modelling and sculpture under the watchful eye of well known local sculptor **Bon Suter** presented itself, Donald jumped at it."

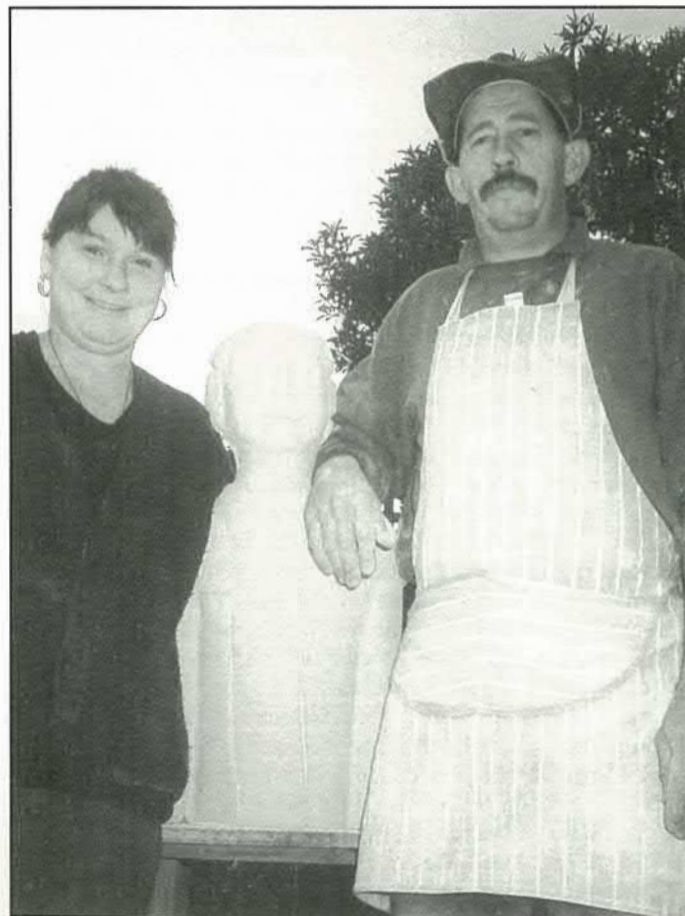
Ms Suter well remembers that first day she met Donald and describes how he came into the garden where she does her stone sculpture, and went crazy.

"It was exciting to see him getting so much pleasure from the sculptures. His response just confirmed my determination to take him on as a pupil - a decision I've never regretted because Donald so quickly displayed a real talent and the potential to stand alone as an artist and sculptor," said Bon.

The first sculpture completed by Donald was of his faithful friend and guide dog **Lobo**. It clearly demonstrated his highly developed sense of touch and sensitivity to shape and form. This and later works including male and female torsos, take on in Bon's words "a life force of their own".

"Donald works with the most amazing sensitivity in his fingers. Starting with realistic forms, he slowly works away at a piece, paring it down and softening the lines. For him it's a case of - do

Donald Gibson with his communicator, Maree Bone



Donald Gibson with sculptor, Bon Suter

it, feel it, do it, feel it and so on and the end result is really quite beautiful. Donald's stone sculptures are now starting to sell and I think he has a great future as a sculptor."

Maree Bone goes on to talk about the transformation in Donald's personality since he started working in clay and stone sculpture in 1994.

"When I first met Donald two years ago, he was an isolated, lonely and unhappy person. In just two years, he's become enthusiastic, dedicated to his work and ready to display his innate and quick sense of humour. I attribute all this to Donald's having

found his artistic niche and being able to interact with other artists."

While Donald's flair for stone sculpture has opened up a whole new world for him, his story would not be complete without reference to pottery.

A professional potter of 25 years, **David Lewis** has been tutoring Donald one night a week for the last two years. He describes Donald as having a real feel for the medium and an excellent sense of shape and form.

"Donald brings to his stoneware pottery a blend of skills. His background in painting shows through in his decoration, layout and brushwork. He also employs a highly developed sense of touch to execute pots with excellent shape and form. Since I have known Donald, I've also been impressed with the way he applies himself with dedication to learning and practising the skills required to succeed with clay. Donald's eager and considered approach makes him a model student," said David Lewis.

Today, Donald Gibson's life is a busy one as he juggles living alone in a flat with the help of Lobo, pottery classes and working on new sculptures. And, according to Maree Bone, Donald's life is unlikely to slow down in the future given his plans to create even bigger sculptures. "Planning is already underway to truck about six, two tonne stones off a local farm to Bon Suter's gallery to meet Donald's growing sculpture needs and I know, he has no intention of allowing his pottery classes to slip," she said.

"I also have no doubt that Donald will now go from strength to strength artistically speaking. He's shown what he's capable of and proved to the world he can foot it in a range of mediums. His challenge for the future as he sees it, will be to achieve even greater personal, vocational and financial independence through his art. Being self-sufficient for a man as proud and intelligent as Donald is so fundamental," Maree Bone concluded.

Also of great importance to Donald in his artistic development has been the huge amount of support given by his mother **Jane** and his sister, **Kathy Gibson**.

Donald Gibson's stone sculpture



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Book Review

The Leach Legacy: St Ives Pottery and its Influence

by Marion Whybrow

Sansom & Company, Redcliffe Press Ltd, Bristol

Reviewed by Howard Williams



Bernard Leach watches Hamada working, 1967



Bernard Leach with Mirek Smisek, 1963

Anyone interested in the studio pottery movement of the 20th century will have heard of **Bernard Leach** and **Shoji Hamada**, and will recognise their influence on the craft in most of the Western world, not excluding New Zealand.

Leach, having spent eleven years in Japan and China, returned to England and with Hamada set up the now famous pottery in St Ives, Cornwall in 1920.

His experiences, particularly in Japan, led to his forming a philosophical attitude around the techniques and aesthetics of pottery making. He found a hunger for this in his students/apprentices and his working and teaching culminated in the writing of *A Potter's Book*.

Published in 1940, this work was translated into many languages and with sales exceeding 130,000 has never been out of print since. The book became known as "The Potters' Bible" as it was for many years the only practical text book on the subject, and it inspired many potters to take up the craft.

The Leach influence was greater than most people realise. Many of those he taught, either directly or through his writings, became teachers in turn, the philosophy including the passing on of knowledge gained and skills acquired.

Those who worked at the *St Ives Pottery* and went on to become notable potters and teachers in their own right include **Richard Batterham, Michael Casson, Michael Cardew, Katharine Pleydell-Bouverie, Gwyn Hanssen Pigott, Warren MacKenzie, William Marshall, Jeff Oestreich, Byron Temple, Robin Welch and Geoffrey Whiting** - not to mention more than one **Hamada** and members of several generations of the **Leach** family. These have since had world-wide influence in their own right and in many countries.

Even here in New Zealand we have had direct influence through **Harry and May Davis, Len Castle, Peter Stichbury and Mirek Smisek**, all of whom have worked at St Ives.

These names are from a list of no less than 61 who worked there at some time. There are a further 47 names directly connected with the pottery, and of course unknown hundreds who have visited - and still do - as a pilgrimage more than just as interested tourists.

This remarkable history has been put together from a different angle by **Marion Whybrow**, in her new book *The Leach Legacy*. The brief and well illustrated chapters on Leach himself, his fam-



Peter Stichbury, 1972



Len Castle OBE, 1979



ily and the pottery, are not intended to be a complete history, but more as an introduction to the profiles of those who worked there. Each of the 61 has a double page spread telling of their connection with St Ives and what they have done since. Their potter's marks are included as well as a portrait of each person and photo

of one of their pots. There are also 22 colour photos of pottery from some of these. The book makes an interesting and informative read, but as a record of the influence of Leach extended by those who have passed through the St Ives experience, it is invaluable.



Mirek Smisek OBE, 1995



Harry and May Davis, c1950



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Recently Seen

Kelvin Bradford
New Work
Compendium Gallery, Auckland

During November, the 10th anniversary as sister cities of Auckland and Fukuoka, Japan, was celebrated in a visit by over 30 citizens of Fukuoka to Auckland. One of the high points of official events was when **Kelvin Bradford's** exhibition was jointly opened at *Compendium Gallery* by the Mayor of Fukuoka, **Keiichi Kuwahara**, and the Mayor of Auckland, **Les Mills**.

They exchanged official gifts of pottery; a shell-fumed vase Bradford made from imported Fukuoka clay goes to Japan and a bowl made from New Zealand clay by Fukuoka master potter **Jun-ichi Kozuru** has come to Auckland. Both are very beautiful pieces, though Kozuru apologised for a slight slumping of his bowl due, he said, to the lack of strength in the New Zealand clay.

The Fukuoka delegation was impressed with Bradford's exhibition; pottery which emulates a revered and ancient Japanese wood-fired style though he fires with modern techniques in a gas kiln using saggars. Softly thrown teabowls, vases and containers with wooden lids have subtle colours and textures from light salting and shell and charcoal fuming. Poured slips on some, give crackled surfaces and stronger colours.

A high iron-content clay especially imported from Japan, fumed with oyster-shell and salt has produced a blush of pink and delicate, pebbly, glassy green known as *Sorba*, the tea-dust tenmoku, a highly valued effect unobtainable with New Zealand clays.

Photo by Howard Williams

Mayor Keiichi Kuwahara holds the vase gifted to the city of Fukuoka by Mayor Les Mills, potter Kelvin Bradford on the right



St Heliers Bay Arts Festival
Pottery Awards
Auckland East Arts Council

A new ceramics competition organised by the *Auckland East Arts Council* was on show as part of the *St Heliers Bay Arts Festival*.

This is a national competition with sponsored prizes from *Eastern Bays Community Board*, *Creative Communities* and *Creative New Zealand* of \$600 and \$300, plus discretionary judge's commendations, and a "popular choice award". The exhibition was unavoidably concurrent with the *Auckland Studio Potters* annual at the Museum - in fact the openings of both events were on the same night.

Maybe because of this clash, there were fewer entries than the organisers were expecting, but the exhibition still made a strong showing with a high standard of work from around the country. With its inaugural success - and excellent sales - this competition will grow in importance as it becomes more widely known.

First prize was awarded to **Brian Gartside** for his *Wall Plate*, a hanging square dish ruggedly made from slabs, with organic textures and punchy colour. **Graeme Storm** took second prize for his beautiful stoneware blossom vase, meticulously surface-carved with a repeating plant motif and glazed with matt blue and green.

The popular choice award voted on by exhibition visitors was given to a dish in the form of a large paua shell celadon glazed inside, with the exterior in an oxide-rubbed crackle texture. This unusual piece was by **Peter Selwyn**.

Exhibition organiser Toni Millar holds Jeff Brown's "Starfish".
Graeme Storm's vase in front



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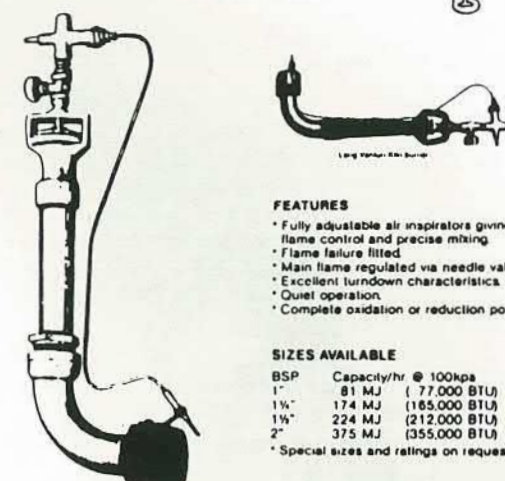


