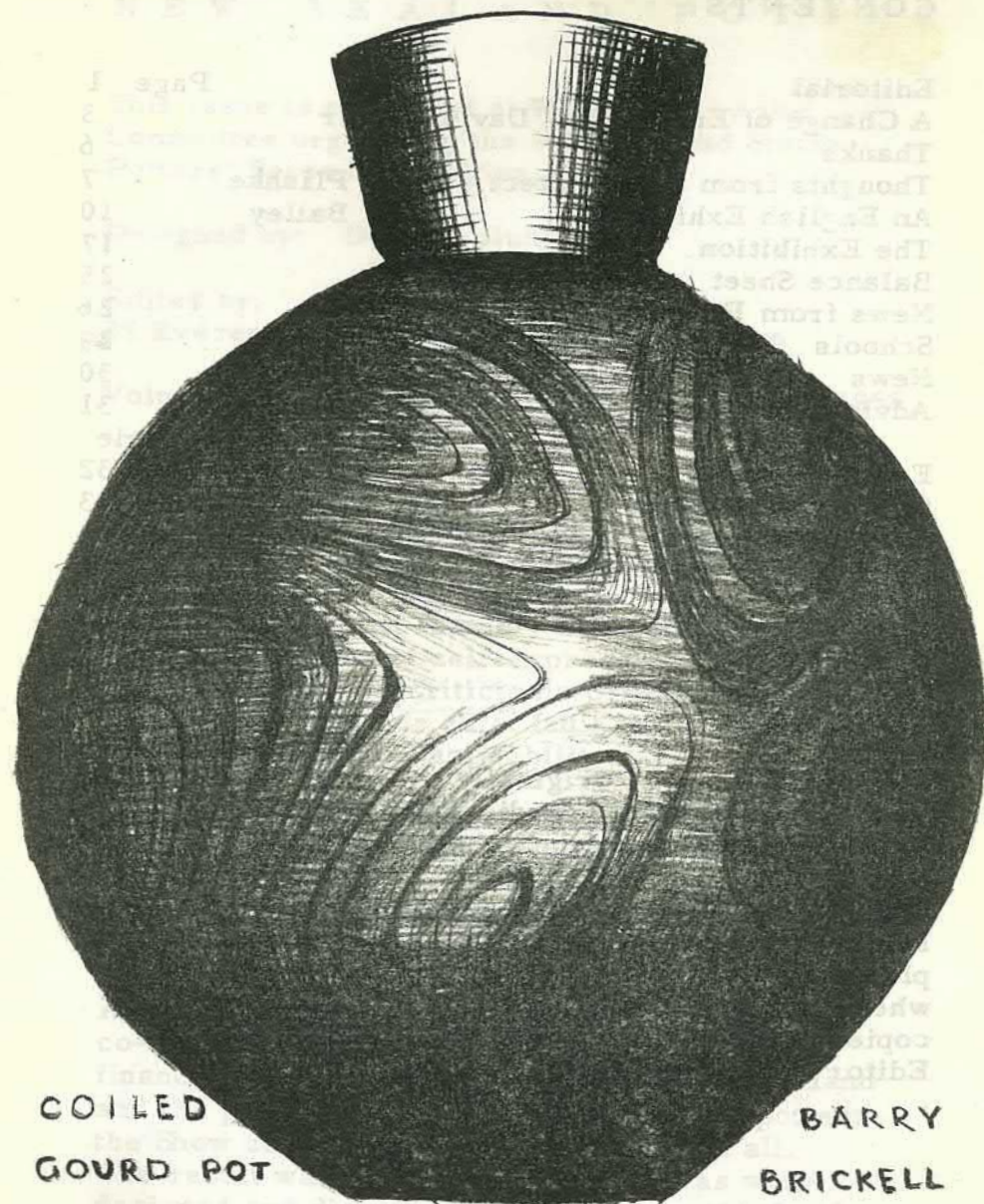




NEW ZEALAND POTTER

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 2 DECEMBER 1958



COILED
GOURD POT

BARRY
BRICKELL

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This magazine was originally produced in connection with the New Zealand Studio Potters' Second Exhibition and subscribers helped to finance the Show. Next year we intend to carry on the magazine. If you are not one of the original subscribers but would like to take out a subscription, please write to the Editor and we will contact you when the future policy has been decided. Single copies of Nos. 1 and 2 may be obtained from the Editor for 2/6d post free.

NEW ZEALAND POTTER

This issue is published at Wellington by the Committee organising the New Zealand Studio Potters' Second Exhibition.

Designed by: Doreen Blumhardt

Edited by: Helen Mason
29 Everest Street, Khandallah, Wellington

Volume One Number Two December 1958

The New Zealand Studio Potters' Second Exhibition is now over, but from it several points emerge. The vigour of the whole Show surprised us all and demonstrated most forcibly that pottery as a form of art and a form of self-expression is here to stay. From the criticisms printed in this issue it is evident that our chief fault is not lack of enthusiasm but of practicability.

The Selection Committee's initial work of rejecting nearly fortyfive per cent. of the pots submitted means that we have set for ourselves a reasonably high standard, which is something Art Societies have failed to do in their Exhibitions.

Another point demonstrated is that potters can co-operate and work together. Without the financial help of potters throughout New Zealand and the physical help of most Wellington potters, the Show could never have functioned at all. The result was an Exhibition which was well-designed and displayed, at which two-thirds of

the pots were sold, and which attracted an attendance of over a thousand people.

Now we ask ourselves where we are going. For many of us the joy of creating a pot is enough, for others who wish to go further there is no side-stepping the fact that sooner or later we have to settle down and discipline ourselves into acquiring the skill necessary to produce serviceable, well-designed pots for use in daily living.



LEE THOMSON

A CHANGE OF EMPHASIS - Observations from a Selection Committee Member.

David Driver

Where do we start ? That's the first question that comes to mind as I sit down to write these few notes. But it's also a very obvious first question for a selection committee faced with an array of nearly 300 entries for a pottery exhibition - on tables, on the floor, on a desk in another room, on a shelf and a window seat in the entrance hall. It was an impressive array, with so much of it reaching a standard higher than we'd dare to hope for. But this was good, for we'd been asked to be sufficiently ruthless in our rejections to maintain the whole exhibition at as high a standard as possible. Where, then, did we start ?

