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# NEW ZEALAND POTTER

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N E W   Z E A L A N D   P O T T E R

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Volume Four      Number One      August 1961

Enthusiasm is a tremendous force that often manages to overcome the greatest obstacles. But it is important to remember that the techniques and skills a potter needs have taken thousands of years to develop, and to expect successfully to "go it alone" is a childish egotism. We all need help and guidance if we are not to dissipate our energies in blind alleys or in attempting to discover simple techniques that can be indicated in a moment by one who knows.

This guidance and help can only be given by fully experienced professionals, and pottery in New Zealand is now suffering very largely from the lack of standards that such potters set. There is no simple remedy for this situation, and the problems it presents will call for much hard thinking by New Zealand potters for several years to come.

J. C.

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The price of this magazine is Two Shillings and Sixpence. It is published twice yearly in August and December. The annual subscription for the magazine only, is Six Shillings post free. Well-wishers and potters wishing to take part in the Annual Exhibition pay a subscription of Ten Shillings per annum. In May a circular is sent to all subscribers telling of plans for the year and calling for subscriptions. News of interest to potters is always welcome.

Editor: 29 Everest Street, Khandallah, Wellington.

## CLAY RESOURCES

Roy Cowan

When rocks containing iron compounds are weathered in humid conditions, clays which form are stained by yellow-brown iron hydroxides. If the clay is fired the iron compounds form the red oxide  $Fe_2O_3$ , but on the way they flux the other clay minerals strongly. Result, low firing red brick clay of the kind which appears to be the sole pottery resource in many districts. Iron hydroxides cannot be washed out of clay, but they are removed by certain soil processes. These, however, require time, and the general rate of surface movement over much of New Zealand does not permit these processes to come to maturity. Nevertheless, potters working in the yellow clay regions have certain avenues of search open to them:

#### 1. Forest Soils:

Removal of forest cover on the hills has, of course, set in motion rapid changes in the soil cover, but in easier country there are areas in which the forest soil profile remains undisturbed by erosion or cultivation. The profile of value to the potter will show at the surface a layer of apparently rich humus, dark in colour, and often showing recognisable plant remains. This changes abruptly to a greyish layer, which with increasing depth shows patches of concentrated brown iron hydroxide accumulation. This soil evolved under forest conditions, which gave rise to an acid layer of vegetable detritus on the forest floor. If the acidity in this layer rises too high, earthworms cannot operate, and the surface humus and underlying clays remain unmixed. Acid solutions from the humus percolate downward, leaching out iron and alumina. The iron accumulates lower in a layer which may form a hard pan. The layer directly below the humus level and above the zone of iron accumulation will provide a

clay with higher silica and reduced iron content.

## 2. Lateritic Soils:

These are usually found in tropical regions where they are the outcome of periods of intense rainfall under warm conditions. They do occur locally, however, in temperate regions. Silica is removed in solution, leaving iron in the form of  $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$  (which gives laterised soils their characteristic red colour), and alumina. In varying circumstances either the iron or the alumina may be concentrated to the point where the soil becomes a metal ore.

More commonly, soils occur which show a degree of the characteristics mentioned, but are not fully developed. A good deposit will be brick-red in colour (as if it had been fired), low or entirely lacking in plasticity, and highly refractory. Lateritic clay cannot be used unless mixed with plastic clay, but, subject to acceptance of the strong colour, it can be used to build up temperature resistance in a low firing plastic clay, and it is also used commercially as an anti-adhesive in the firing of firebricks.

Combined water in a flux (as in the iron hydroxides) appears to increase the melting effect. Once the combined water has been driven off the melting point may rise considerably. Hence the relatively refractory nature of clays which have their iron in the form  $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$  and are fired under oxidising conditions. In a reducing fire, oxygen will be abstracted from the iron compounds, converting them to grey or to metallic forms, and earlier fluxing of the clay may set in.

Small deposits of this type of clay (source of the red ochre used in Maori Art) are to be found in New Zealand, relics of earlier periods of more tropical climate. They lie in pockets which have escaped subsequent erosion.

## 3. Swamp Clays:

Lakes and the later swamp phase are temporary landscape features, the result of some disturbance of the normal development of the drainage system of a region. On the bed of the lake clays sorted from all sandy or stony particles may be laid down. In time the lake shallows to the point where vegetation can cover the surface. The vegetable refuse, sinking into the waterlogged swamp, does not decay in the ordinary way, but enters the peat-lignite-coal cycle. As with the humus layer of the forest soils, acids from the peaty layers enter the clays beneath and remove the iron in solution, bleaching the clay.