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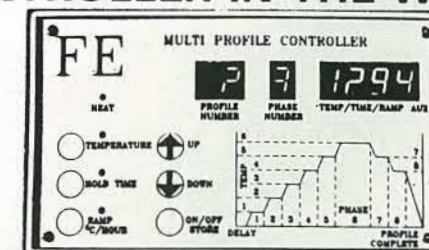
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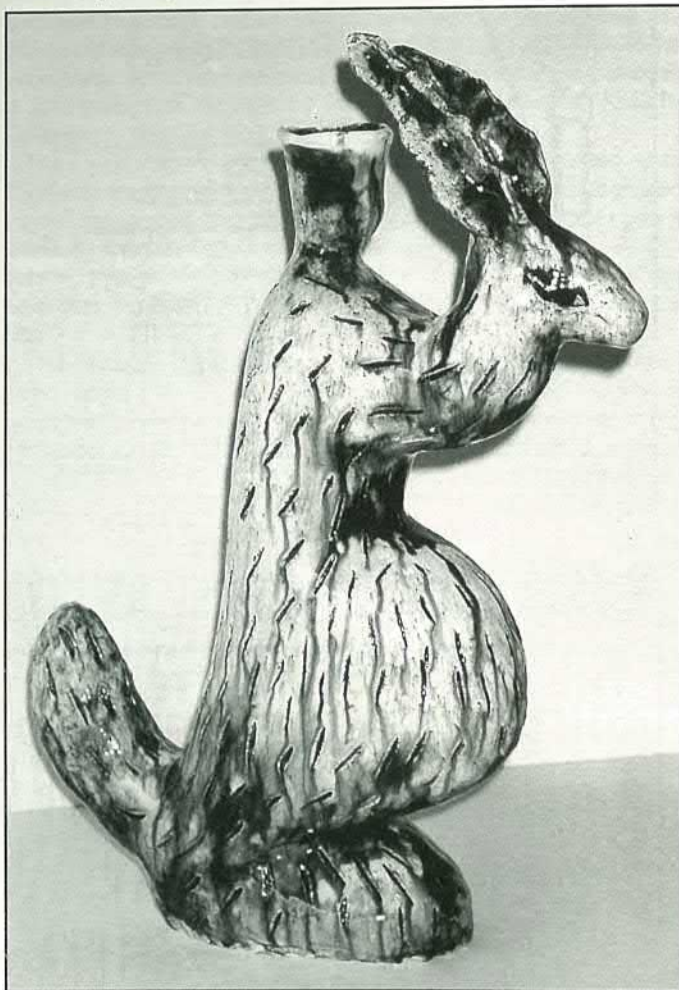
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Harvey's Real Estate National Ceramics Award

Baycourt, Tauranga

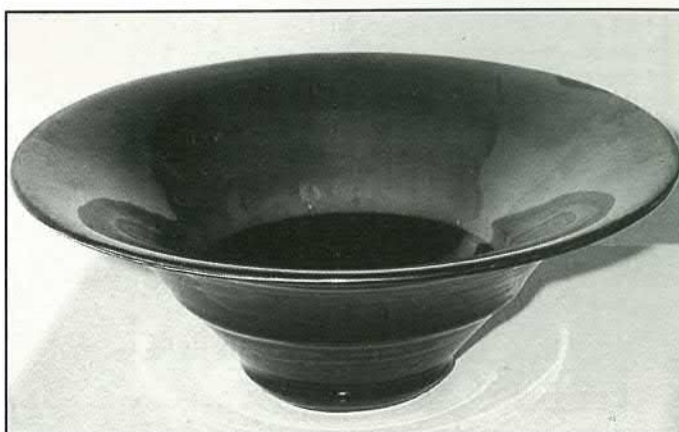
Hosted by the Bethlehem Pottery Club

Photos by Margaret Flaws



Premier Award from Harvey Real Estate, \$1,500
"Kangaroo Candlestick". Kevin Barton, Coromandel

Merit: "Mauve Lustred Bowl". Helen Keen, Dunedin



Selector's Statement from **Bronwynne Cornish, Auckland** who selected 107 pieces out of 200 entries from 70 potters nationwide

"It is always an interesting task to be given the privilege of casting your eye, your hand and your judgement over a roomful of your peers' clay works.

The winning works caught my attention almost immediately. Amongst the crowd they stood out for one reason or another. Just to be sure of those initial responses I cast my eye over the whole bunch two or three times, weighing one up against the other.

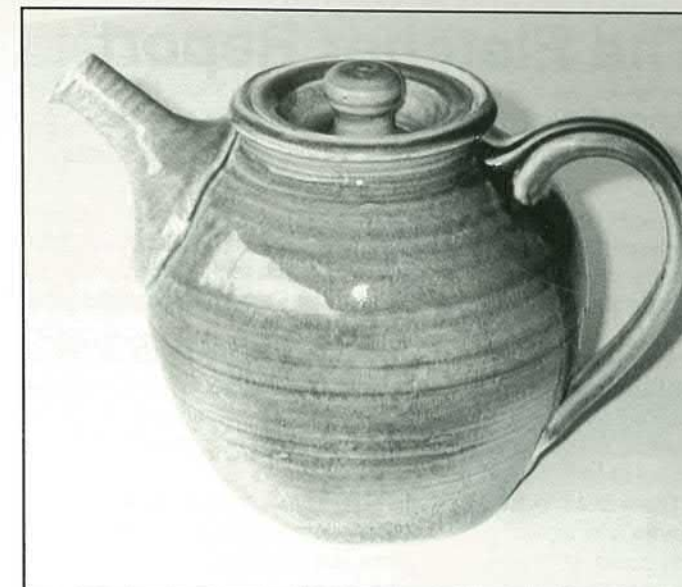
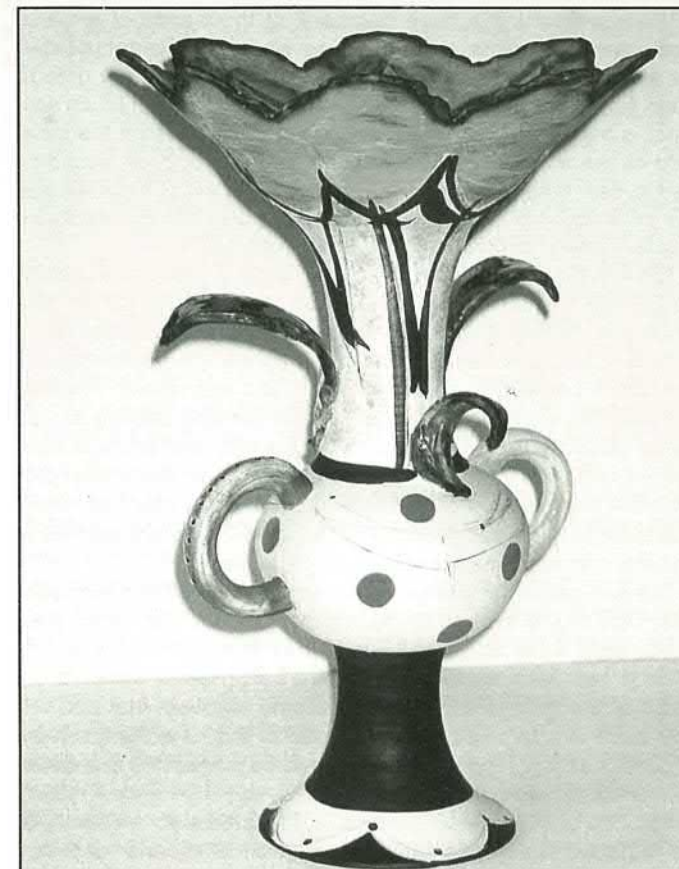
What was I looking for? Clayness. By this I mean a fitting and confident use of the material. Colour and surface, the treatment of the outside and the inside of the forms they adorned.

Originality; something new to please my eye.

Finally it was something more than the sum of form, and the technique used, no matter how persuasive or accomplished. The whole needed to communicate directly to me in an essential X-factor way.

Both the winning work and the runner-up had a playful, humorous quality which I enjoyed. The four merit winners spoke of "bowlness", "teapotness", surface, and the magic of salt glaze. All of them echo and reinforce my preferences, gathered during thirty years on the clay trail."

Merit: "Heat Seeker". Mark James, Canvastown



Merit: "Teapot". Judy Wood, Warkworth

Left, Second Award from Cooney Lees and Morgan, \$500
"The Jester has Green Thumbs". Suzanne Butson, Dunedin

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The Fletcher Report

Moyra Elliott, Auckland

Reprinted from The Auckland Studio Potters Newsletter

I thought you might like to see part of a letter I received from **Michael Robinson**, the curator from Northern Ireland who took a lively part in the *Writers' Forum*, which took place during the season of the 1996 *Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Awards* in Auckland.

"Meant to write the minute I got home whilst New Zealand was still the uppermost thing in my mind, but immediately I had to go down to Dublin and judge a ceramics competition. After the *Fletcher* it was rather a sorry event and I was inclined to hang the lot of 'em.

There is so much self-satisfaction amongst people who make, handle and exhibit crap and their complacency is impervious. If they could, but once see a show like the *Fletcher*, it would do so much to enlarge their horizons, generations would benefit from the experience.

I am still on a high from my time in New Zealand. I dream of the landscapes and laugh at the memory of so many happenings. I'm quite sure that if you had invited me even ten years ago, I would have stayed. I would be very grateful for copies of back catalogues to show people over here what a real exhibition looks like."

While I'm on about the *Forum*, I thought you might be interested in part of a review by **Rob Kessler** in *Studio Pottery* magazine about the big international ceramic conference in Helsinki. **Gabi Dewald**, another speaker at our *Forum* first gave her paper on *Welcome to the Club of Outcasts* at this Helsinki conference. The review says...

"The fire was provided by two women speakers, neither of whom were makers. Gabi Dewald, editor of the German *Keramik Magazin*, let forth a blistering attack on why ceramics is largely ignored as a subject for reviewing in either the daily press or the art magazines, laying the blame largely at the door of the ceramics world itself....contentment with the status quo, shying away from comparison, inability to enter into critical debate, and a readiness to blame the ignorance of outsiders, were just a few of the accusations which had the audience fidgeting in its seats. My heart sank when the first questioner from the floor came out with; 'that is the most outrageous thing I have ever heard', but was immediately revived when he added, 'but I agree with every word of it'."

Also from our bulging mailbag, a letter from **Bede Clarke** (USA): "Just a short note to express my gratitude for the fine work you do in putting on one of the premier shows anywhere. Today I am in receipt of my *Award* cheque and of course it is very nice indeed. Truth be told, I was thrilled simply to get in the exhibition this year. It is humbling to accept money for something which owes so much to the efforts and energies of complete strangers - you and your colleagues and all those volunteers. I am grateful beyond words and wish you and the *FCCA* every success in the years ahead."

There are more lovely letters, but this is enough to give you the general gist.

This *Fletcher report* will be my last, as I have decided not to reapply for the position of director. All of the team are tired and renewed efforts are becoming harder to resource with the increasing workload and decreasing time between shows. It is time for fresh energy to come in and there will be plenty of offers - it is enticing to build on something seen as successful and we are all available if needed.

We leave behind a huge databank of thousands of entrants and potential entrants' names, having inherited a list not updated for ten years, and a list of form letters honed over the time to keep English and non-English-speaking recipients in touch with what is happening with their work - essential if it is on the other side of the world. We have efficient systems built on economy and to deal fairly with everyone, a wonderful set of furniture and the satisfaction of having put about \$300,000 into the *Auckland Studio Potters'* coffers over the last seven years.

We leave behind also an event built up to a significant position on the international scene, certainly at number three for our type of all-encompassing, broad catchment show that includes *Mino* and *Faenza* (there are also specialty international exhibitions like the Swiss porcelain or German salt-glaze examples). Possibly our standing exceeds this - some would have us believe so - as far as publicity for and communications with exhibitors is concerned. With the *Forum* as the beginning of an expansion programme, the inclusion of off-shore observers this year has meant exposure in overseas publications for New Zealand ceramics in general and for some individuals in particular.

Our non-parochial viewpoint has served us well and our reputation for highly ethical standards has meant that when New Zealanders have done well - and they consistently have - all know it has been achieved against a background scrupulously clean of the taint of committee/curatorial carousel that can tarnish such events. We can all be proud of that; it is the lynch-pin of our reputation. Now with 25 international magazines and newsletters taking news of the *FCCA* each year, the network established can only enhance New Zealand's status as a country to be regarded highly and consulted with on all manner of things ceramic. This has happened, and doubtless will continue to do so.

I think, if we have achieved anything, it has been because the entire team, from management through administration to display and volunteer organisational matters, have put the interest of the *ceramists*, the people who do us honour by sending their entries off in good faith, before all else. With principles revolving around that, the rest has dropped into place and growth has happened without conscious effort on the whole.

We take many memories of damned hard work, much worry, great support and terrific recollections of seven extraordinary judges, each unique, generous and accessible to all who cared to look and respond, and who gave their best and more to all aspects of their duties while here. Their legacy can only be measured fully with the passing of time. Our necessarily small world has been singularly enriched by their contributions. So has mine. Seven years of accumulated skills have expanded possibilities and horizons, and there are some opened doors that warrant exploring that I have deferred for too long.

My sincere thanks to those who have given their support so unstintingly. It has been a privilege.

Letter from Gabi Dewald

Gabi Dewald, editor-in-chief of the German *Keramik Magazin*, was one of the speakers at the *Auckland Studio Potters* writer's forum *Art for Clay's Sake* in August, covered in our last issue, Vol 38, No 2. Here she writes on her return home.

"Being back at home, thinking my 'big journey' to New Zealand over again, I want to add something. Reflecting the show (*Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Awards*) the writers' forum and many talks I had with potters in your country, I felt you are somehow 'on the edge' with the *'Fletcher Award'*."