Our starting point was, of course, to ask ourselves certain basic questions relating to such things as: the potter's mastery over his material and method - the quality of his throwing, coiling, moulding or sculpturing of the clay; the appropriateness of the glaze or other finish; the relationship of colour, texture or decoration to shape; the suitability of form for intended function. And how did the pots answer to this test ? Undoubtedly the majority of rejections were made because of technical deficiencies, particularly in throwing and glazing. There were also functional failures - beakers which were rough round the edge and would rasp the lips when in use; jug handles which gave insufficient grip for the size of the jug; mugs that were awkward to hold; sets of beakers, bowls, mugs and so

on, which were so far from matching that they stood as individual pieces rather than as sets. The greatest successes, on the other hand, were bowls, plates and vases - or just "pots" more or less straight from the wheel. Indeed it may well be that the success of some potters arose from the fact that they had not attempted some of the more difficult forms, for there was a noticeable lack of spouts, handles, lids and matching sets. Because of this there was perhaps more credit due to the potters who attempted such things, even if not always successfully, than to those whose whole eight entries were acceptable but consisted only of bowls and vases.

A potter who had achieved some degree of excellence in throwing individual pots, was heard to remark when required for the first time to make a number of items alike "Mine all look like individual pieces". Undoubtedly the discipline necessary to make successfully a set of bowls, beakers, mugs or cups and saucers is a stiff one, but one that must bring its reward in an improved sureness of technique. Likewise, it's worth taking up the challenge of making a lid that fits or a spout that pours well and doesn't drip. Certainly these are all items of everyday use and there's an element of repetition in making them. Perhaps a potter is reluctant to take time for these when his greatest satisfaction comes from the individual pot which as likely as not will be an object of decoration in itself rather than serve any utilitarian purpose. His enjoyment comes largely from the feel of the pot in the making of it. But the satisfaction of the user is also worthy of consideration. And the pots he feels most are those which he handles as part of

his everyday living - the jugs, mugs, teapots, beakers, dessert bowls, platters and so on. I'm sure that Leach is appreciated as much or more for the semi-mass-produced ware his studio turns out as for his individual pieces, which tend to be more in the nature of collectors' items.

Could this be a guide for future exhibitions? Could potters produce a greater variety of work by doing some things that are in themselves a little more tedious or repetitious? Could there be more emphasis on articles for everyday use - on "handleability" - and so encourage in a wider public a feel for fine craftsmanship which will have a leavening effect in other fields of design as well? Can New Zealand potters take up the challenge caused by import restrictions and fill the gaps in some of our finer shops, so helping to maintain the growing public interest in good design which has been apparent during the last few years of freer imports?

No doubt these challenges will be taken up. Then the next exhibition will show forth more of the qualities evident in one very small group of entries in this last show - the sculpture. Though only a handful of entries, there were certain pieces among them (particularly some of the wall sculpture) which were outstanding for their originality, imaginativeness, vitality and variety. If these qualities pervade the work of each exhibitor, next year's showing will itself be more varied, vital, imaginative and original. It will appeal to a still wider public and will outdistance even the remarkable achievements of 1958.

THANKS

We acknowledge with gratitude the work of :-

Mr. Geoffrey Nees, who designed the layout of the New Zealand Studio Potters' Second Exhibition, and what is more, spent most of a weekend setting it up for us.

The Selection Committee, Mrs. Joan Macarthur, David Driver and Keith Lowe, who spent many exacting hours in setting a standard for the Show.

Denny Garrett, Adult Education Schools Tutor, whose genius as unpacker and general carrier smoothed the way at many hectic moments.

The National and Regional Councils of Adult Education, whose help in lending space for the selecting and for the storing of pots was invaluable.

Roy Cowan, whose work with hammer and saw and constant help at all crucial times was most valuable.

Bill Stewart, Training College student, who shared in all the toil and is learning young the differing aspects of a potter's life.

Freda Anderson, who kept her head and the cash straight on the opening night, and also prepared the Catalogue.

The Exhibition Committee, Terry Barrow, Doreen

Blumhardt, Lee Thomson and Helen Mason, who found any talent they possessed for organisation, carpentry, photography, hospitality, was used to the full.

And all the minders and potters who lent a hand at necessary moments.

A record in colour film of as many of the pots as possible was taken by Dr. Barrow. These may be borrowed by interested groups. Apply to the Editor.

THOUGHTS FROM AN ARCHITECT ON
THE STUDIO POTTER TODAY

E. A. Plishke

First of all I am not a potter and I do not know anything about the technical or chemical side of this craft. The only justification for my having any opinion on pottery is the fact that since my student days I have loved it. The fact that pottery is one of the most ancient crafts, with perhaps the least interference from modern technology, gives it a unique position. The only parallel is perhaps the uninterrupted tradition of hand weaving. The secret of the charm of hand woven fabrics or hand thrown pots springs from a creative activity and with that we are also at the root of the satisfaction which people derive from making pots.

It is a fact that any artistic activity goes back to periods akin to its own mood in order to derive encouragement and strength therefrom; for instance the Pre-Raphaelites to paintings painted before Raphael; William Morris to the uninterrupted tradition of medieval craft, and Bernard Leach to Eastern pottery, unaffected by the Industrial Revolution. This going back to previous periods not only gives strength and encouragement to the artist but also has an inherent weakness - the weakness of any kind of eclecticism, any acceptance of the forms of other periods for today's artistic expression. In this case the pots may be very skilful and fine reinterpretations of eastern work by western minds. In contrast to this perhaps is the effort to make something which is free and more independent of these forms in order to give more direct expression to the mood of our time. It is obvious that to strike out on one's own in order to do that leads to more mistakes than if one keeps within the strict limits of established tradition. But on the other hand the result may be more alive. A good pot like any good work of art or craft requires a synthesis of vitality and form, otherwise it may either remain primitive or become mere empty formalism.

The same problem may become clearer in architecture. We all agree that previous periods have produced very beautiful houses and that it can still be very agreeable to live in an old Georgian or Regency house. Or again, one of my most prized books is Yoshida's publication on the Japanese house, brought out by Wasmuth in 1935. But the fact that we are enchanted by the beauty of these old houses of the East or

West does not mean that we ourselves could really successfully design a house in one of these styles and in doing so still create a positive atmosphere and frame for our way and mood of living. In some ways it would always be a sort of stage setting superimposed on our present-day life. To recognize the essential qualities in the old and to translate them into a work which has also the vitality and characteristics of our time seems to me the task of any artist.

It is one of the most impressive signs of the sincerity of the group of potters who exhibited in their second exhibition that they succeeded up to a point in avoiding the dangers of eclecticism. But none-the-less looking at the exhibition the three different orientations of the potters were clearly represented in their work. And then of course there is the work which does not closely adhere to one of these schools but is combining in various degrees qualities of the old traditions with the feel and frame of mind of our generation.