It is through the operation of this cycle that fireclays are commonly found in association with local beds, the best clays usually lying directly beneath the coal. The intensity of warping or faulting movements in many parts of New Zealand has created many ponding sites, some still to be seen as lakes or swamps, others dried out and perhaps covered in later deposits.

A typical site will show layers or lenses of brown to black peaty clays, sometimes with recognisable vegetable remains, and possibly deposits of steely grey to off white (these colours are as revealed in the freshly cut damp clay). The lighter colours are the most refractory and will contain a high proportion of silica.

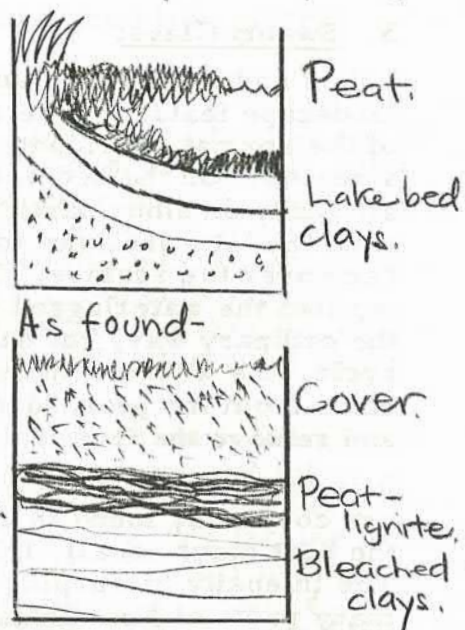
Clays high in silica undergo a reversible dimension change at  $573^\circ\text{C}$ , the result of changes in the size of the contained quartz crystals. This may cause cracking. Cracking in the heating stage, generally distinguishable by retreat of the glaze from the crack, may be avoided by evenness of thrown thicknesses, and even distribution and controlled rate of heating in the vicinity of  $573^\circ\text{C}$ . Cracking while cooling will be marked by a sharp-edged fracture. If this is not

## Forest Soils



6.

## Fireclays, swamp stage



caused by cool draughts or opening the furnace too soon, it may be due to poor glaze fit. A glaze which is under too much compression may spall off, or when well fused on to a thin pot, may break the pot on cooling.

Although no intensive prospecting has been done, the Wellington region, to take one example only, has revealed many deposits of these "proto-fireclays". They are found at Karori, Ngaio and Khandallah, Onslow and Porirua East. Further deposits may be expected in the Pauatahanui and Judgeford regions, in the Kaitoke basin, in Whiteman's and Wainui Valleys, and possibly in the Ohariu Valley. The clays must not be confused with green-grey to black clays or silts found in former marine bays or estuaries, which will be found on firing to be enriched in iron.

7.

## NOTES ON THE PREPARATION OF CLAY

Mary Hardwick-Smith

The problem of clay preparation is always with us, and this is intended, not as an essay on "how to do it", but as notes on what one potter is actually doing at the moment. The aims and conditions are given as they vary with the climate, materials, and type and quantity of clay needed.

Aim: A continuous supply of well-blended fine stone-ware body, suitable for domestic ware: enough to keep the pottery running full-time for ten months of the year.

Conditions: Long hot summer with good outside drying - very wet winter with very little drying.

Clay: Mixture of prepared body in powder form, rough clay from Plimmerton, and dug clay from Auckland, the latter very sticky and difficult to break down, and requiring the addition of feldspar.

Requirements: Adequate means of breaking down and blending, sieving, drying to plastic state, and storing; a system which is fast enough to prepare large quantities during the summer months, and so reduce difficulties of winter drying.

Equipment: A concrete paving slab and wooden mallet for breaking up dry clay, coal shovel, spring scales and bucket for weighing.

Blunger: An old Beatty washing-machine with stainless steel bowl and more power than some of the recent models that are belt-driven. This one cannot be slowed up by holding the agitator with both hands.

Three extra fins are screwed on to the bottom of the agitator (mild steel 8" x 1" x  $\frac{1}{4}$ " twisted and bent upwards in the middle). These break the swirl caused by the usual washing action which was inclined to roll the clay into balls. The fins also prevent the clay from settling in the corner of the bowl, and speed up the effect of blunging. There is a cut-out switch on the motor to prevent over-loading, and an inch-wide outlet at the bottom of the bowl.

Hose for filling blunger, dipper for dipping out slip.