I heard many voices demanding a change in the procedure of judging the Award. The main reason seems to be disappointment about the fact that there are not more New Zealand potters

in the show, and in the group of the prize winners as well. There seems also to exist some discontent about the fact of being always judged by foreigners.

"We don't need all these people from outside - we know very well for ourselves what is good and what pots we need to see. I am sick of always being so humble and that someone else always makes up our minds for us."

This voice might be quoted here for quite a number of others. No, you don't need other people to tell you what is right and wrong. That's for sure but, that you dare to ask others, that you then leave the decision up to them, that you are so interested in another point of view - these are the crucial points. That you dare to do this, proves you are more interested in a frank and open-minded debate, than in pushing and promoting yourselves - an attitude unparalleled in the ceramics world. You have turned your lack of exchange - being "on the end of the world" - into your profit. Now the world comes more and more "Down Under". Be aware that Europe has only just started to appreciate the *"Fletcher"* and the importance it has. This is for three main reasons, I suspect.

First; for us the ceramic world used to end in Japan.

Second; your system of judging is very unusual for us in Europe. Here people expect an award to point out reliably THE very best. This seems to be guaranteed by the greatest possible 'objectivity' (Always the magic word! But, does it exist? And, what is it?). Therefore we always invite a number of different, well-known, experienced people who discuss as accurately and long as possible about the subject. From this you get what **Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins** called "curator's art". A carousel of names turns around on itself - in the jury and in the number of prize winners.

After visiting your country I understand that your system of judgement is an equivalent to your political self-understanding. Much more, than for example in our German democracy, you seem to trust in the individual decision of everybody, instead of believing in a party or any so-called authority.

As a result the *"Fletcher"* was the most surprising and fresh show I have personally seen in a long time.

The third reason for growing attention to the *"Fletcher"*. Through the work of **Moyra Elliott**, whom I met several times working on the *"Fletcher"* all over Europe, the Award gets more and more attention and attracts people more and more. In her confident and professional way she promotes your international prize in an absolutely powerful way (I always learn by watching her!). It is her promoting that, for example, international magazines now really pay attention to the *"Fletcher"*, that in Europe one speaks about this as an Event.

You surely need a person like her, a kind of ambassador to represent and promote the *"Fletcher"*, especially now that Australia is coming up next year with an international award which could be serious competition for you. Their way of judging is more related to the European one, they have high prize money, they have the big magazine *Ceramics: Art and Perception* in the background and they have - last, not least - **Janet Mansfield** herself, who promotes this award by being all the time all over the world.

Will this just be another lap of name-dropping? There is nothing new or special with this prize, it is just one more competition you can apply for. But people here cannot afford to send their work to New Zealand AND to Australia. Your way of surviving can only be by way of keeping your own profile, of cultivating it, of being on the offensive!

Do not enter the mainstream; do not enter the dead end of thinking more national - don't you have quite a number of New Zealand-only competitions anyway? Think big! Don't go back now and risk getting - in comparison with the other international events - the second rate choice!

With the writers' forum, the symposium *Art for Clay's Sake* you did a step in the right direction. Have the most frank debate; show things you won't see all over the world; cause something the rest of the world will speak about; do things being done nowhere else but in New Zealand.

Ro Cambridge

A Profile of the new Director of The Fletcher Challenge Ceramic Award

Ro Cambridge, the newly appointed Director of the *Fletcher Challenge Ceramic Awards* is definitely not a ceramist. She vaguely remembers a clumsy pinch pot at primary school and throwing a "very wobbly messy kind of object" way back in 1970 at *Teacher's College* where she studied art and literature. Her only other rather tenuous link to the art is through family connections with Korea. Her daughter **Su Ji** is half Korean and Ro has worked and lived in Korea.



Ro Cambridge does however have a keen interest in the arts and brings to the position experience in the administration of community arts projects and special event and art sponsorships. For the last two years Ro has worked on contract to Auckland City administering "Arts Alive" the City's performing arts sponsorship programme and she will continue to do so while directing the *Fletcher Challenge Awards*.

She welcomes the opportunity to become involved in the arts. "Theatre, although it is a very powerful medium, is also very ephemeral. I love the idea of ceramics because they are so durable and are often objects which give aesthetic pleasure in everyday life".

Ro is already hard at work establishing contact with the local ceramics community and learning more about the history of ceramics in NZ. She has been browsing the *Award* catalogues as part of her orientation. She has found them a wonderful visual history of ceramics in New Zealand and an illustration of the influence of the Awards in their development.

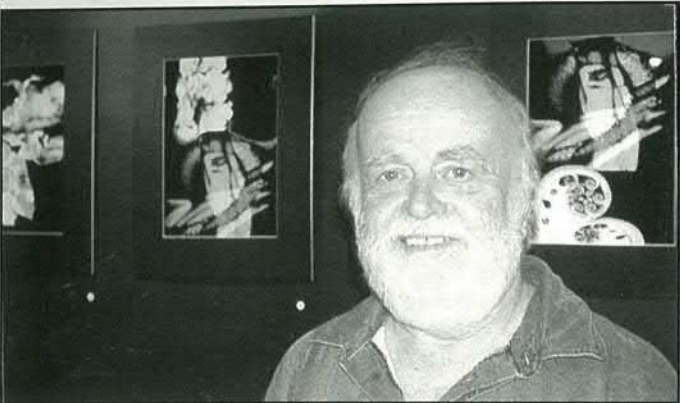
Ro says she has been struck by the passion and commitment she has encountered amongst Auckland ceramists for their craft, Ro's own particular passions are reading and fiction writing. "I love words and I am addicted to books" says Ro. "I understand the creative process from my own struggles to write so I am intrigued to be working beside artists working in such a different medium".

Ro says she is highly conscious of the fact that she is succeeding an Awards Director who was both a practitioner and a very enthusiastic advocate for ceramics. "It is already clear to me that **Moyra Elliott** has had a significant influence in making the *Fletcher Challenge Award* the prestigious international competition it is today" says Ro. "I hope that in bringing a fresh eye and my own particular skills and interests to the job I will have similarly positive effects on the Awards".

And who knows? Maybe Ro will become a potter herself : the *Auckland Studio Potters* in a bid to help her really come to grips with the medium, have offered her free classes at their Teaching Centre in Onehunga.

How L'eau Can Go?

Brian Gartside, potter, artist and regular contributor to the *New Zealand Potter*, acknowledges the help of Craig Jackson in the creation of this article



Dihydrogen monoxide (*DHMO*) is colourless, odourless, tasteless and kills uncounted thousands of people every year. Most of these deaths are caused by accidental inhalation of *DHMO*, but the dangers of dihydrogen monoxide do not end there. Prolonged exposure to its solid form causes severe tissue damage. Symptoms of *DHMO* ingestion can cause excessive sweating and urination and possibly a bloated feeling, nausea, vomiting and body electrolyte imbalance. For those who have become dependent, *DHMO* withdrawal means certain death.

Dihydrogen Monoxide:

- Is also known as *hydroxyl acid* and is the major component of acid rain.
- Is found in high concentrations in beer
- Contributes to the *greenhouse effect*
- May cause severe burns
- Contributes to the erosion of our natural landscape
- Accelerates corrosion and rusting of many metals
- May cause electrical failures and decreased effectiveness of automobile brakes
- Has been found in excised tumours of terminal cancer patients

Contamination is reaching epidemic proportions!

Quantities of *DHMO* have been found in almost every stream, lake and reservoir in America today. But the pollution is global and the contaminant has even been found in Antarctic ice. *DHMO* has caused millions of dollars of property damage at various times to New Zealand river towns and our coastline.

Despite the danger, *DHMO* is often used

- As an industrial solvent and coolant
- In nuclear power plants
- In the production of Styrofoam
- As a fire retardant.
- In many forms of cruel animal research
- In the distribution of pesticides. Even after washing, produce remain contaminated by this chemical
- As an additive in certain 'junk foods' and other food products
- AT ALL STAGES IN THE CERAMICS PROCESS

Companies dump waste *DHMO* into rivers and the ocean and nothing can be done to stop them because this practice is still legal. The impact on wildlife is extreme and we cannot afford to ignore it any longer!

We advise a few special precautions:

- Keep container tightly closed to avoid excessive evaporation.
- *DHMO* is considered a non-regulated product, but it may react vigorously with some specific materials
- Avoid contact with all materials until investigation shows substance is compatible
- Protect from freezing

The Horror Must be Stopped!

There isn't a government in the world that has agreed to ban the production, distribution, or use of this damaging chemical due to its "importance to the economic health of this nation". In fact the navy and other military organisations are conducting experiments with *DHMO* and designing multi-billion dollar devices to control and utilise it during warfare situations. Hundreds of military research facilities receive tonnes of it through highly sophisticated underground distribution networks. Many store large quantities for later use.

It's Not Too Late!

Act *NOW* to prevent further contamination. Find out more about this dangerous chemical. What you don't know *can* hurt you and others throughout the world. Send email to: no_dhmo@circus.com or beeegeee@xtra.co.nz or visit the World Wide Webb: http://www.circus.com/~no_dhmo/

What has all this got to do with pottery? I hear you ask!

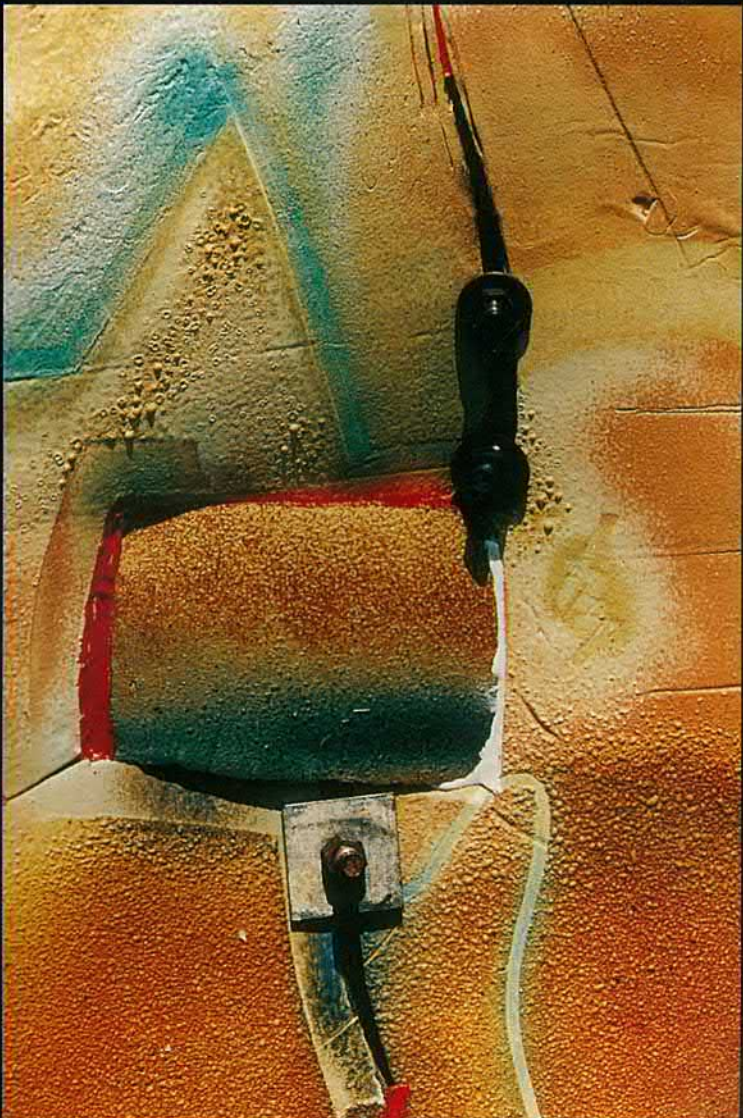
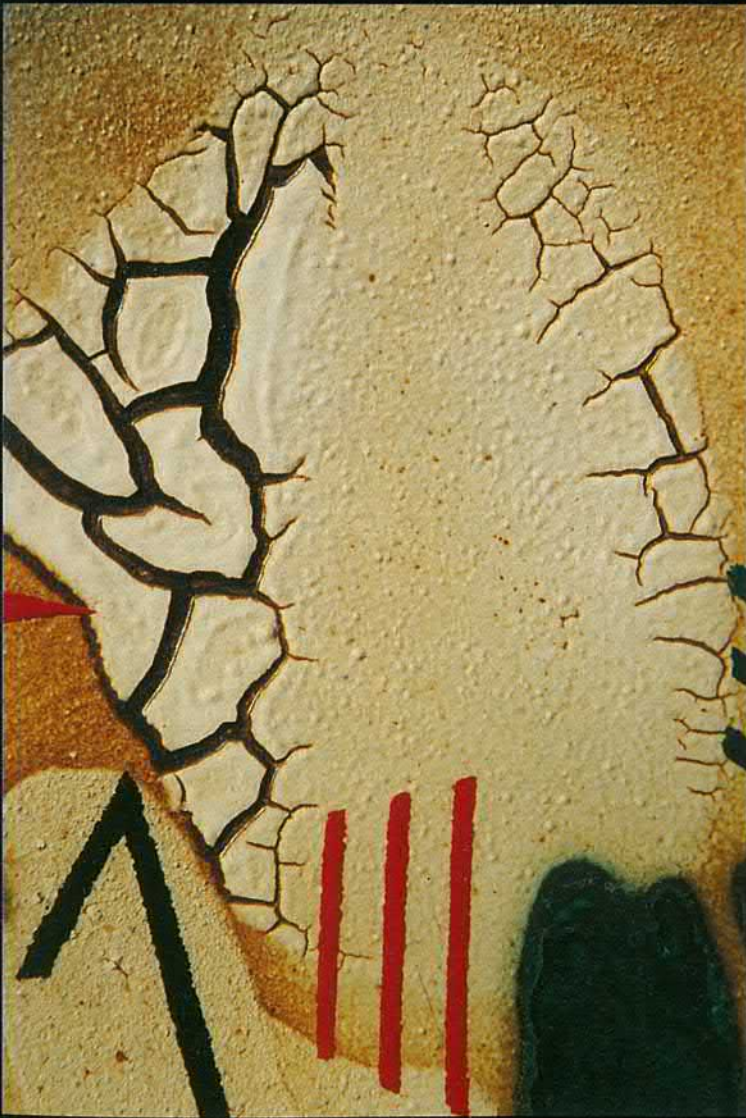
Well, to start with, clay would be not workable without *DHMO*. Have you ever wondered why the ingredient is *never* included in published glaze recipes?...all glazes contain a proportion of *Dihydrogen Monoxide*. What is not commonly realised is that this ingredient plays a crucial role in the fired result. It affects the texture, colour and transparency or opacity of the glaze. At times the amount of *DHMO* used in the glaze mixture totally changes the character.