In a young country, so far away from historic centres of great tradition, it seems natural that the potter as much as any creative man would feel tempted and challenged to find an expression in his work which is in accord with the feel and mode of living of the country. Any form of eclecticism is to him the only and quite necessary training ground of any modern pottery.

AN ENGLISH EXHIBITION

Professor C. L. Bailey

I thought you would like to have my impressions of the 1958 Exhibition of the Red Rose Guild of Craftsmen that I saw last week in Manchester. I saw it, but not Manchester! It was, as usual, a dim outline seen through a thick miasma of murk compounded of smoke, rain, and fog - Manchester smog indeed. But in the midst of this indescribable ugliness was this glorious exhibition. I groped my way to the Whitworth Art Gallery, now a constituent of the University of Manchester, and for many years the venue of the Guild. (The Guild itself was formed in 1921 and within the first five years of its existence it was joined by a group of potters who have left their mark on English potting - Staite Murray, Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, Bernard Leach. Today it would be fair enough to say that the potters are its mainstay. Certainly the exhibition I saw was mainly of pots, with weaving, woodcrafts such as carving and furniture, and silver-work as subsidiaries - and some of it splendid indeed.) I must confess that as I made out the contours of the Whitworth, after groping past the black-soot Museum and the grimy collection of buildings that added up to the University of Manchester, my heart sank with the anticipation of a joylessness that would match it all. In fact I was ill prepared for the wondrous joy that I - and the hundreds of Mancunians thronging inside - experienced when face to face with the feast of creativeness within. There is something almost symbolic in the fact that it is in Manchester of all places,

veying with Huddersfield and Warrington, Jarrow and Sheffield, Stoke and Liverpool, for the honour of being the supreme graveyard of the spirit, that the Guild should have its centre and hold its exhibitions, seeking through creative hands to save the life of the spirit. I kept thinking of this when I left and went out into the twilight of noon from this little world of bright vision. God truly moves in necessary, if mysterious, ways.

In all there were thirty-five potters exhibiting, two or three of them modellers, the rest potters in the ordinary sense of the term. Many of the names of these are household words to New Zealand potters; many are new names. And among the new names are, in my opinion, some of the best, or at least the most promising potters. I was immensely cheered by this for two reasons. Several good judges had told me there were few good young potters coming on, and this judgment I found to be unnecessarily gloomy. And I found in this exhibition in Manchester a general decline in the work of the established leaders in English potting, although of the 310 entries, the "old guard" contributed 22 of the 25 pots that I singled out as the best in the show. (I deliberately left out as "eligible" the regular domestic pots of the Leach Pottery, almost but not quite as competent as ever).

My "25 best" were as follows: (1 & 2) a vase with wax resist decoration, and a covered pot, with slip and wax resist, by Frederick Casson. Casson has developed a cheerful and satisfying treatment for red clay that combines gaiety and

strength of character. He is one of the few potters who can be fresh and bright without being facetious. His pots are predominantly white with blue-grey brushwork applied with freedom and restraint (if you can imagine the combination). (3, 4 & 5) a decorated bowl, a pint mug, and a teapot, by the Davises, consummately thrown and in their very best style. Generally speaking I thought the other pieces from the Crowan Pottery were muddy, and rather spiritless, and not in the mood of what we have come to accept as the best thrown pots in the world. However I should hasten to add that the little celadon teapot with cane handle was perfect, and I would be prepared to take a bet that it is the most delightful teapot that has ever been potted. (6) A fine bowl, near-porcelain I would think, celadon with iron decoration and blue, by Derek Emms. This Staffordshire potter is a strong worker who seems to owe much, in his approach, to Leach, Harry Davis and Michael Cardew. His throwing has strength and character, but there is a tendency for his wax resist treatment to be rather contrived and his decoration pointlessly and unceramically geometrical. (7) A modest, honest, and downright usable cylinder vase in stoneware with wax resist, by Arthur Griffith. The passion for usability shown by this potter has much to teach to many exhibiting in this show - and in New Zealand too! (8 & 9) Two pieces by Marianne Hale (de Trey), a fluted white bowl and a fluted white vase, feminine and personal, and consummately potted. She exhibited a lot, but most of it disappointed me. She does not seem happy in her larger pieces, and her black ware lacked the very personal quality that one generally finds in her pots. I wonder if potting under her late husband's name instead of her own, as was her custom, has caused her to

pot "outside her personality"? Her wax resist struck me as downright unpleasant. But these two fluted pieces! They are pots that linger in the mind. (10, 11, 12, 13, 14) A superb run of pots by Henry Hammond, all stoneware - a vase, a plate, a honey pot, and two mugs. The honey pot was a little thing, ginger-jar shape, in oatmeal biscuit, unglazed and decorated by a hauntingly beautiful piece of iron-rust brushwork, like a spray of bamboo. This was the choicest pot in the whole show, my No. 1. And it was selling for 25/-! (15, 16 and 17) Three great pots by Bernard Leach. One was a large olive coloured raw glaze jar bellying sharply at the equator, and engraved with a satisfying motif through to the biscuit. This was one of Leach's very best things, and usable to boot, which is more than can be said for too many of his personal pieces. Much of Leach's work of the last few years has been forced and uninspired - but this is a veritable masterpiece. Two others, (from an offering of 19 pieces) were almost as impressive, a large tenmoku fluted jar, and a fluted stoneware vase, also tenmoku. Apart from these three, superb in any company, the rest of his work seemed to be evidence of a decline both in touch and vision. (18) A strongly potted stoneware stew pot by Michael Leach. There is strength and a clarity of concept in the work of this potter and with it much promise for the future. I cannot say the same for David Leach's work. He displayed a lot, almost all of it red clay covered with a grey-brown slip with bright-cut decoration cut with spidery line. His work is unmanly in character, more like the potting of a dainty and too fastidious woman. (19) An odd, but attractive little square-patted

