



Pot Chatter

Craft Potters Nelson Inc.

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FEBRUARY 2002

Lyn Packers Pottery



EDITORIAL

While January was the beginning of the year, for Craft Potters our year only starts now in February. Classes will be under way this month and our committee has to look at the year ahead and make decisions regarding the activities in terms of workshops and social occasions. There are several people making suggestions for future undertakings and in order to get everyone together to be able to discuss these suggestions there will be a barbecue, picnic, social occasion with no

object other than to give air to the ideas brought forward. There is a flyer attached to this Pot Chatter to give encouragement to all our members to join in this. An **“Airing of Ideas”**.

We are at a point in time where the progress in things technical is of advantage to some and difficult for others. Not entirely an age thing as while most of the younger ages grab these improvements with both hands, there are some at any age who find the Information Technology as it is called or I.T. for short difficult to deal with.

The source of our pottery movement based on the Hamada and Leach teaching started very primitively. Hamada turned his wheel with a stick and by hand. We now have electric wheels, electric and gas kilns, pug mills, and gadgets by the dozen to make the production of pottery easier. There will always be the Luddites among us who the Calvinistic approach that anything worth while be hard earned. Others search out and take delight technical improvements. Today’s invention is tomorrow’s household appliance.

The photographs reproduced in this Pot Chatter been taken by a digital camera, unheard of and out our price range only a few months ago. Who knows what awaits us round the corner in the of research and in areas which may assist the in his or her craft. Each potter must decide for themselves whether the latest invention will help hinder.



“Busy Lyn”

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or

OPEN DAY



No doubt about it, this was a successful day! A very big THANK YOU to ALL those who turned up and helped. The members who assisted by giving rudimentary tuition on the wheel or showing some of the secrets of doing handwork put in valuable time and may have given a few budding potters some insight into how it is done, and how hard it really is. We enjoyed the day and the company of one another in a very traditional Craft Potters way. Not enough space to name everyone, but we do mean you. The till was kept busy too!

“The bird having a bath in Justin's birdbath on Open Day was a treat

and a joy. Offering the hope that many more little feathered friends will follow suite. Lets hope the local moggies don't find out about the "spa" at “CRAFT POTTERS” Jan Moresby

COMMITTEE NOTES

Pug mills

In this Pot Chatter there is an article by Michael Banks regarding the firing temperatures of the ‘low fire’ clays. These clays should NOT be pugged in the same pugmill as stoneware clays. It was therefore decided to use the old pugmill for mid fire white clays. To this end the pugmill will be cleaned out and rejuvenated for that purpose.

Sessions to teach the proper use of the pug mills will be arranged later.

CLASSES

The enrolments for the Wednesday morning class are rolling in and several of our more experienced members are coming back for a bit of up skilling, including yours truly. Part of this interest I am sure is because of the standard of the pottery experience of this years tutor.

Sue Newitt has taken schools and classes in the past and gives good value with her range of knowledge at every stage of the pottery learning curve. I, for one look forward tremendously to returning to the place where we all have learned our craft. In the class.

First Class **Wednesday February 13th at 9.30 a.m. sharp** for the first lesson. Enrol now, and IF you have not paid your fees by then please bring them with you.

Kiln Fees

For some years the job of checking and banking the kiln fees has been done by Cathy Durham. Cathy did this job without any fuss and did it well. Just another of those members who quietly got on with the job and kept another part of the organisation that is Craft Potters working well. Thank you Cathy for attention to detail and the consistency with which you did the work. Kaye Lunn has accepted the responsibility for this and we are grateful to her for offering to keep the records up to date.

EXHIBITION

Next year's Exhibition is already on the agenda and the Committee will be discussing this at regular intervals. First and foremost there is need for a new Convener .

Members interested in being involved in this the most important event in the Craft Potters calendar are invited to apply to the committee for consideration, giving any ideas they may have of how we can make this the best exhibition ever. Let your brain waves come forward and be seen. Please let the Committee know before the next meeting which will be on the 19th February. Phone Uta Calver (secretary) phone 541-8953 and express your interest

Maintenance

A small notebook has been prepared and is situated above the desk in the library area for members to enter any faulty equipment etc that they may notice, Kelvin Black will check this book regularly and take appropriate action.

Wood Kiln

Alan Ballard has expressed interest in organising a glost firing in the wood kiln, preferably beginning of March. He would be able to source the necessary wood and would be happy to have people helping with the firing. The helpers would be able to put a pot or two in for themselves. Anybody interested should phone Jan Moresby telephone 544.7059.

Committee

The Committee has decided to co-opt 2 new members for the sake of continuity in the club organisation. This has not yet been finalised.

In future the committee will meet every third Tuesday in the month.

Demonstrations

Whareama home was treated to a pottery session on Thursday 17th January. Jan Moresby handled the organisation for this with help from, Kaye Lunn. The senior citizens were very creative and one lady made a teapot. Well done you two

Rodger was asked by the Open Home Foundation for a session with students on 21st Jan from 2-3 p.m. at Craft Potters. Twenty eight children came and there was good support from the six adult helpers who came with them. The children were quote "*surprisingly well behaved*". Rodger was assisted by Jan Moresby, Pauline Cohen and Kaye Lunn. Those members who volunteered for this said they enjoyed the session very much.