In my own pottery I employ different thicknesses of the same glaze to simplify my decorative techniques. Without even trying I obtain the visual dynamics of a subtly changing surface which is the direct result of glaze thickness.

The illustrations show four surfaces which demonstrate the variety of colour and texture possible with one glaze. All these glazes were mixed thick, medium and runny and in these instances the technique of spraying over paper stencils was used. ■

Photos of Glazes, opposite, by Brian Gartside

- Top left: 50/50 Bone Ash / Frit 4508 and a pinch of Cobalt
Top right: 50/50 Bone Ash / Frit 4508 and a pinch of Cobalt
Bottom left: 50/50 Zinc / Nephylene Syenite
Bottom right: 50/50 Bone Ash / Frit 4508 / 4% Iron Oxide



My Journey

Mike O'Donnell, Paeroa, Hauraki



Wai-ora, vessel for Holy Water

"My work in clay has been my survival and realisation in many ways, and is the influence of this environment, this land, Aotearoa.

That my work may speak to and from this influence of water, forest, mountains, wind and the tides...is my desire and often my relief.

Much of my life has been purged in the sense of explaining deeper feelings, sometimes old ones lost, through my involvement in the defence of the nature of our environment and our failure to not only realise, but to uphold, values that are beyond the physical encumbrance.

The journey of clay is one that touches all the elements of Earth, Air, Fire and Water. To honour this through my craftsmanship is perhaps how I endeavour to honour the feelings.

*Taraariki is my teacher,
Te Aroha my mountain,
Waikato my river."*

These are the words placed before my most recent exhibition hosted by Carol Hamilton of Gallery 16, Huapai. I exhibited with an artist from Hauraki, Graham Bell. We both live either side and upon a land that is of the influence and of our expression. The land and her elements are very much my teacher here in Hauraki. The clay is the medium...that carries forward the shapes and symbols...holding and honouring the essence of the feelings...from which the truth of a voice may come.

I do not take journeys to make exhibitions of clay. It is better seen that they "are"...and that the clay is the shape of the wairua...I have no other word or way of expressing it. I have been taught in the understanding of the mauri within the clay...the essences of the body earth - of the clay body. To honour and so manifest the dream time of a journey, is to honour and to manifest the whole "body being"...of body *Etheric*; body *Heart*, *Breath* and *Belly*; body *Mind*; body *Physical*. In the transposing from the

dream time and the carrying of these four body beings through the clay medium...it is essential.

The Old Ones say that you are holding the vibration...and so in the shaping of the clay, it will speak to and from that vibration. They say that the vibration sits within the silence. To recognise that in working with the clay, we real-ise the four elements held within the four directions. My Ancestors are of *Te Airihi*, the Irish. My people hold alive an old line, of being carriers of the fire, the passion, the spirit... *Te Ihi*. They hold the knowledge of the voice of stone, of clay, of water and they were also the story tellers, who selected 107 pieces out of 200 entries from 70 potters

This exhibition was a space that was provided...into which I was able to bring the shapes of what was the gathering...in a journey back...to come forward. For the past twenty years, my life has been taken away...into the defending of what is simply our backyard. It has been one of having to explain myself, alongside others, and our relationship with the nature of life; to Tribunals, National, Regional, District hearings, on Marae and sometimes even to my friends - and to myself.

In the expression of relationship with our natural environment, there never seemed to be a place in the system for the voice of the Heart or of the Etheric body. Plenty of room in the tribunal or whatever, for a voice of the Mind or the Physical...being Science and Law. Much of our Heart and Etheric voice has been taken away. It has been repressed and suppressed; by contrivance and design the essence of our Indigenous voice has been denigrated...it was once known as the common sense. My elders said it had to be hidden in the stone and in the deep silence, because the ridicule became a killing and a burning, and many had to leave. They said that it will always be held there, for those who are prepared to listen.

The elders of Aotearoa hold this in the teaching of *Mana Whenua*... of the listening to what the land is saying...only those truly listening hold the mana, the authority.

There is an ancient symbol from my people, a spiral that holds the knowledge of the feminine centre. I have often held this to pass a story, as an understanding of what has happened to us as men and to my mates. Though not just the men. It holds the teaching of the feminine essence...the creative intuitive...and how we are placed within the tides of the moon, the earth and the nature. Of how women hold the birth tides...and the waters.

Of the strangest words, the word *fuck* best carries, in its shockingness, the story, in that it derives from the beginning of the problem. "To fuck the earth" in its origin of meaning was to plough, to turn the sod over on her back, to cultivate, to assume control, to deny the nature of, and so...they fucked the land, they fucked the women, they fucked the feminine within the self. It may seem uncomfortable, but the truth often is...and so we seem to have reached this time with all of this about us. It is only by honouring the tides of our creative, intuitive, our feminine essence, that we begin to heal this destructive process.

This is a personal journey, but through the clay I have come to know, "that it is the clay that centres you and that in the listening and in the intimacy of its body talking, it helps us in the journey "to be". An elder once told me "not to despair in what we are asked to bring back to the surface, for we are the privileged ones. We are the ones of a New Age and chosen to speak out. No longer does the voice of this centre have to be hidden in the silence...think of those who have carried it for so long...unable to. We sit within three lives; of our past, our present and our future."

The following words were placed within the exhibition beside the stone that I was asked to open up.

"These stones have come from Hinuera. They hold an ancient memory of my river Waikato and of a time when Taupo spoke to the world. I am Airihi, of the Irish, of the faerie, the Keeper of Po-ta-to...and the dancer of Ihi. I am one of the children of Aotearoa. The Spirit Stone was hidden, buried, suppressed, repressed...lost between the tides. It is of the feminine tide. It is my privilege to be of one holding the line...to pull this stone back to the surface, to honour my ancestors, to honour myself, and to lay warm the path for the children. It is to open the doorway to light. To all of the women...I don't know how to thank you...except to bring this forward. From the woman to the man...let this healing begin."

My elders of Waitaha, my Whaea, have held the confidence of this journey with me and so they placed the blessing of this exhibition with us all. When I was asked "What is an exhibition?", it made us all laugh when I said, "It is me standing naked, baring my soul, goosebumped with apprehension...excited yet afraid. The fool on the hill carrying down these shapes and symbols of what I have seen."

To further write this down holds the residual nature of a nervousness that this is my personal journey, yet a knowing that the most important shape, and so voice, in this, is your voice. Who am I to define and so determine that? It is simply the passing of a confidence...to and from one another. My old people say... that it will come in many shapes and symbols, tongues and so, words... but there is only one land, one sky, one water, one spirit. Call it what you like and shape it how you will.

The Exhibition

Bringing forward this exhibition of my journey and trying to find the words to translate the feelings of the shapes...is in parallel to explaining the feeling of my shape...complexly intuitive...otherwise known as of the fool.

In the intuition of my skills as a clay worker, the forms were able to evolve with a strength and direction of their own. It was important that I allowed the clay to move the feelings; of journey, moon, tide, riding the vortex, within, without, spiral...vortex, ancient feeling.

Watching shapes evolve before me brought excited feelings of the journey being real, manifested through the masculine energy...holding and honouring the feminine essence.

I became lost within the forms and people arrived within my workshop who seemed to belong to them. Events surrounded each piece that seemed to guide them further. Many stories were shared at this...the forms were talking out loud.

At this same time I was carving the Hinuera stone. The journey there was older

than I can imagine, listening to the shape of the stone's voice. It picked up all of my feelings - holding the confidence of Te Puna...the Spring - and carried them forward.

Writing this now helps me to see how held, still within that vortex, I am. Waking this morning to write my way out...to explain, understand...so old are the feelings to bring them back to the surface.

Well; technicalities! Another reality! Firing time. Firing? Help! No thought had been given to these pieces and their firing. How could I? I had never seen their shape before...who am I to assume authority?

I seemed to technically and logically act irresponsibly; against my better judgement. Intuitively I laid the vessels in beds of Waikato river sand - my river. In beds of oyster shells - the tide zone - Hauraki, a place to stand. In beds of fern leaves and bracken - nests of nurturing...of the nature. These beds were holding the vessels...holding me...a long journey with feelings of the unknown...exhaustion.

And so "they" fired.

Opening the kiln was an experience only a mad addiction could wish to repeat. It was of the inescapable...of looking inside myself. It held such intense emotion that I did not know what to believe. The vessels were held within a state that was more truth than I would ever have consciously been able to express. I called others towards me to help me through this, with a knowing that it was of them, also. I have always felt these moments as, "for some a madness - for others, a sense of joy."

A friend recently shared with me the words of a Japanese clay-worker, **Soetsu Yanagi**:

"The precise and perfect carries no overtones, admits no freedoms. The perfect is static, regulated, cold and hard. We, in our human imperfections are repelled by the perfect, since everything is apparent from the start and there is no suggestion of the infinite.

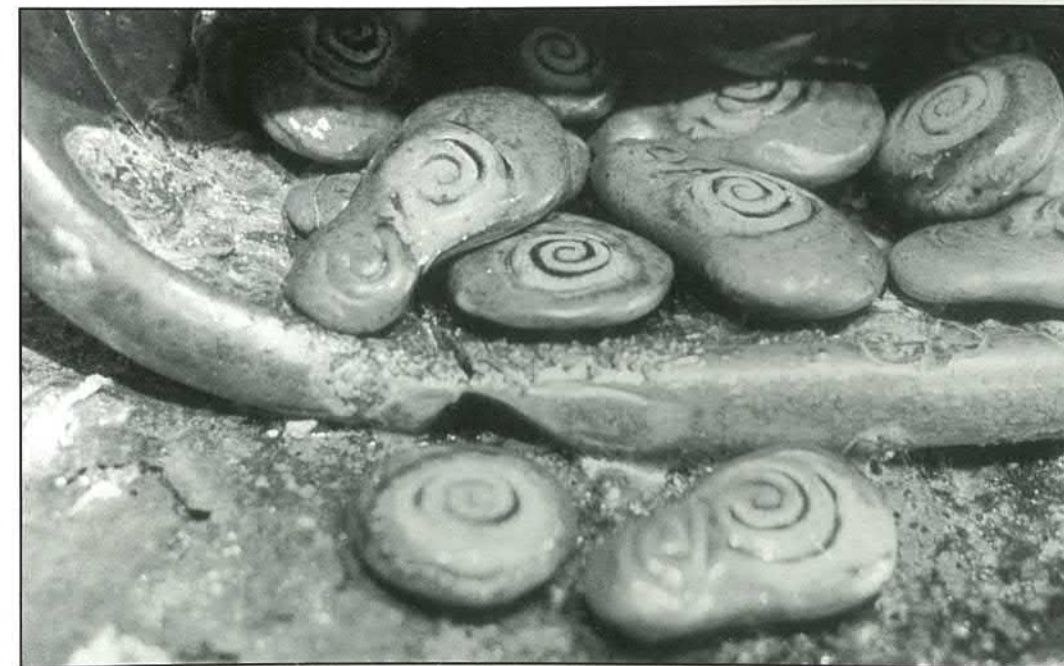
Beauty must have some room, and must be associated with freedom."