bottle by William Marshall. I was somewhat irritated by the clutter of odd bottles from several hands in the Leach Pottery - Janet Leach, Bernard Leach and William Marshall. Only William Marshall's had point and personality. It is a good piece, but does it redeem the rather mediocre recent work I have seen from this magnificent potter? Why has he lost his touch? At his best he is the best here - only Cardew in Africa excelling him. (20 and 21) Among a rather disappointing group from Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie was a glorious off-white stoneware bowl, with a carved pattern, ridiculously underpriced at two guineas. Another bowl in grey-green ash glaze, with a regular cut pattern trellis-like. Most of her pieces were tiny unusable things, narrow-necked bottles or pin bowls. Unusability, despite all the arguments about beauty-in-itself, I still find a vice in a pot. (22 and 23) Two delightful pots by a potter completely unknown to me - Harold Thornton. Here is a man worth watching. All my life I will remember his little Japanese style winebottle with black sprig brush decoration, a pot of great piquancy and character. And a stoneware bowl with woodash glaze and a rim treated with an iron-washed brush kept me coming back again and again to look at it. I like this man's work immensely. It is the sort of potting I would like to do myself. Looking at it I had a feeling of having seen his work before, until I realised that I was looking at the embodiment of my own criteria of good potting. (24 and 25) Two entirely successful pots by Geoffrey Whiting. He exhibited a lot of pots, more than any other potter, but though I have for long admired his work, most of it disappointed me in this exhibition. Too often the form was hesitant and uncertain, too lifeless, fatty-flabby. But these two were grand

and purposeful - a tallish cylindrical vase in stoneware, tapering in slightly towards the top (and definitely usable!), and with a variegated brown and rust glaze effect, combed with a series of strokes down one side; and a great two foot tall pot slightly bellied at midpoint, and terminating in a nice square shoulder rising to a useful 2 inch neck, the sides of the pot cut into faces, and the whole in a mottled grey and rust glaze.

These are the twentyfive best as far as my own preferences are concerned.



PATRICIA DERRIN

How representative of English potting would this exhibition be? There are few well-known potters who were not represented. Two immediately come to mind, and both of them New Zealanders working in London (at the Central School of Arts and Crafts) - William Newland and Kenneth Clark. Norah Braden, Eleanor Whittall, John Shelley, Raymond Finch, Rosemary Wren, Margaret Leach were not there. But by and large I would think it a not unfair cross section of English potting at the present time. How then does it compare for vitality and quality with New Zealand potting? England has a population of about 50 million, New Zealand about $2\frac{1}{2}$ million. I am bound to say that the comparison tends to be in favour of New

Zealand potters. In a population of 50 million England, I felt, has not six potters better than Len Castle and Helen Mason; and I find more vitality in the work of Minna Bondy, Barry Brickell, Peter Stichbury and Terry Barrow, and more personality and growth, than I found in the general run of potters exhibiting in the Red Rose Guild. This, I believe, is in part due to the greater directness of life in the less sophisticated society, in part to the closeness of the earthy Japanese influence on New Zealand potters, in part to the character of the New Zealander, accustomed to improvising with and exploiting local materials, and in part to fruitful contacts with the very greatest masters of potting in England - Bernard Leach, Michael Cardew, Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, especially these three. Most of the craftsmen potters exhibiting at Manchester seek to live by their potting; in New Zealand, almost without exception, potting is for love, as it were, and not for livelihood. This raises the highly controversial question of which group is creatively freer. Against all my instinct, and against my wishes even, I think that today, taking the two societies as they are and the general quality of life within them, the initiative lies with the group of New Zealand amateurs. I do not expect anyone to agree with me. I wonder what Len castle would say about this, with his unique experience of having potted in the two worlds?



LEN CASTLE

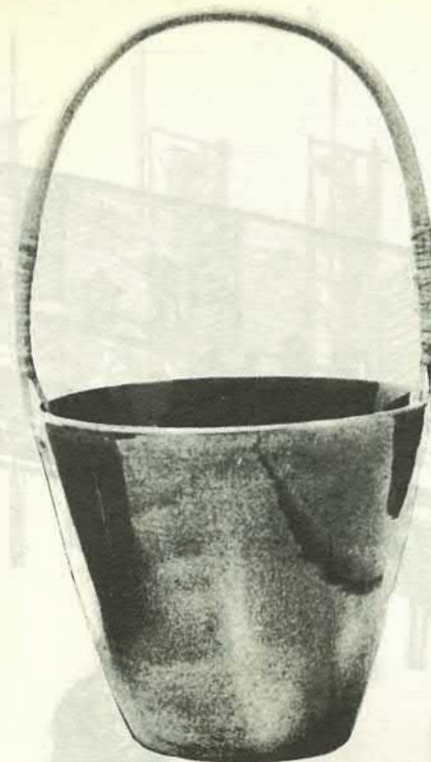


Photographs of individual pots by T. Barrow.

Mirek Smisek.
Salt-glazed stoneware. Cat. 119.Helen Mason.
Stoneware. Limestone glaze.
Cat. 86.Martin Beck.
Contrasting glazed/unglazed stoneware.
Cat. 12.Minna Bondy.
Stoneware. Light celadon.
Cat. 33.



Another visitor to the Exhibition examines a very practical item. The teapot (Cat. 133) was made at the Leach Pottery by Mr. Peter Stichbury of Auckland. A patch of cobalt slip has been placed (by dipping) over a wax-resist pattern. (Photograph Evening Post).



Inez Rennie
Earthenware ice bucket. Green.
Cat. 106.