These demonstrations are becoming a common feature for Craft Potters and we are grateful to the members who give up valuable time to promote the art of pottery in our district.

Obituary

It is with sadness that we heard the news of the death of Colleen Malcolm on 28th December last year. Colleen had been a member for some years and was well loved and respected by many of our members. She had her own inimitable style and was a potter in her own right. She did not compromise her creativity to follow the changes of public popularity but was constant in her artistic beliefs.

Colleen's family have donated her spray booth to Craft Potters and it will always be a reminder of her and the times she spent with us firing the gas kiln and joining in the comradeship of those firings. We commiserate with them in their loss as it is ours too.

Gallery

When you're doing gallery duty, please don't put pots into the gallery that I haven't checked. There may be some confusion for new members as to what pots have been checked. Unchecked pots are ones that are sitting on the shelves near the toilets, behind the curtain. If we run out of room there, then sellers are likely to put some on the far shelves on the left hand side. There are signs on these shelves that say " Checked Pots".

If this message is facing you, then they are checked. If the message has been reversed, then please leave them until I have checked them. Sellers, if you need to put your pots on these shelves, then please turn the sign around so that it is blank.

One more thing. As most of you know, I don't normally phone you if there is a problem with your pots. Instead, I write you a wee note and leave it with the "offending" pot. Could you please check behind the curtain regularly in case there is a pot of yours that needs a 2nd sticker, before it can go out into the gallery, or one that is unsuitable to be sold by us. Thanks. *Lyn, with my Quality Controller's hat on.*



Winspear bowls revisited, Glazed by CPN

Gallery Programme.

The checking of the sales sheet has been done for several years on a programme written by Keith Smith. This programme has been replaced recently with one written by Hanne Bjorklund and it is with some relief that we have it working as from the beginning of January. There is a lot of work involved in writing a programme like this and I certainly appreciate the way the job has been made easier by using it. Keith wrote the original which was a big improvement on doing it the hard way by hand. We are very grateful to him for the years of work it saved us. To Hanne a very big 'Thank You' from me, since I am the one who gains the most from this, doing the sales sheet is literally a breeze these days. Of course I have my handy built in serviceman on hand when I get in a muddle but we are doing very well and with the 'bonza' month January has turned out to be it has been wonderful to do lists of figures with no problems.

Roster

While on the subject of the sales sheets I would like to reiterate some of what we have stressed previously. Stickers not too close on the page. Sellers please use your prefix especially if it is not the same as your initials. This is very important as your sale could go to another seller if you do not do this. Do not write anything else on the sticker. Other stickers such as 2nd or porous should be left on the pot for the purchaser. Do NOT write anything on the sales sheets except the date at the beginning of each new days records. Please do not add up the days sales on the sales sheet, use a scrap of paper and put that record in the pink folder. The only total should be at the bottom of the third column i.e. the one where the figures for each set of sales are recorded. Please ring and ask me if in doubt 544-8768 or just leave the adding up for me!!

Thank You all you are doing a VERY good job indeed. Which makes me a happy lady! *Maggie*

Low-Fire White Clays

In 1995, Potters Clay Nelson introduced a vitreous china throwing clay product called UV that matures in the cone 02 -1 (1130-1150° C) range. This is about 60 degrees lower than the mid-fire clays available. UV is not truly an earthenware (even though it fires in the low-earthenware range) because when fired up to cone 1 it has no porosity and (in combination with Ferro 271D glaze) it is virtually free of earthenware defects - such as rim chips and undesirable body-heating in microwaves.

The concept leading to the production of UV (and its casting slip sister P16) was to provide white clay that could:-

1. Be fired alongside low-fire terracotta in the kiln
2. Develop it's full strength within the Ferro 271D glaze (also known as "Abbots Clear") safe firing range of 1050-1150° C
3. Result in lower firing costs.
4. Utilize brighter colours, especially the pink, lilac & crimson stains that are less stable at higher temperatures.

However, all these benefits require that users understand the firing behaviour of their kilns well and avoid firing higher than the recommended maximum of cone 1. The clay will not actually melt if over-fired (contrary to mythological reports), but items will develop small bloats, may warp (possibly to the point where glazed surfaces stick to shelves) and become brittle..

To put this risk in perspective for club use: UV has a short firing range of only about 3 cones (under-firing will result in crazing of the glaze). Most high-fire stoneware clays (cone 9-10) too have only a useful 2 or 3 cone range. Their glazes will craze below cone 9 and the body will likely bloat at cone 11.

In connection with this; I would urge clubs like CPN, to use cones on a more regular basis, keep good firing records and adjust the maximum settings of kiln controllers. It is not widely appreciated that the readings of pyrometers are subject to drift downwards with age, (caused by slow changes in the thermocouple wire and increasing impedance), resulting in firing temperatures rising imperceptibly. This process may have caused recent over-firings of stoneware in CPN kilns, where cone 10 clays have reportedly bloated. Any firing of an electric kiln to over 1300° C will result in rapid degradation of the elements, which are not rated to exceed cone 10 (quite apart from disappointment and discouragement of the potter's precious efforts).