Such is the way of the *Wairua*.

Thanks...to those of you who called me out of the politics and held a confidence of me in the translating of these feelings.

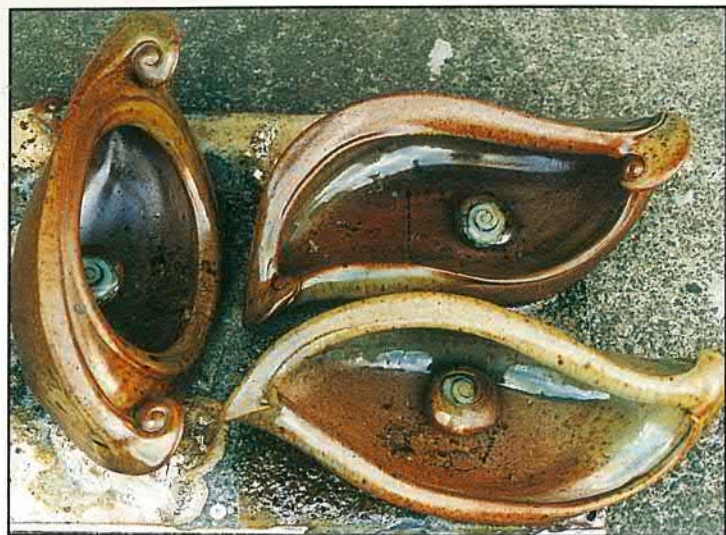
Kia ora, Mike

Moon Stones: Tide Stones





The Exhibition



Held on the Tide... Mood Tide, Earth Tide, Nature Tide



Po: ta: to: with Vortex Stones

Po: ta: to: the Old Knowledge lifted from the Tide



Kaha-Wai - Strong Water

Te Puna - The Spring... Water Journey



Matt McLean

Linkage: A Retrospective

Photos by Kate and Matt McLean



Matt McLean

Linkage: A Retrospective

Helen Adams, Auckland



Matt McLean lives on a sloping section in the sunny Auckland suburb of Grey Lynn. His sculptures meander quietly over his back lawn which runs down a bank to the shade of bordering trees. They sit contentedly amongst the silver beet and the grapevine, linking and connecting with each other as well as with the viewer walking amongst them. In his garden Matt's sculptures enhance the natural setting and create another dimension with man-made art.

Matt claims to have always enjoyed clay and remembers as a child firing up an incinerator and throwing in salt.

He majored in sculpture at *Elam Art School* from 1973 to 1976 and was actively involved in choreography and film. It was there he met his partner Kate, and where together they built an oil kiln and experimented with ceramics part time, although it was not until after art school that they saw pottery as a viable way of making a living. Matt went on to *Secondary Teachers College* in 1977.

Matt used, and still uses excavation clay from around the city area. Its main advantage is that it is available in quantity free, so he does not have to consider money costs when working on a large scale. The clay has its strengths and weaknesses as it tends to be short, coarse textured, iron coloured and contaminated with stones. Yet it has a good stiffness, is tolerant in firing and it responds well to wood-firing. This clay Matt mixes with ball clay, feldspar, Waikato river sand and various fibres at times, to suit the needs of the moment.

In the 1980s Matt and Kate built a five hundred cubic foot wood-fired kiln at *Outreach*, the *Auckland City Council Community Centre studios* in Ponsonby Road, Auckland. Using his clay and firing this large kiln with demolition timber allows Matt a freedom from cost restraints, but he has to accept the limitations of surface treatment as a payoff.

Matt stresses that the manual involvement with his making is very important to him. It gives him an intuitive sense of his material. He likes to use his whole body to lift and tip or turn the pieces while making them. The sculptures have human size and weight, allowing the viewer to relate to them from a gut level - a human level. He talks about his work as abstract reflections on the unsettledness of the human condition. The connectedness and the disconnectedness; the disturbing, changing quality of life.

Matt sees artists as often out on their own. He says, "While the processes involved in art can be communal and the results

shared, the act of creating is, in the end, solitary. At that point the artist is alone with his own instincts. He has to find the courage to trust that instinct if discovery is to occur through the work."

In building his sculptures, the most common technique used is a mixture of slab and coiling, often employing rough wood and clay moulds with supporting structures. Matt says, "I use wooden moulds because I consciously allow them to imprint on the forms, lending the works their characteristics. I enjoy the balance between the handled, manipulated, seen surface and the more independent unseen surface. This gives me a certain detachment from the piece - I become more the planner than the modeller and I think this contributes to the distancing of the viewer...."

"Sometimes I'll make a few pieces, dry them, then move them about, turn them over and generally explore their relationships one to another. Then I'll build into the spaces between, or onto the newly exposed surfaces. Thus the works are never fully planned or drawn out, but evolve as they are worked on. In its final form the work owes as much to looking and playing with it, as to planning from the start."

This relates to his idea of linking pieces, keeping the play going. One sculpture on his lawn is dismantled with segments partly re-assembled and Matt claims this to be more evocative than the completed thing. It challenges the viewer to take the work an extra stage, breaking down the boundaries of viewing by inviting a mental interaction with the work; to see it complete and together in one's imagination.

Matt McLean's work moves in different directions and he tends to avoid titles. Yet some works from his 1994 and '95 period have a frontality, like walls. Indeed, his 1994 *Fletcher Challenge Ceramics Award* exhibition entry is called *Dancing Wall* and it won him a double award of merit. It has an anthropomorphic feel and a sense of moving line.

This moving line is seen in other Wall works in his garden. He creates line by using a bright blue colour to introduce a thread of movement. The bright blue also becomes a sign that distances; an area of colour that broadcasts outward and can be seen from afar. These works are meant to be experienced from a distance as well as close up, with daylight coming through the holes.

Other works are deliberately solid and interlocking, suggesting shifting land masses and slides. A black colour is used for tonal relief and in daylight it can become a negative colour, shimmering white in the sunlight.

All Matt's work is non-fussy and unadorned. It conveys a soft, curvaceous quality. His larger forms usually have supporting gussets inside to accommodate corners, and support the weight of closed-in tops.

He says, "The larger closed-in elements are in themselves quite pot-like, or should I say, balloon-like. Once closed off with air sealed in, they can acquire a new life in a way; can be beaten, displaced and pushed about like a bean-bag, giving a soft quality to the form that is quite distinct from a carved or solid form."

This soft quality can be seen in a 1996 piece which Matt built in three different clays. It shows he is off in a new direction. Here he has used paper-clay and introduced two cross shapes as interlocking pieces around which are built other shapes, playing with their connections.

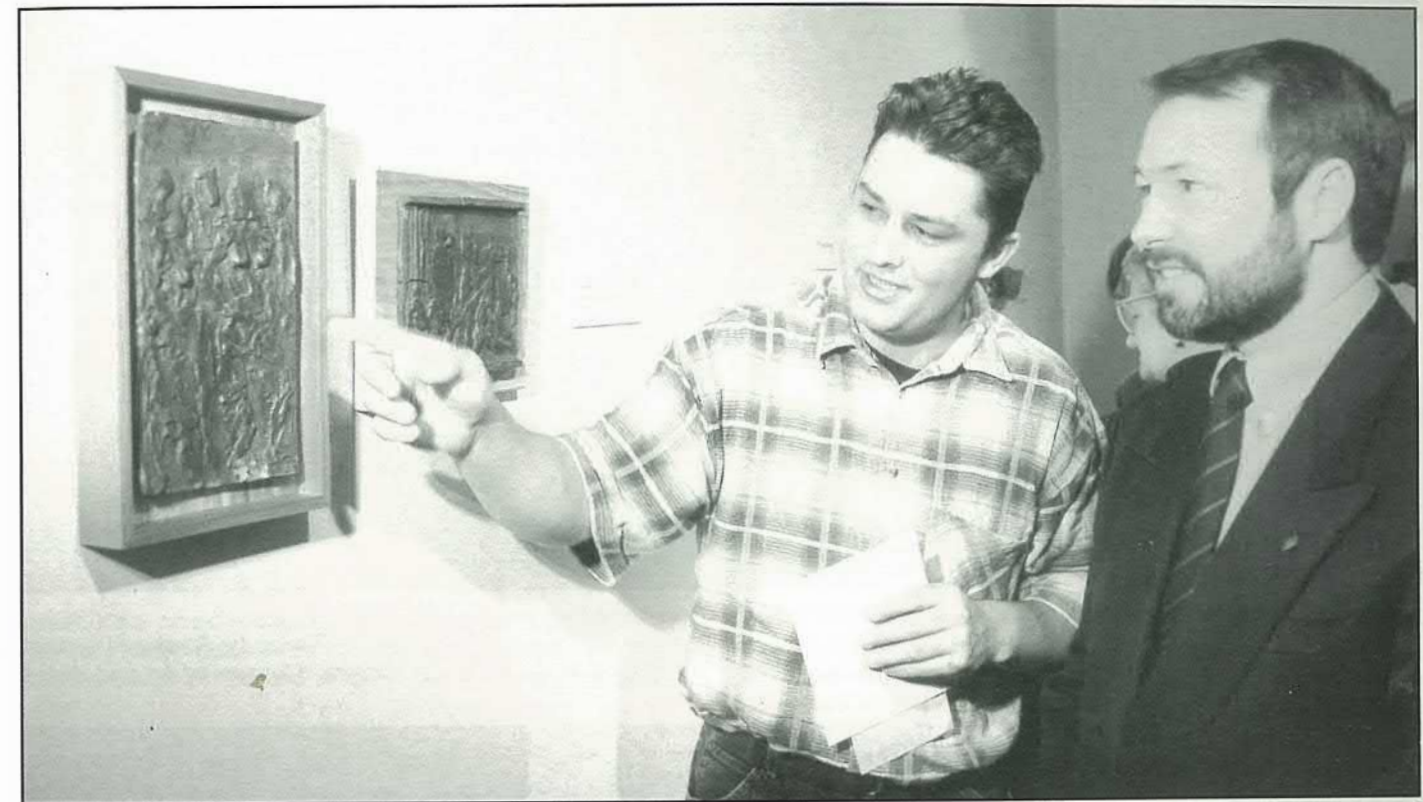
Matt's method of building is like forming pots and now he is also producing a line of delicate coffee cups and comfortable kitchen jugs - all wood-fired of course.

Overall, Matt's work is conceptual and hence fraught with mental stimulation. He admits this way of working sometimes makes it hard for him as current president of the *Auckland Studio Potters*. With this responsibility his creative thread of concentration can be disturbed, and he is aware of the conflict it can create within. Yet this conflict is all part of the human condition. A fundamental honesty and directness is conveyed in all Matt's work, both large and small. He is an artist of dedication and deep sincerity. ■

The Gas Centre Awards

Waikato Museum of Art and History, Hamilton in conjunction with the Waikato Society of Potters

Notes from the Selector, Bruce Dehnert, Dunedin



Darren Keith shows his winning entry "Night Life" to Robert Peterson, General Manager of Natural Gas Corporation
Photo by Chris Parker

The whole scene reminded me of a garage band situation in which the kids' passion has taken over any space normally reserved for the cherry-red Mitsubishi, windsurfers, laundry and, of course, Dad's workshop. But, instead of a pummelled drum set with 'Viper's' logos plastered from top-hat to bass drum, luminescent guitars stacked against refrigerators and an electric keyboard piled high with trade mags, there were ceramics everywhere.

Everywhere. Something in the neighbourhood of 240 of them according to **Bryce Stevens**, the world's friendliest toxic materials vendor. This corrugated garage on the outskirts of springtime Hamilton was packed to the rafters with entries for the *1996 Gas Centre Ceramics Awards*. The show is generously sponsored by the *NGC Gas Companies* under the super organisational facilities of the *Waikato Society of Potters*. I was to select a show that "I liked" for the *Waikato Museum of Art and History*.

I didn't attempt to analyse what I "like". I allowed the selection to be an intuitive one, knowing I could trust that. Just as the individual works were made from a variety of standpoints, each representing a substantial investment of emotion, so would my selection. Collectively I wanted a show that would offer diverse strategies of making, but would also seem assured of itself, not manic and searching.