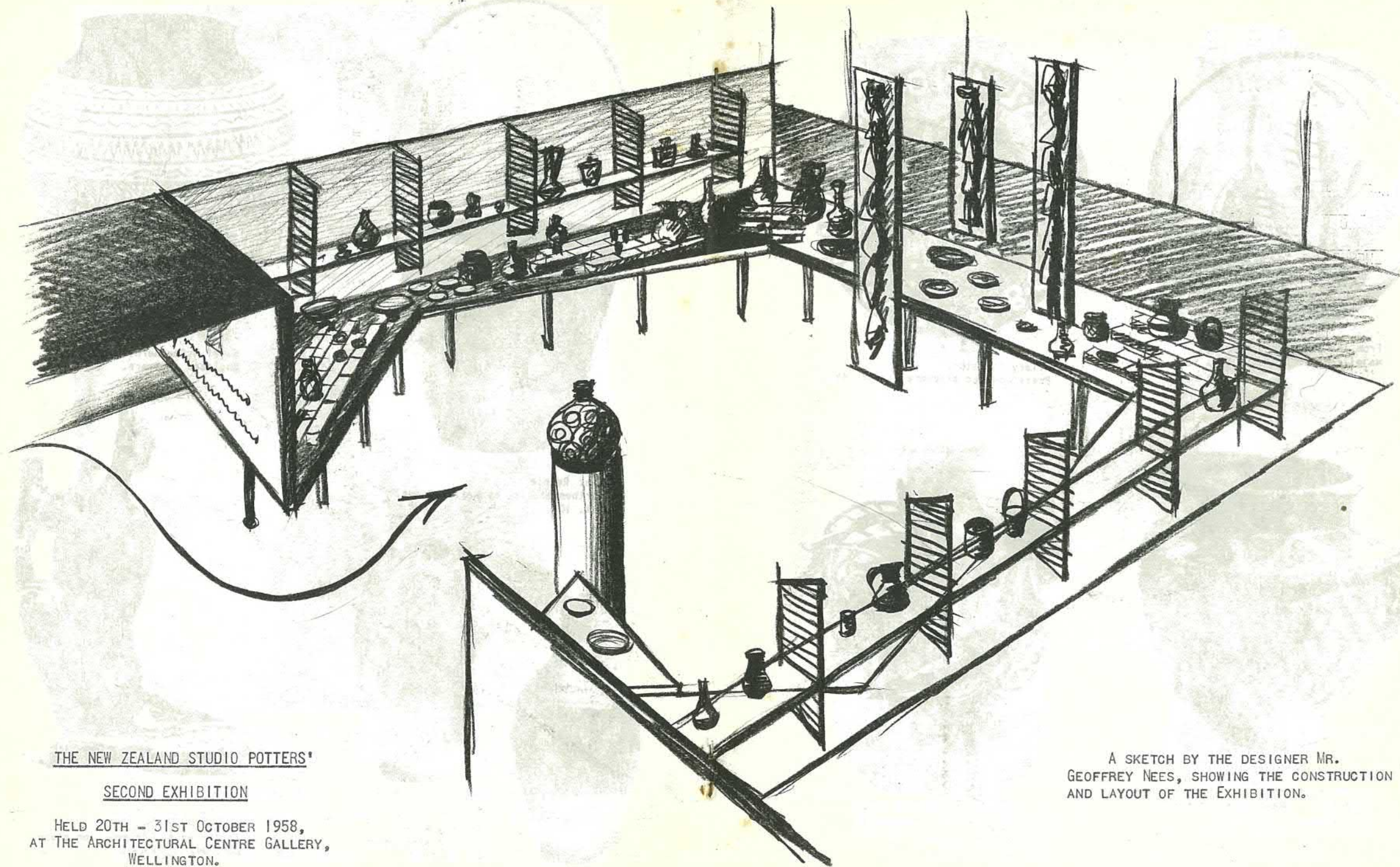
Hazel McCaughern.
Unglazed slipware. Cat. 82.



Patricia Perrin.
Unglazed stoneware.
Cat. 99 & 100.



Muriel Moody.
Earthenware. Blue-green glaze.
Cat. 94.



THE NEW ZEALAND STUDIO POTTERS'

SECOND EXHIBITION

HELD 20TH - 31ST OCTOBER 1958,
AT THE ARCHITECTURAL CENTRE GALLERY,
WELLINGTON.

A SKETCH BY THE DESIGNER MR.
GEOFFREY NEES, SHOWING THE CONSTRUCTION
AND LAYOUT OF THE EXHIBITION.



From the Hillsborough Group.
Majolica-type plate. Cat. 68.



Hilary Thurston.
Press moulded slipware. Cat. 141.



Doreen Blumhardt.
Stoneware. Manganese decoration.
Cat. 31.



Roy Cowan.
Earthenware cockerel.
Cat. 50.



J. L. Stewart.
Earthenware. Dark blue.
Cat. 129.



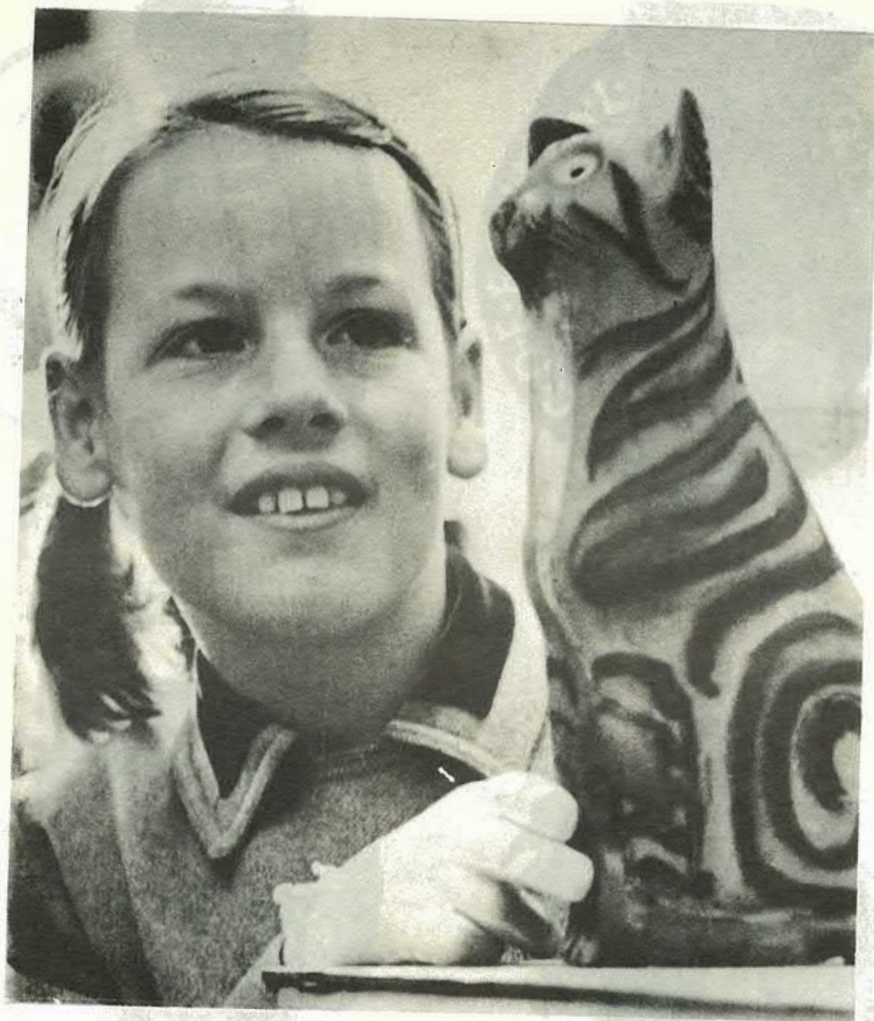
Len Castle.
Stoneware. Blue pigment.
and woodash glaze. Cat. 48.



Terry Barrow.
Stoneware. Tenmoku over white.
Cat. 8.



Lee Thomson.
Stoneware. Tessha.
Cat. 135.



A young visitor to the Exhibition
admires an earthenware cat (Cat. 103)
made by Juliet Peter.
(Photograph Evening Post).