Whether pottery clubs are ready to adopt fussier, but technologically advanced products such as low-fire clays, is entirely up to their members. But there are undoubted advantages in reduced power costs and better products.
Michael Banks

Glazing for beginners No.6 by Bob Heatherbell

More about the fluxing materials.

It's time to take a look at some of the materials, and a good place to begin is with the Feldspars. There are four main ones and are listed below with their average formulas. The reason I say average is that there are many brands available all of which may vary slightly in their content.

Potash Feldspar (Orthoclase) $K_2O_3 \cdot Al_2O_3 \cdot 6SiO_2$.

Soda Feldspar (Albite) $Na_2O \cdot Al_2O_3 \cdot 6SiO_2$.

Nepheline Syenite. $K_2O \cdot 3Na_2O \cdot 4Al_2O_3 \cdot 9SiO_2$.

Cornish Stone. $K_2O \cdot Al_2O_3 \cdot 8SiO_2$. (Probably contains traces of Soda and Calcium).

These formulas are put there, not to confuse, but to make comparisons between these materials. Now of the letters K stands for Potash, Na stands for Soda, Al stands for Alumina, Si stands for Silica and the O for Oxygen.

Each material contains either the flux Potash or Soda or some of each. Each of the materials also contains Alumina and Silica, but look how they vary. Soda is a more active flux than Potash, so we can expect Soda Feldspar and Nepheline to melt their glaze mix at a slightly lower temperature. Cornish Stone has a high Silica content so is the most refractory material.

In any given amount of each of these materials, the amount of flux (Potash or soda) is not large. When you add these materials you can see that you are also adding Alumina (refractory, stabilizer) and a lot of Silica (refractory, glass). So it's likely that you may not get the result you desire.

Most potters use Potash Feldspar or possibly Nepheline Syenite for lower temperatures. Remember that we're talking about using these materials in stoneware glazes, cones 8,9,10, in oxidation or reduction. Up to 1300°C. When you look at your next lot of pots and they look a bit drab and under fired, think carefully about making changes to your bucket of mix. Just throwing in a bit of Feldspar may not be what's needed.

If you're wondering what Orthoclase is, it's the raw material that Potash Feldspar is obtained from. And Soda Feldspar is obtained from the raw material Albite. Nepheline and Cornish Stone are refined from naturally occurring feldspathoid minerals deposits.

Tip of the month

When using an extruder put your clay into a supermarket bag after shaping it to go in the extruder. Make a hole in the plastic at the bottom for the clay to go through the die. Extrude in the normal way and when you have finished pull out the bag and the extruder is left spotless.

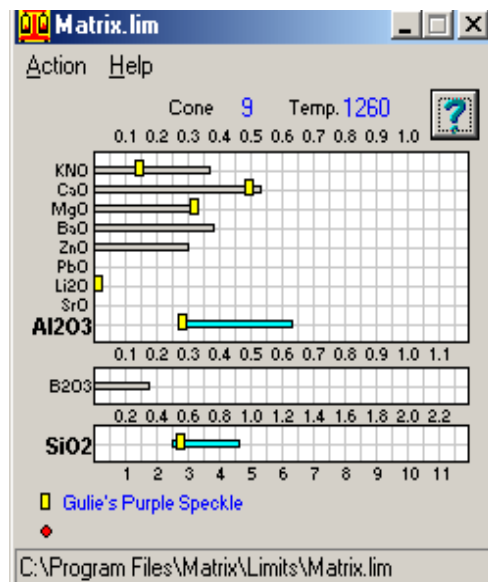
Courtesy Lynda Lines.

Glaze Recipe "February"

Gulie's Purple Speckle In Oxydation

A strong bright blue which with Cobalt Oxide gives a

Soda Feldspar	15
Potash Feldspar	16
China Clay	13
Whiting	18
Talc	15
Silica	24
Lithium	0.5
Cobalt Oxide	8



speckle.

Courtesy Gulielma Dowrick.

This has been a busy month and lots of information for the Pot Chatter, I appreciate the interest that is being taken in what we are trying to produce for club members. All submissions are welcome and with the help of the 'publisher' I try to get it all included. The next month will be an exciting one for most of us and may the standard of the pots reflect the enthusiasm.

Good Luck and Good Potting!!



Maggie. Editor.

Phone: 544-8768



QUOTE

*If you enjoy the work you do, you'll never work another day in your life.
Confucius*

FOR SALE

Pottery Business. Do you enjoy hand throwing, handpainting and designing dinnerware? Claydreams have been making dinnerware for restaurants and cafes throughout N.Z for seven years. we have built a steady and reliable customer base however we are now travelling overseas and would like to pass on the opportunity to another potter. In the last year we have been working in other fields and have not accepted as much work so we are selling our business at the cost of our plant. only \$ 8.500.00..... Claydreams is in the yellow pages and we are willing to pass all our contacts, techniques etc on. for further info contact -----

Michelle on 03-383-4067 or e-mail michmich@paradise.net.nz