In abrupt contrast to shows I have selected in the past (eclec-

tic visions and, at best, attempts to please everyone) I decided on a body of works that might enjoy an easy dialogue with one another, speak to the qualities of raw material and touch, and demonstrate clarity with respect to the makers' intentions.

One might argue that this show was contrived from an unabashedly singular point of 'taste'. This would probably be true. But I would set forth the argument that the dynamic of expectant surprise remains true because the "aesthetic" hasn't been diluted by committee driven compromise (or consensus, depending on how one looks at it). You only need to look at a building designed by a committee to understand what I'm talking about.

I would venture that formulas are the bane of Art. The moment a selector steps into the realm of "what is best?" rather than "what is the artist saying to me?" then that selector becomes dependant on formula. It is at that very juncture we depart from the Head, Heart and Hands and begin our flirtation with other things such as machines. What then becomes of the sensual trace, or the footprints in the snow?

I chose **Darren Keith's** *Night Life* for the Premier Award. The piece is a bas-relief, rectangular in shape and has the immediate finish of heavy oxide washes. The worn slab's corners curve outward from a spare wooden frame, the warpage of drying hasn't been resisted. Human figures have been modelled with an ease of touch, the slightest gesture of clay representing a hip, elbow,



Merilyn Wiseman: Second Prize Winner *Pacific Rim*

Raewyn Atkinson: *Whale Pot*



Photos by Stephanie Leeves
Waikato Museum of Art and History



The Gas Centre Awards Exhibition, Waikato Museum of Art and History, Hamilton. Photo by Stephanie Leeves

breast. It's a crowd scene with each figure vying for someone's attention. Keith makes either knowing or unknowing reference to Rodin's *Gates of Hell* and in particular, the early clay models, c1880.

Both artists employ a heavy vertical shape in the centres of their works where the conventions of narrative can gather around or, in a way, subject themselves to. Keith's modelling, in all its simplicity, makes possible a complex reading, especially as the work gains momentum from its top to its bottom. There is an interesting connection between the artist's technique of direct and honest modelling and the 'modelling' or posturing of his subjects. In this case, the real-life narrative is reflected in the artistic process. While Rodin used 'doubling' to break narrative logic, Keith has kept matters variable and ambiguous so as to allow multiple narratives to be assumed.

Merilyn Wiseman's *Pacific Rim* received the Second Prize. Its title referenced the vast ovoid shape of islands and continents encircling the world's largest ocean. Wiseman's work stimulates sensory associations, a la naturel, with places and things as diverse as Alaska's Glacier Bay, the glowing underside of Baja, Costa Rica's blue-crested cockateels, Chile's vast and unexplored fjords, Mt Cook's icy spew, even the frenetic surfboards of Kamikura fame.

The 'rim' of a pot is a demarcator of character, indicating qualities from weight, to function, to shape and volume. In defining the mouth of a vessel, the rim has multitudes to say about the form before the pot is sensed in any other fashion. This being particularly evident in *Pacific Rim*, we are also made aware, through Wiseman's use of glacial hues, of the openness of sky and ocean. Additionally, where Proust might tell us (in our experiencing of the object) "It is characteristic that the information which it (object) gives about the past retains no trace of it" (Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*. New York, Harcourt, 1969, p158). I am hyper-aware of Time - past, present and future - when considering this important work. Consequently, *Pacific Rim* and the body

of work that is its context, has a timeless quality to it. This alone, forms a challenge for Wiseman as she moves on.

The minuscule and delicate *Firth of Thames* by Elizabeth Boyd came back at me in a considered, sure manner. Here is a diminutive bowl that, like its intricate cousin in the *Peace Museum* at the United Nations (a gift from the People's Republic of China) reflects with fervent humility (is that possible?) upon nature. Specifically, the seascape near the artist's home. As I held the piece, I felt nothing short of a compelling intimacy. Boyd has taken up, from a personal perspective, where the 12th century Persians and their magnificently pierced *Seljuq* whitewares left off.

Suzanne Butson's *Cathedral* is an exquisite abstract of the architectural form from which it gets its title. If architecture, as the purest art, provides a vespular space in which human activities may take place, Butson refers us to some of the richest times and styles of architectural history; the Gothic and the Baroque. Running as a parallel and appropriate theme is Butson's interest in the afterlife as explained in her Christian beliefs.

In some way this is manifested through superb figurative drawings on the exterior of the form. The upper half of the pot is like a line drawing in space, with a Cathedral's spire being realised through fluid and waving ribbons of white clay. While sculptor Tim Scott achieved a completeness of image through use of reflected surfaces as demonstrated in his 1965 sculpture entitled *Quantic of Sakkara* (Rosalind Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, London, MIT Press, 1981) Butson employs shape and volume to good effect while paying homage to an ancient history of chalice use in the Christian faith.

In each of the artists who entered this year's Awards there was an undeniable integrity to communicate and hopefully affect a response. This communication takes place somewhere above words, perhaps even beyond a logic. But in all cases it remains a purely human endeavour with the resultant exhibition hopefully reflecting some of my own aesthetic sense or point of view at that moment.

Pure Energy

This Consumer Guide for the safe handling of *LPG* gas was first published in the Australian *Ceramic Study Group's* newsletter, courtesy the *Australian Liquefied Petroleum Gas Association Ltd*, Sydney. The information has been adjusted where necessary for New Zealand conditions, thanks to **Dave Paton**, Technical Administrator for Propane Gas Ltd of Hamilton.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS

Liquefied petroleum gas is commonly known as *LPG*, or simply "bottled gas", names which are used to describe Propane and Butane. It is different from *Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)*.

LPG is safely stored and easily transported as a compact liquid under moderate pressure in cylinders. When gas is required, the cylinder valve is opened and some of the liquid boils off as a vapour or gas. The liquid expands to 270 times its volume when it vaporises and can then be burnt.

A strong, distinctive odour is deliberately added to *LPG* to assist in early detection of even minor leaks. Since *LPG* is heavier than air, any leaked gas will always flow downwards, collect in low places and be slow to dissipate without ample ventilation and air movement. All *LPG* gas is absolutely non-toxic, non-corrosive and non-polluting, but if inhaled in sufficient volume it would cause suffocation.

BASIC SAFETY RULES

Ensure fixed *LPG* installations are carried out and serviced by a licensed or authorised gas fitter. This includes work in premises, on caravans and boats.

Keep *LPG* appliances and fittings in first class condition. Check them regularly for any deterioration in performance, signs of corrosion or for minor leaks. If any leak of gas is detected, refer to *Emergency Procedures*.

Use only equipment and parts specifically manufactured and approved for *LPG*. Appliances burning *LPG* are tested and approved by the gas industry. Look for the endorsement of this approval on every product.

To light an appliance, hold a burning match or gas gun at the burner, then turn the valve to ON. If the gas fails to ignite promptly, turn to OFF, ventilate for at least 3 minutes to disperse the gas and repeat the process.

Adequate ventilation is essential when using *LPG* to allow ample air for combustion and removal of burnt gases. Never seal doors or windows or tents for extra warmth while a gas appliance is being operated.

CARE OF LPG CYLINDERS AND FITTINGS

All *LPG* cylinders sold in New Zealand are designed and manufactured to meet strict standards.

Every cylinder must be inspected at an authorised *LPG* Test Station at least once every 10 years. The last inspection date is stamped on the cylinder collar, neck or foot ring.

A safety valve is fitted to the vapour space to allow automatic relief of any excess pressure due to overfilling, or in the event of a fire. Never tamper with the safety valve or other cylinder fittings. Do not use undue force to open or close the main cylinder valve. If in doubt, consult the supplier.

If any leakage from the valve of a small cylinder is detected or suspected, move the cylinder to a safe location at least 20 metres from any possible source of ignition. Slowly release the contents. Return the empty cylinder to a Test Station. Where a leaking cylinder is part of a fixed installation, shut off the main valve and immediately notify your gas supplier.

Gas cylinders (except for fork-lifts and automotive fuel containers) must always be transported, stored and used in an upright position. This ensures that the safety valve remains in vapour space and not immersed in the liquid. Keep cylinders secure during transport. Use a cylinder sealing plug whenever it is not connected to an appliance.

Store cylinders well away from possible sources of ignition or excess heat and in a well ventilated space. Do not store near other compressed gases.

Shut off the cylinder valve before disconnecting the cylinder from the appliance. Conversely, when replacing an empty with a full cylinder, ensure that appliance isolation locks are turned off.

Cylinders are not to be totally filled with liquid *LPG*. To allow a safe vapour space for liquid expansion with temperature change, the correct maximum fill is approximately 80%.

USE AND CARE OF FIXED LPG APPLIANCES

Installation and maintenance of *LPG* appliances must be carried out only by licensed or authorised installers, to ensure gas regulations are observed. The installer is responsible to ensure new work or replacement appliances are connected, tested, adjusted and in safe working order. Appliance operating instructions should be handed to the consumer and explained by the installer.

LPG appliances must not be connected to other gas supply systems, such as *Natural Gas*.

Adequate ventilation must be provided to give air for satisfactory combustion and ensure ample dispersal of the burnt gases.

Installations in caravans, recreational vehicles and boats must comply with the Installation Code applicable to fixed appliances. Cylinder compartments must be sealed from the interior of caravans and boats and vented to the outside. Cylinder valves must be closed when a caravan is in transit. Never use any gas appliance, including a refrigerator, in a moving vehicle.

Turn off every *LPG* appliance in caravans and boats before petrol refuelling.

Do not use a cooking appliance or stove as a room heater.

Do not use unflued *LPG* appliances in bedrooms, bathrooms or sleeping annexes under any circumstances.

PORTABLE AND LEISURE LPG SYSTEMS

Read the manufacture's operating instructions.

Keep cylinders upright and on a stable base.

Gas regulators must be kept clean.

Do not operate a portable or unflued *LPG* appliance where people are sleeping in enclosed spaces.

Connect regulators and hose joints "spanner tight".

Even in the outdoors make sure there are no leaks in the system. Check for leaks by brushing on soapy water and watching for bubbles. NEVER USE A MATCH!

When a portable appliance is not in use, turn off the cylinder valve.

Ensure cylinders are not overfilled. Small cylinders filled by volume in the field are fitted with ullage gauges, from the outlet of which *LPG* appears as a white fog when the cylinder has been filled to the maximum permitted level of 80%. The filling operation is then stopped.

Use the correct type of hose and keep it gently curved to eliminate kinks and damage. Do not make temporary connections.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Leak Suspected - Location Uncertain

Check the entire system if there is ANY indication of gas leak such as smell or hiss.

Test with soapy water solution, which will bubble at any point where gas is escaping. NEVER use a match or any flame to test for leaks.

Rejoin connections and test. If the leak has been indoors, fully ventilate the room before further use of the appliance.

Do not interfere with any part of a fixed installation.

Leak Detected - Not on Fire

If possible stop the leak by shutting off cylinder valve.

Ventilate the area thoroughly until the air is clear.

If not possible to stop the leak, remove cylinder carefully to a safe outdoor location. Keep the leak uppermost so only gas - not liquid - escapes.

Keep hands and face clear of any stream of escaping liquid.

If cylinder cannot be removed, disperse gas with fine water spray and provide maximum ventilation.

Keep possible ignition sources at least 20 metres away until cylinder is empty. These sources should include: open fires, non-flameproof electrical appliances, camera flash, telephone, radio, vehicle engines and any other equipment that can generate a spark.

Leaking Cylinder or Appliance - On Fire

If valve is undamaged, close if safe to do so and let fire go out. Do not use again until inspected.

If valve cannot be closed, call fire brigade or police or gas dealer, advising location, that it is an *LPG* cylinder and the cylinder size. Keep cylinder cool by water hose, but DO NOT attempt to extinguish flame. Unburnt gases in a confined space may explode if re-ignited. Keep clear and await assistance.

If there is any possibility of cylinders being engulfed by fire, evacuate the adjacent area.

Cylinder Exposed to Excessive Heat

Keep cylinder cool with a water hose, sprayed from a maximum possible distance.

Remove cylinder from heat source if possible and safe to do so.

For more detailed advice contact your local *LPG* supplier.

Natural Gas

The following information was supplied by courtesy of **Peter Friar**, manager of Industrial and Commercial Tariff Business for the *Natural Gas Corporation*, Hamilton, sponsors of the annual *Gas Centre Ceramics Awards*.

Principle Characteristics

The term *Natural Gas* is used to describe the flammable gas which is derived from the earth, usually from deep boreholes and frequently in association with crude petroleum. It is composed mainly of methane with smaller quantities of heavier hydrocarbons, notably ethane. In addition there are very small quantities of non-combustible gases such as nitrogen and carbon dioxide. The average calorific value of natural gas is 40.0 MJ/m³.