NEW ZEALAND STUDIO POTTERS' SECOND EXHIBITION

Receipts and Payments Account

Subscriptions	55. 10. 0	Rent of Architectural	
Sales Catalogues	23. 18. 0	Centre Gallery	12. 12. 0
Commission on sales		Commission to	
(15% of £261. 4. 6)	39. 4. 1	Gallery	12. 12. 0
		Advertising in Press	8. 15. 0
		Printing Catalogues	
		& Invitations	29. 5. 0
		Insurance	9. 0
		Preparation of	
		stands	19. 17. 0
		Less sale	
		of timber	5. 5. 1
			14. 11. 11
		Freight on unaccepted	
		pots	3. 14. 11
		Wall photo	3. 0. 0
		Colour film for	
		records	1. 11. 7
		Postages	4. 0. 0
		Presentation pot for	
		designer of show	3. 3. 0
		Freight on unsold pots	1. 15. 0
		Misc. expenses	1. 6. 0
		Balance	21. 16. 8
	£118. 12. 1		£118. 12. 1

NEW ZEALAND POTTER VOL. I. NO. I.

Receipts and Payments Account

Advertising	15. 0. 0	Printing	29. 15. 0
Sales at Exhibition	9. 7. 6	Typing	7. 2. 6
Other Sales	8. 12. 6	Duplimats & Ribbon	1. 7. 11
Balance	10. 2. 2	Postage & Envs.	4. 16. 9
	£43. 2. 2		£43. 2. 2

BALANCE SHEET

Surplus from		Cost to Exhibition	
Exhibition	21. 16. 8	of Vol. I No. I.	
		N. Z. POTTER	10. 2. 2
		Bal. for Vol. I No. 2.	11. 14. 6
	£21. 16. 8		£21. 16. 8

NEWS FROM PETER STICHBURY (Present Holder of Fellowship Award from Association of New Zealand Art Societies).

Greetings to all our New Zealand potter friends ! It is almost impossible to tell of all the happenings of our first year away in a few paragraphs - sufficient to say that we are thoroughly enjoying life and all that it has brought us of late.

Seven exciting - though not nearly long enough - months at the Leach Pottery where I spent most of the time throwing, or trying to throw, standard ware. Occasionally some of this was accepted for firing ! Helpful discussions with Bernard Leach on form, and interesting anecdotes from him on past experiences. Much help from Bill Marshall on throwing techniques and form of standard wares. Exciting kiln firings and openings with an occasional individual pot to be happy about. Interesting people such as Janet Leach, Atsuya Hamada, Anne from Denmark and Eleanor from Brazil to work with.

Diane (my wife) worked at a local school for a time, and also as "mother's help" with a local family - a grand aid to finances. Winter time in St. Ives of course, but far better than the summer with its hordes of tourists cluttering the streets.

A highlight of this period was the Pottery Conference at Pendley Manor in Tring - organised by Murray Fieldhouse with ninety people from everywhere. Wonderful personalities to lecture to us - Michael Cardew, a vital person; Sir Albert Richardson, R. A., a controversial figure; David

Ballantyne, Bernard and Janet Leach, Rosemary Wren, Sir John Wedgewood, Cottie Burland - these but a few of the people who talked to us and filled us with information. As well we had a barbecue, a Raku firing, a visit to Sir Alan Barlow's collection - the lot !

In April we purchased a small van, which was to become our travelling hotel for the next few months. We "did" the Continent - ten weeks, ten countries, ten thousand miles all told. Spain (wonderful place), France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Holland, Belgium. At a pueblo pottery in Spain we had a most amusing time with language difficulties, but wonderful people to visit - we managed to find out everything about their pottery and processes, and they in turn were most curious, much to our amusement and delight - a complete story in itself. Superb museums and galleries at Munich, Copenhagen, Vatican, Amsterdam, The Hague. Picasso pottery at Vallauris (we haven't quite recovered from the shock of seeing the "pottery" made in Vallauris but perhaps the memory will fade.....) Visits to six potters or potteries in Denmark - Kahler, Zeuther, Mohl, Erickson, Lyngaard, Toft. Interesting pottery at the World Fair in Brussels in the American, Japanese, Spanish sections, plus three pots in the Russian section. The highlight of our Continental museums was the Exhibition of Van Gogh paintings and drawings at Amsterdam - indescribable ! Then back to England with a trip to Cambridge, and permission obtained to photograph English Mediaeval pottery in the Fitzwilliam and Archaeology and Ethnology Museums. Then a tour of Britain, cut short in some places by inclement

weather, but still a lot accomplished. A wonderful collection of mediaeval pottery at the Nottingham Museum. A visit to Stoke on Trent, to Winchcombe to see Ray Finch and the pottery where Michael Cardew worked. Allowed to pull out all Cardew's old pots from here and there, wash off the dust and photograph them. A thorough exploration of the old kiln and pottery. Then down to St. Ives for a few days and final farewells to all there. A visit to Harry Davis at Crowan Pottery - to stand amazed at his pottery and organisation. To gloat with him over new glazes made from local raw materials entirely. What a man! And how grand to have a water wheel to work everything. We then visited Mrs. Cardew at Wenford Bridge, to bask in her personality and thoroughly explore Michael's pottery and kilns - the huge bottle kiln and round downdraught for stoneware. Wonderful place this - used to be the old pub at Wenford, with many of Michael Cardew's pots to handle and photograph. On the way back to London we visited Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie and Norah Braden who was staying with her - charming and interesting people with superb pots to show us.



We hope to visit other potters and to spend a great amount of time in the London Museums in the few weeks left to us before going to Nigeria. We fly there on the 5th October - what adventures await us there we can only imagine as yet. Our appetites have certainly been whetted by the tales told to us by Michael and Mrs. Cardew - we will just have to be patient.

SCHOOLS

CRAFT CENTRE INC., 116 Springfield Road, Christchurch. Two five day pottery schools for teachers will be held in the Craft Centre for a maximum number of twelve pupils at each school. The dates are from 29th December to 2nd January inclusive, and 20th January to 24th inclusive.

Replies must be received not later than 12th December and will be treated strictly in rotation.

AIMS: To teach the principles of making earthenware.
To help beginner teachers with the knowledge of how to start pottery making in schools, and to help the more experienced to improve the standard of craftsmanship and design.
To help in the making and design of all the necessary equipment.

Fee for the course will be £5.

The Napier Group are planning a school with Len Castle commencing 5th January, 1959.

The Tenth Art and Design School arranged by the Adult Education Centre will be held in Auckland from 12th to 23rd January, 1959. The Pottery Group will be taken by Len Castle and Barry Brickell, with emphasis on the use of local materials, decoration, glazing and the packing and firing of kilns.

FOR SALE: Small electric wheel in good condition, two wheelheads. Price £15. Ring Davin, 40-869, or write 53 Barnard St. Wellington.

NEWS

Oswold Stephens, long-standing Dunedin potter, has been experimenting with a red stoneware body made from Otago clays. We hope to see the results at next year's Exhibition, in Auckland.

Mr. C. H. Terrey of Wanganui, is leader of an ardent group of potters at the Technical College. Stoneware is his medium with ash glazes, using from 25 to 40 per cent. of thorn, manuka, bracken, grass and tobacco ash. He has three electric kilns which he built himself, and which fire to Cone 10. Latest plans are for an oil-fired draught kiln now that he has accumulated the English insulating bricks and liners. Mr. Terrey can supply china painting colours, gold and lustres, as well as underglaze colours. His address is: 53A Wilson Street, Wanganui.

Betty Rapson, Auckland potter and stalwart of many a Summer School, has left on an extended trip overseas with her sister Marjorie. Their first port of call is Mexico.



HELEN MASON

In the last issue Stocktons inadvertently included in their list of agencies that of Winchcombe Pottery. This agency actually belongs to Patrick Pierce of The Art of the Potter, Victoria Street, Auckland.

ADVICE FROM A SENIOR POTTER

Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie

Don't expect much of the ash recipes in the "Potter's Book". They are good for a wood-fired kiln (which I was using when Leach wrote the book) but rather a headache in an oil-fired kiln, as far as my experience goes. If I may suggest it I should try :-

A.	Wood ash	5	or B.	Ash	20
	Felspar	6		Felspar	45
	Quartz	4		Quartz	15
	China clay	1		China clay	10
	Ball clay	1		Ball clay	10

(all parts by weight)

Oil firing seems to require a higher percentage of quartz (or other silica) and felspar (or similar material:) I can't explain this but certainly in my kiln, and also in electric and gas muffle kilns that I have tried, the old formulae tend to come out rather dry and pitted. Of course you may not find this, but if you do, try something round these formulae. About 10 per cent. Wenger's frit 321 (or you can use any frit you may have) brings the temperature down quite a bit without altering the quality if you find the temperature troublesome. Roughly 1260° without frit and 1230° - 40°C with; I think; perhaps a little less. Muffles usually fire the ware at a slightly lower temperature than open kilns.

EXHIBITIONS

The New Group held their Sixth Exhibition in Dunedin from September 22 to October 3 in the Public Library Hall. Helen Dawson exhibited stoneware, John Blackman painting and drawing, John Middleditch carving, painting and drawing. Guest artists were painters M. T. Woollaston and Judith Weston.

November - December. The work of Wellington potters at New Vision Arts and Crafts, Takapuna.

December 1st - 19th, 1958. Auckland Society of Arts are holding an Arts and Crafts Exhibition.



ELIZABETH MATHESON

CORRESPONDENCE: We have had two replies - from Professor Bailey and Roy Cowan - to the article on Shoji Hamada in Vol. 1 No. 1 by Dr. Barrow. We asked Roy Cowan to expand his letter into an article. Roy Cowan, painter-potter of Wellington, won a Fellowship from the Association of New Zealand Art Societies and spent 1953-55 studying painting and lithography at the Slade School. His wife, Juliet Peter, at the same time studied pottery part-time at the Hammersmith School of Art. They brought back an electric kiln and since their return have been enlivening potting circles with their amusing and excellently done earthenware.

SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

Roy Cowan

On our return to New Zealand my wife and I were impressed by the rapidity with which stoneware had become established here. This impression is strengthened on viewing the Second New Zealand Studio Potters' Exhibition, in which stoneware provides the larger and I think more generally successful part of the show.

This predominance of stoneware, especially stoneware of types deriving ultimately from Chinese and Japanese models, seems to be a special condition of pottery in New Zealand. A similar collection of the work of contemporary potters in England would contain much more earthenware and more ceramic articles other than wheel-thrown pots. Amongst the stoneware there would be much work in which experiments in form and texture or in the use of figurative decoration would have carried the work quite away from what might be called the Oriental Tradition.

Why should we have this particular predominance? It is not a matter of facility of production, for one cannot say that the ware is easy to produce, or that suitable bodies are easily obtained. A good deal of course can be ascribed to the influence of potters such as Staite Murray, Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, Bernard Leach (his book must surely be one of the most influential ever written on the practice of pottery), and within New Zealand, I think Len Castle has done much to set the tide in this direction, but there is more to it than personal influence alone.

In New Zealand, Studio Pottery is a comparatively new thing, launched in a country where there is a dearth of tradition, a lack of examples, and a great mass of unsatisfying commercial ware. In such relatively hostile conditions it is quite common for artists who are interested in launching a new art form to adhere to some code or manifesto by which they at once seek a discipline, limit themselves to certain approaches, or confine their attack upon the problems of art to some comparatively narrow front.

This, our present problem, is similar in kind to that which faced pioneer studio potters in England some years ago. Confronted by the jungle of late Victorian art, they found a congenial set of ideas embodied in certain kinds of Chinese and Japanese stoneware, from which they could derive a discipline. Simple forms, carefully considered, materials which in themselves provide a richness of texture, a restricted range of colours, the virtual (and to some extent forced) abandonment of figurative decoration, and a robustness of a kind which need not rule out subtleties, characterise the best work of these pioneers and of their New Zealand counterparts.

Something very like the manifesto of this kind of art is to be found in the article on Hamada in the first issue of this journal. In this article, there is one point of particular contrast between precept and practice. It is said that the beauty of pottery finds fullest expression in relation to utility, but the recent exhibition suggests rather a strong trend

towards the abstract - very well exemplified by the pot which appeared on the catalogue. While this pot would undoubtedly function as a vase, it appears to be an object for contemplation rather than for use. But abstract or not, the qualities of form and texture, and the general suggestion that here we have a hand made object of utter permanence, give satisfaction to the beholder, especially when there is an underlying reaction to the large roles the synthetic, the machine finished and the shiny play in our lives. And here by the way lies one of the difficulties of earthenware pottery, for while the stoneware procedure leads straight to satisfying qualities of texture and substance, those of earthenware result too easily in unsympathetic surfaces - some earthenware pieces in our Exhibition resembled glassware or metal, or they were so shiny as to seem to have little substance at all.

Thus, our liking for stoneware may in part be ascribed to reaction against certain unsympathetic elements in our surroundings. A similar reaction is involved in the appreciation of Tachiste or Action Painting.