Natural gas is a non-toxic and non-corrosive gas which is clean burning, but if inhaled in sufficient volume would cause asphyxiation. It is lighter than air and consequently rises on release resulting in easy dispersion, unless the leak is in a confined space with limited ventilation. To assist in its detection an odour is added. This smell is very distinctive and the smallest of leaks can be detected.

Basic Safety Rules

All natural gas installations must be installed in a competent and safe manner and be supervised by a craftsman gas fitter who must certify that the installation complies with the relevant legislation and codes of practice, and is safe.

Ventilation is an essential requirement to ensure sufficient combustion. Openings into the area where the appliance is being used should not be sealed and any additional ventilation installed to aid combustion must not be blocked or obscured.

If natural gas is smelled, the appliance should be isolated at the main burner control valve, the emergency shut-off valve located at the meter, and the area ventilated by opening windows and doors. Should the smell persist the gas supplier must be advised immediately. The escape must be traced and repaired by a suitably qualified person prior to the appliance being relit.

In the event of a flame failure occurring, the main burner control valve must be shut and a suitable time allowed to permit any gas build-up in the kiln to disperse, prior to relighting the burner. The same procedure should be followed during the initial light-up when starting the kiln; if the burner does not ignite immediately the gas supply should be closed and a period of time allowed to elapse prior to another attempt being made.

Care and Maintenance of Equipment

Equipment should be maintained on a regular basis by a suitably qualified person to ensure that maximum efficiency is achieved and it is operating safely. Appliances should be kept clean with no obstructions blocking access. Pipework should be checked for signs of corrosion or damage on a regular basis and any remedial action taken immediately.

The kiln flue should be examined to ensure there are no obstructions. Flammable material must not be kept in close proximity to the flue as it will become exceptionally hot while in operation.

Flame Safety Shut-off

There are two basic types of safety shut-off system:

1. *Thermo-electric* which utilises a thermocouple positioned in the flame to generate an electric current that energises an electromagnet which holds a thermo-electric safety shut-off valve open. When the flame is extinguished the thermocouple cools, the electric current stops and the valve closes.

2. *Rectification (or Electronic)* which relies on a probe through which an electric current passes, being immersed in the flame. Flame loss results in the current flow being stopped so the solenoid valve positioned in the gas supply is de-energised and it closes.

Kiln Atmosphere

Under ideal combustion conditions natural gas requires approximately 10 units of air for every 1 unit of gas, this being called the *stoichiometric* ratio. Normal combustion of natural gas is completed using excess air to ensure there is sufficient air to permit complete combustion. Therefore the products of combustion contain oxygen. The excess air acts to cool the kiln as it is heated and lost out of the flue. All fuels require excess air to ensure there is thorough mixing and complete combustion.

Extreme care must be taken when a reducing atmosphere is required at the latter stages of firing when certain glazes need their oxygen content reduced to achieve a colour change. Firing at gas/air ratios below stoichiometric will result in fuel wastage and therefore should only be used for the minimum time necessary. The result of incomplete combustion of fuel will be the production of carbon monoxide, a toxic gas which is absorbed by the blood in preference to oxygen. If this occurs, the initial result is a feeling of tiredness and continued exposure produces unconsciousness - or death if the exposure is continued approximately 10 minutes.

Advice

Your local natural gas supply company will be pleased to provide further advice and assistance on firing kilns with Natural Gas. ■

Alex Dufort, Brixton Pottery, England

Permanent relief from Potters' Back? Robot thrower takes over

The *Programmable Robotic Ceramics Production Machine (PRCPM)* uses an eight-axis robotic arm with a turret toolhead in conjunction with a speed controlled turntable, to throw and turn pots. It is designed to make a succession of highly consistent short runs of different shapes and sizes of domestic earthenware automatically, without the need for re-tooling or machine setting. The machine is designed specifically for the small to medium sized pottery company which needs to mechanise and can perhaps afford to purchase one machine, but not a whole production line.

For the first aspect, the *PRCPM* makes free-standing pieces on a turntable rotating about a vertical axis. The robot arm has several tools on its turret end. The throwing tool is a calliper faced with several suitable materials, which are presented successively to the workpiece using a *CNC* indexed turret.

The software prepares ranges of simple tool paths from computer aided design (CAD) profiles, controlling the throwing arm through the stages from centred billet of clay to finished product. A ceramic product can be made in different sizes by altering the scale of the CAD input image. The software also issues codes for calliper angle, turntable speed control and turret rotation, so that turntable speed can be adjusted to workpiece size, and turning and finishing tools can be brought to bear on the exterior surface of the workpiece.

The human hand above all is strong, articulated and lubricated. To replicate these qualities, the toolhead has been designed so that it can apply similar forces to those exerted by the hand, in both direction and strength, to the clay piece.

The lubrication of the clay/tool is also crucial. The potter, equipped with naturally abrasive hands, reduces drag by wetting them and uses feel and judgement to evaluate the success of this lubrication. *Brixton Pottery* has investigated toolheads using water for lubrication, roller bearing heads, self-lubricating materials such as *PTFE*, compressed air and other non-aqueous fluids. A major problem that has been resolved in the research stage has been to establish tolerances for lubrication, and to determine related shear limits for the clay. Matching the clay humidity to the tool has required trials with a range of clays of varying hardness and moisture contents. The tolerance range within which the *PRCPM* will satisfactorily form the clay without collapse, shear or deformation, needed careful evaluation. Tolerances of air inclusion have been clearly established.

Meanwhile, two independent approaches have been taken in imprinting the tool paths in the robot's computer memory: "teach-by-show" and off-line programming. In the first, the coordinates of the tool path are registered by the computer, by placing and articulating the toolhead at "waypoints" on models of the intermediate extruded shapes. A six-stage extrusion has been created and virtual models of the shapes assumed by the clay at the end of each stage have been made.

speed and curvature of movements between the waypoints. The tool is run "for real" with clay and the success of the stages evaluated. The computer code is then modified if necessary. *

Brixton Pottery is now using an Italian *Comau S2* robot arm for its research. The controlling programme comprises two parts: the *CAM* software which generates the throwing paths, and the post-processor software which converts this information into *Comau*-specific code. The post-processor programme is the *CNC* equivalent of the commonplace *PC* printer drive file. If another robot arm is substituted, only this post-processor code will need to be altered.

This extract from an article by Thomas Stubbing and Bill Ashton is reproduced courtesy of Global Ceramic Review, UK.

Prior to drying, ceramic shapes comprise around 15% to 20% by weight of moisture and, because the specific gravity of dry clay is around 3.5, approximately 40% to 50% moisture by volume. During the first phase of drying, ceramic shapes cease to be plastic and shrink by around up to 10% dimensionally and 27% by volume as moisture separating the clay particles is removed until they come into contact with each other. During the second phase - known as the falling rate period - drying is completed without further shrinkage by removal of the moisture remaining in the interstices between the clay particles.

The 100°C moisture is then able much more easily to migrate outwards from the shape's core and rapid evaporation and shrinking can take place without the shape warping or cracking. At the same time, the steam generated by the moisture's evaporation quickly displaces and replaces the dryer's remaining initially contained air.

Once the shrinking phase is complete, the surface of the moisture retreats to below the shape's surface and the outer layer of the clay becomes bone dry and porous. Due partly to the turbulent recirculation penetrating its pores, the temperature of the dry clay increases up to the dryer's recirculation temperature.

With conventional drying, because the temperature of the moisture remaining inside the shape is typically at around 60°C, ie, at below its 100°C boiling point, it will not evaporate unless air at above 60°C, but with a saturation temperature below 60°C is present at its surface. Such air must therefore penetrate the already dry outer layer of clay in order to evaporate the core moisture and transport it out of the shape.

In practice, because the high *RH* and above 60°C air recirculating in the dryer cannot absorb much additional moisture before becoming saturated, a substantially greater weight of humid air than of

moisture still to be removed must first penetrate the porous dry layer to the shape's still moist core in order to evaporate that moisture, and must then return through the layer with evaporated moisture to rejoin the recirculation.

With airless drying, because the core moisture is at 100°, no air is needed to transport it out of the shape once it has been evaporated by transfer into it of thermal energy at above 100°C from the dryer's turbulent, typically around 130°C recirculation superheated steam atmosphere. As a consequence, as the remaining core moisture is evaporated it simply becomes steam, expanding by 1,670 to 1.67m³/kg as it does so, and emerges from the shape through its already dry and porous outer layer.

Care still needs to be taken to avoid too rapid heating and the creating of an internal pressure sufficient to cause, for example,

Moist, Still Plastic Ceramic Shape: Fully Shrunken, Partly Dried Shape:

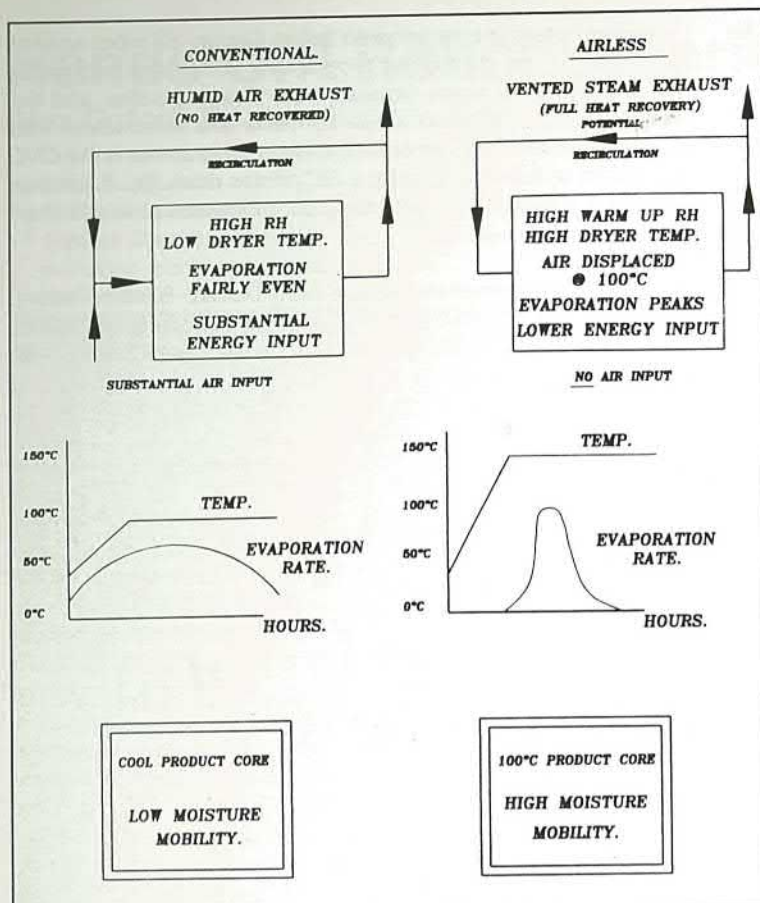
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Fully Shrunk, Almost Dried Shape:

Fully Dried Ceramic Shape:

Figure 1 schematically illustrates the drying process, with each 'X' representing a clay particle, the 'O's representing the moisture in a moist and still plastic shape and the 'o's the moisture remaining within a fully shrunken, first partly and then almost dried shape. The clay particles 'X' are in practice asymmetric and randomly distributed and, after shrinking is complete, are in contact with each another.

During the shrinking phase of conventional drying, the moist shape cannot be heated to above the partially recirculated air's saturation temperature, typically around 60°C, and at that temperature both the moisture's surface tension and its viscosity are relatively high. In consequence, unless the moisture in the shape's outer layers is removed slowly, giving time for its core moisture to migrate outwards and enable uniform shrinking to occur, warping or cracking results.



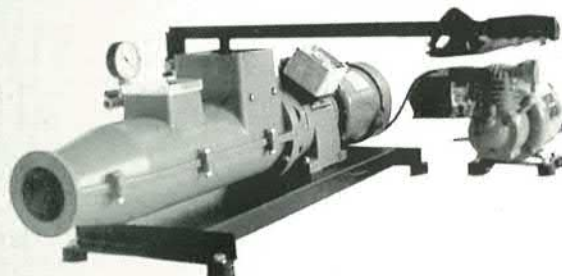
blistering of a shape's smooth outer surface. However because as there is no need as in a conventional dryer for a substantial volume of air first to penetrate the shape and then, within a further increased air/steam volume, to transport the evaporated moisture out of the shape, safe falling rate moisture removal is also more rapid with airless drying.