In the making and the appreciation of stoneware, a further reaction may be described in the limitation of decoration, especially figurative decoration. In New Zealand stoneware potters do not draw, or they apply only a few near abstract strokes or patches. In this, they are in part reacting against the sea of inappropriate realistic ornament found on most commercial ware, and also, they show considerable good sense and sensibility.

There is a fundamental difficulty in drawing on or decorating pottery. Simply, we are cut off by our tradition from the means of doing it well, and we are separated from the museums which contain the examples we need to study.

Since the Renaissance, and the subsequent establishment of academies, we have been taught to see and draw in the system of light, shade and shadow and perspective. Ultimately we come to see Nature only as we are taught, and in this process our eyes are gently but finally closed to the qualities of those arts which depend for their realisation on the handling of surfaces rather than upon illusions of depth. By this means, we lost the ability to construct fine mosaics or stained glass windows (there was no loss of the technical knowledge), and lost also the ability to put designs of vitality upon pottery. The finest pottery design, appropriate to the medium and to the shape, requires an acute apprehension of nature and the ability to transform or to draw out the quintessential nature of what is seen. Of course, the museums contain the works of art of those cultures in which this approach is preserved, but, lacking understanding we see them only as dead things in a glass case.

At this point, the modern movement in art becomes effective. There is a weakening of the Beaux-Arts tradition and the rediscovery of the value of surface pattern in painting, and with this, we can again experience real appreciation of the arts of foreign and historic cultures, and are able to learn how to organise shapes and surfaces.

At least, this is the position in Europe. In

New Zealand, we have neither a strong modern trend in art nor have we the collections of pottery. This lack tends to bear more upon the decorative arts and in particular upon earthenware which might carry decoration, and this difficulty in turn may tend to confirm the more sensitive potters in their attachment to the abstract trend in stoneware.

The real danger, I believe, is that this attachment to certain kinds of stoneware, with those rules of excellence, may harden into an academicism. When the enjoyment of an art form is bolstered by the taking up of a moral position, those concerned are in danger of becoming blinded to the qualities of other art forms. This element seems to be present in the article on Hamada I have mentioned above, in phrases such as that which suggests that good results may come from the use of local materials in a "direct and honest way". This, I submit, is not so much a formula for excellence in pottery, as an expression of delight in a particular style of pottery, couched in terms of moral approbation. Can we really say that a Sung vase is more "honest" than an Italian Majolica jug or a Nazca clay vessel? Would Mr. Hamada's work somehow be less satisfactory if he did not live quite where the clay was mined?

Of course, such comparisons are invalid. Each art form corresponds to a different aspect of the human spirit, and ultimately, the only quality of any importance is the quality of the artistic intelligence which is at work when the article is made.

Colin Bailey is Head of the Department of Education at Victoria University of Wellington. At present on sabbatical leave in London, he and his family spent several months flying to England via the East and Europe. A great lover of pots, Professor Bailey is help and counsellor to many New Zealand potters. While in London he is attending night classes in pottery. The Bailey family return to Wellington early next February.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER

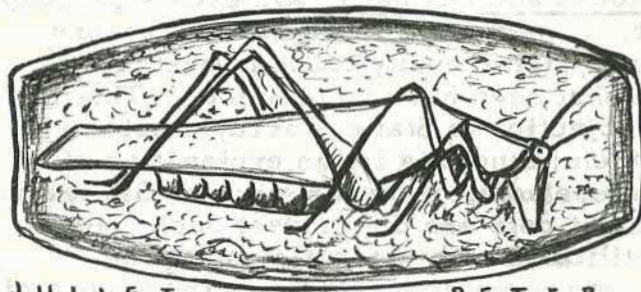
Professor C. L. Bailey

I have read Terry's article on Hamada several times and it has made me think a lot. I begin to realise that his analysis of Hamada goes far to explain my own constant penetration backwards to the beginnings of potting history to find pots made purely for use, in eras and among peoples who made cooking utensils and storage containers rather than works of conscious art.

They were not studio potters, bless them, concerned in the first place with their own urge to create. They were primarily concerned with making something to hold stew, or to cash in on the community's love of stew. Or guts. Or the dried heads of enemies. Or the family pole-cat skins to keep from the moth. Or to hold your estimable grandmother's bones when dead. To go right back into the era of pre-conscious potting is to me a revelation, in the matter of the relation of use to form. That is why it is so

very hard for the studio potter to pot with purposeful conviction. Any form he chooses to make is, by and large, a form emerging from a "spurious need." He doesn't actually need the pot he makes, nor does the person who buys or is given it, in the same way that the neolithic potter really needed a pot made. The studio potter's need is to make and create; it is not the "pot-itself" that is needed. This is a very important point because out of the need or the obvious use for the "pot-itself" comes the essential form. This explains why so many pots of studio potters are like neurotic people, not knowing where they are going, aimless and purposeless in their restless behaviour. This feeling has been growing in me for a long time now; it explains, up to a point, why form always interests me more than glaze and decoration; it explains too, why I find satisfaction in the honest utilitarianism of the primitive potters of the remote past, or of unsophisticated societies today. I would like to think that by hammering this point I could help a little in convincing New Zealand potters that their hands must feel use and purpose before approaching the clay. Not a pot, but a pot to hold zinnias, to hold tall iris, to hold dark-stalked quince blossom, each pot formed for an envisioned and felt need, and each significantly different. I know this would offend many potters who claim beauty to lie in aesthetic elements that need have no function. This is my real objection to Staite Murray's pots or most of them; and this is the explanation of my boundless admiration for Michael Cardew's. The greatest pots are the modest ones, potted to do a utilitarian job without stealing the show. Do we any longer admire those ceramic

effronteries of the Ming period within which no flower, pitiful production of paltry nature, could get attention long enough to give delight? The good pot - that is in this instance the pot good for flowers - effaces itself to become essential to the flowers, like a good accompanist becomes part of the singer and the song. The good pot is always understated, with some with-held beauty, something held back to be felt hidden in the form but sought for by the watcher. I have often looked at pots having this quality; pots that are mysterious and brooding, haunting in their silent modesty, and magic with the love that made them. There are a few such in the King Edward VII Gallery in the British Museum and I go to them every day to look at them while I am here, drawn to them by the mystery of their mood.



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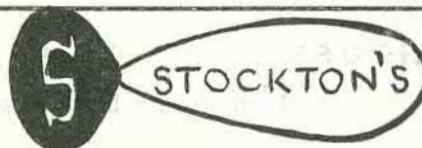
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2 POTTERS' SUPPLIES

We still have a number of items of secondhand equipment: a kiln, a Banda duplicator, a portable CO₂ combustion meter, a portable pH meter.

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