Figure 2 compares conventional with airless drying in the light of the above. Results achieved by airless drying of moist bricks, sanitaryware, tiles refractories and other products indicate that up to 80% safe drying time reductions, significant energy savings and, by re-use of the airless dryer's energy, for example, by using Mechanical Vapour Compression (MVR) to recycle it within the dryer, substantial additional energy savings can be achieved.

CDS Projects (a manufacturing licensee in respect of Heat-Win's patent GB 2209383 and corresponding international patents and patent applications) has already received an order for an airless dryer for refractory shapes to be exported to the USA and is currently processing numerous UK and overseas enquiries from the brick, tile, sanitaryware and other industry sectors.

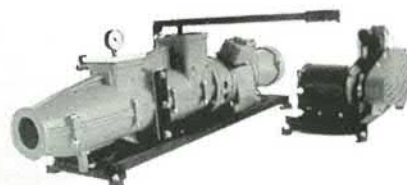
Global Ceramic Review is a quarterly magazine reporting on all levels of ceramic production technology, as well as research, development, education and other topics of interest to the ceramic producing industry world-wide. Editor Charles Wallin. 44 Kingsway, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 1JH, England. Ph: 0044 1782 411433. Fax: 0044 1782 747061

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Gallery Guide

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NORTHLAND

BURNING ISSUES GALLERY, 8 Quayside, Town Basin, Whangarei. On site glass blowing, production pottery and sculpture studios, with viewing platform. Open 7 days 10-6pm. Phone/fax (09) 438 3108

NORTHLAND SOCIETY OF ARTS — Reyburn House Gallery, Lower Quay Street, Whangarei. Monthly Exhibitions of artists and artisans in various media. Hours: Tues - Fri 10 am - 4 pm Week-ends 1 - 4

NORTH AUCKLAND

PALMS GALLERY, Wayby, Fine selection of New Zealand pottery and studio ceramics. Open 7 days (09) 423 7125. Turn left off S.H.1 15km north of Warkworth.

WARKWORTH CRAFT GALLERY CO-OPERATIVE, Corner Baxter and Neville St. Excellent selection of local pottery, turned wood and furniture, jewellery, silk clothing, handknits. Open 9.30 - 5pm daily. Phone (09) 425 8790.

AUCKLAND

ALBANY VILLAGE POTTERY, Main Road, Albany. 15 professional potters exhibit and sell their work at New Zealand's oldest established co-operative gallery. Open every day. Ph (09) 415 9403

AOTEA GALLERY, 18 Manukau Road, Newmarket. Phone (09) 520 0075. Individually created Fine New Zealand Craft in native wood, ceramic, bone and New Zealand jade. Open Tuesday to Sunday

ART BY THE SEA, Featuring New Zealand's best in ceramics, jewellery, sculpture, painting, hand blown glass, etc. cnr King Edward Parade and Church Street, Devonport. Phone (09) 445 6665.

COMPENDIUM, 5 Lorne Street, Auckland, Ph/fax (09) 300 3212 and 14 Woodward Street, Wellington. Ph/fax (04) 499 9299. Open 6 days. Greatest selection of original NZ craft - glass, ceramics, jewellery, wood, clothing

EARTH AND FIRE, ground floor St Lukes Mall, Mount Albert, Auckland. Offer a wide selection of fine New Zealand crafts, pottery, woodturning, glass and wrought iron, etc. Open 7 days. Phone (09) 846 3265.

'FLYING FISH CERAMICS', (Catharine Dawson) 702 Dominion Road, Balmoral, Auckland. Thrown, handbuilt and colourfully decorated ware. Wholesale and retail welcome. Open 6 days: Mon - Thurs 10-5.30pm, Fri 10-7pm, Sat 10-4pm. Phone (09) 638 7069, Fax (09) 818 5858

LOPDELL HOUSE GALLERY, Waitakere Centre for the Arts, two galleries, two working studios, gallery shop. Open 7 days 10am-4.30pm. Phone (09) 817 8087, Fax (09) 817 3340

MASTERWORKS GALLERY, 77 Ponsonby Road. Phone (09) 378 1256, fax (09) 378 1257. Ceramics, glass, fibre, wood, jewellery. Superb selection of New Zealand's best. Open Monday-Friday 10-5pm Saturday 10-4pm, Sunday 11-3pm

MUDLARKS, Hunters Plaza, Papatoetoe, (behind the trees next to K Mart). Offer an extensive selection of quality stoneware, raku and pit fired pottery. Open 7 days, Phone (09) 277 6868.

OUT OF THE BLUE WORKSHOPS. (Brendan and Kathryn Adams, Sue Newby and Bruce Haliday). Working studio gallery, 507 New North Road, Kingsland. Electric and vibrant ceramics with an off beat slant. Open Monday to Friday 10-5.30pm, Saturday 10-4pm. Phone (09) 849 6376

POTS OF PONSONBY, 298 Ponsonby Road, Auckland. Ph (09) 376 0145. Craft co-operative gallery offering a wide range of quality handmade domestic and decorative pottery and other crafts.

F.T. WEBB DECOR SHOPPE, 1 Kent Street, Newmarket, Phone (09) 520 0268. Quality NZ made pottery. Excellent selection available. Reasonable prices. Open Monday to Saturday.

WAIKATO

EXPRESSIONS - The Museum Shop, Waikato Museum of Art and History, Hamilton. The finest New Zealand pottery, glass, jewellery, silk, books, prints, cards. Phone (07) 839 5100.

FIRE AND FORM, Chartwell Square, Hamilton. "Quality pottery and woodturning. Wide range of domesticware and decorative pieces. Monthly exhibitions by NZ craftspeople in various media. Open 7 days. Phone (07) 854 8333.

WAIKATO CERAMICS, Brooklyn Road, (opp show grounds), Hamilton. Phone (07) 855 7717. Sculptural, decorative and domestic works by selected potters. Resident potter Bryce Stevens.

COROMANDEL

ALAN RHODES POTTERY, Situated at Whenuakite, 23km south of Whitianga. Stoneware and pit fired pots. Studio attached to the gallery, visitors always welcome.

PENINSULA GALLERY. Showcasing the Peninsula's finest arts and crafts. Pottery, flowers and carved kauri. Open 7 days, 9am-5pm. Albert Street, Whitianga. Phone (07) 866 5224.

RIVERSIDE GALLERY, Settlement Road, Pauanui. The peninsula's best selection of paintings, pottery, woodware and other crafts, beside a peaceful waterlily pond and garden. Open daily. Phone (07) 864 7834

TAURANGA

PYROMANIA, THE ART CENTRE, 24 Wharf Street, Tauranga. Ph (07) 578 5028. Co-operative gallery. Specialising in pottery, paintings, jewellery, silk scarves, hand blown glass, weaving and other crafts. Open Mon - Thurs 9 - 5, Fri 9 - 6, Sat 9 - 4.

MANAWATU

POTTERS VAULT CO-OPERATIVE, 130 Broadway Avenue, Palmerston North. Decorative and domesticware, pit fired and raku pieces made by nine members. Phone (06) 358 2211.

WELLINGTON

AVID. Dealers in Applied Arts, 48 Victoria Street, Wellington. Handmade works for sale by Contemporary New Zealand designers. Open 6 days Monday to Saturday from 10 - . Phone (04) 472 7703

CAPRICORN GALLERY, 155 Jackson St, Petone. Handblown glass and studio pottery from leading NZ Potters, silk scarves, jewellery. Open 6 days to 1pm Saturday. Phone (04) 568 3208.

CHEZ-MOI POTTERY, 12 Kiriwai Road, Paremata, Wellington. Work by Anneke Borren. Domestic, sculptural, hand brushed decorated stoneware and earthenware. Ring first. Phone (04) 233 9668.

MALCOLM WARR STUDIO GALLERY, 26 Parata Street, Waikanae. Ceramic Sculpture by Maree Lawrence and original prints by Malcolm Warr. Hours by appointment. Telephone (04) 293 5060.

MIREK SMISEK AND PAMELA ANNSOUTH POTTERY, Main Highway, Te Horo. Open every day. Wide range of domestic, decorative and sculptural pieces in stoneware and saltglaze.

NEIL GARDINER - PAKAKARIKI POTTERY, Ceramics for interiors - murals, clocks and mirrors. Commissions accepted. Varied range of bowls and vases plus other surprises. Visitors welcome, 65 Wellington Road, Paekakariki. Phone (04) 292 8396.

REIKORANGI POTTERY and Riverside Animal Park, Ngatiawa Road, Waikanae. Jan and Will Wright invite you to experience a country environment. Open 7 days 9.30am-5pm. Phone (04) 293 5146 (Tea Rooms).

THE POTTERS SHOP AND GALLERY, 14 Woodward Street, Wellington. Phone (04) 473 8803. A co-operative potters gallery offering their pots of excellence to the public.

NELSON

WAIMEA POTTERY. When in Nelson visit Waimea Pottery at Craft Habitat, Richmond, to view a fine collection of lusted and domestic ware by Paul Laird. Phone/fax (03) 544 7481

WEST COAST

HOKITIKA CRAFT GALLERY CO-OPERATIVE, 25 Tancred Street, Hokitika. Multi-media gallery of top quality creations by internationally recognised West Coast Artisans, New Zealand's best. Open 7 days. Phone (03) 755 8802

CANTERBURY

CAVE ROCK GALLERY, The Arts Centre, Christchurch. For fine New Zealand crafts, ceramic, wood, jade, glass, silk and wool. Open 7 days. Phone (03) 365 1634

SALAMANDER GALLERY, The Arts Centre, Christchurch. Art works on paper. Phone (03) 365 9279

COURTYARD POTTERY, 75 Rutland St, Christchurch. Ph (03) 355 5933. Specialising in quality pottery, glass and silks by New Zealand craftspeople. Open Mon-Thurs 9.30-5.30pm. Friday 9.30-8pm, Saturday 11-2pm.

OTAGO

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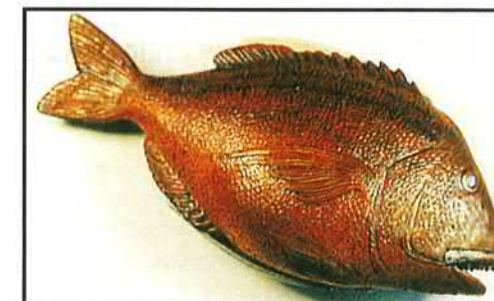


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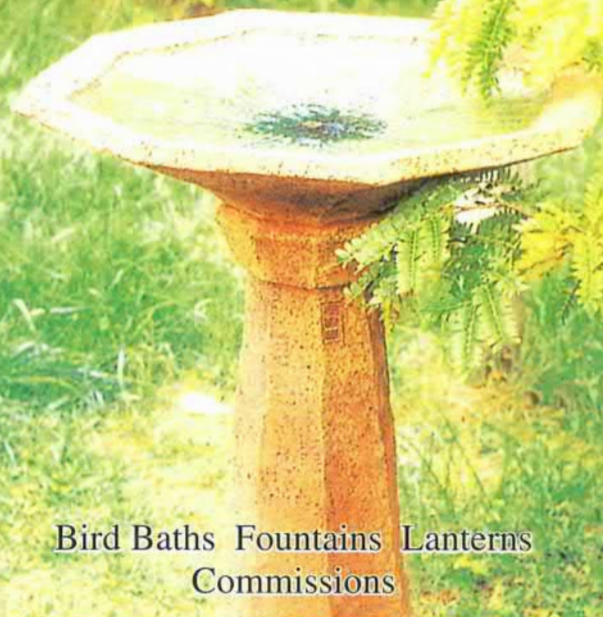
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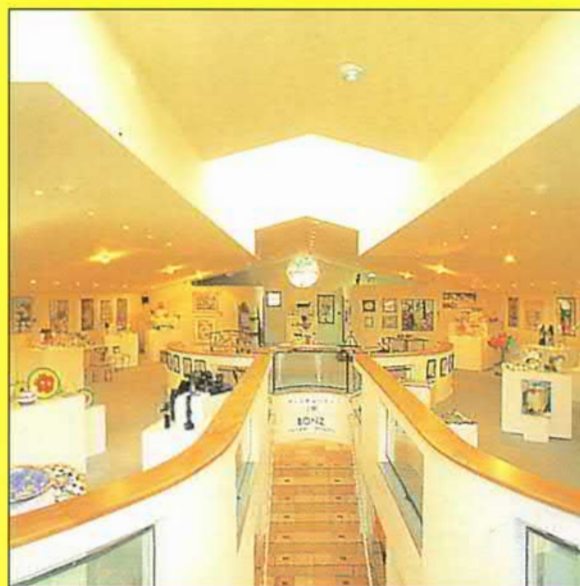
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