Frame for sieve: A wooden frame with corner blocks that fit over the top of the barrel, four pieces of fencing wire stretched across to hold the sieve. This reduces wear and tear on the sieve by taking the weight of the slip and making the sieve easier to agitate. It also allows the potter to emerge unspattered.

Sieve to fit loosely inside frame.

Draining rack: A frame 18" x 24" x 4" on legs with container underneath to catch the water. The base is made of fibre-glass mesh (about 20 to the inch) over two layers of chicken netting, over two pieces of No. 8 wire for added strength. Spread over the top and holding the slip is a loose piece of rayon material with wooden slats tacked on to the sides. (A hem with slats would be better).

Brick trough: Seven brick slabs 18" x 9" supported by two six foot angle-iron standards propped off the ground. A loose wooden frame forms low sides. A piece of nylon or rayon material spread over the bricks keeps the clay clean and makes it easier to pick up when dry enough. It also prevents slip running through the cracks. In wet weather a wood frame with plastic is used as a cover.

Plaster slabs for winter drying.

Plastic for storing clay.

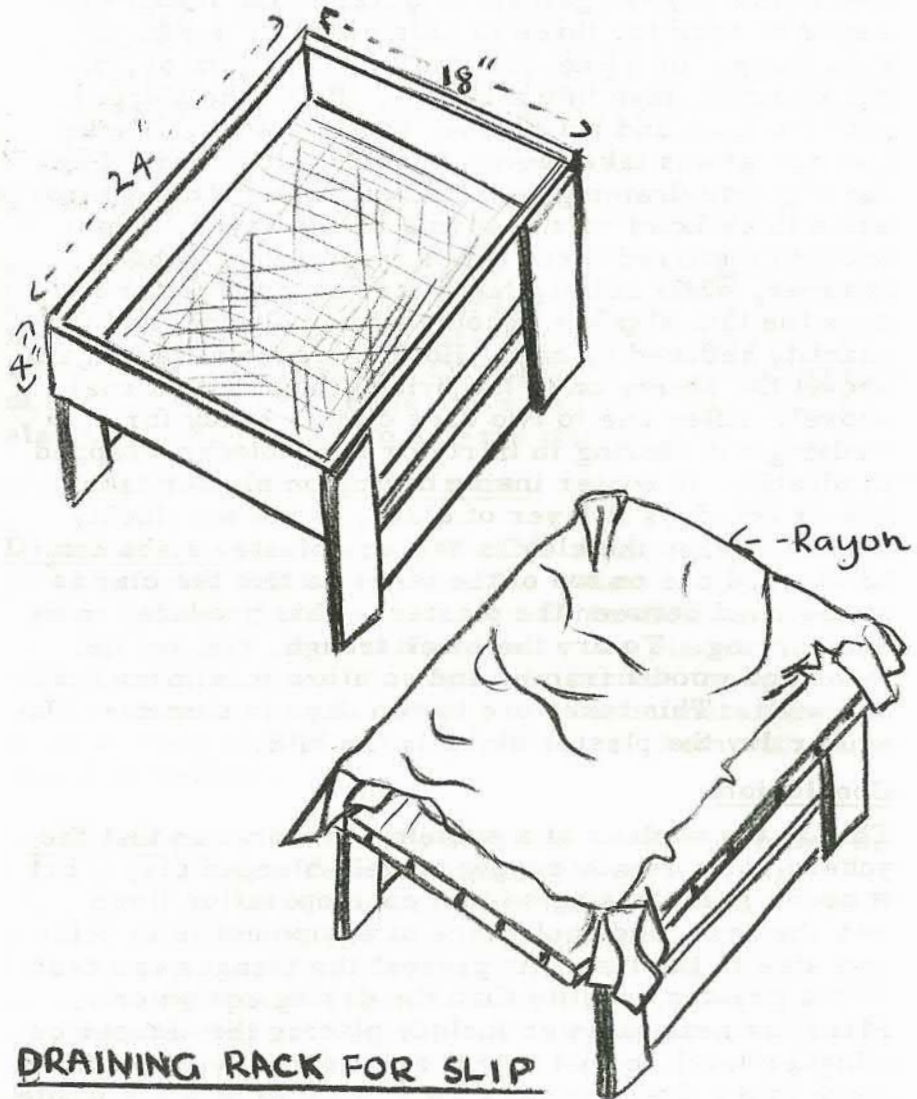
#### Method:

Break up dry clay to about walnut size, weigh batch of 40 lbs. of dry clay plus feldspar, and tip into approximately ten gallons of water in the blunger. Leave to soak for three to four hours or overnight, then blunge for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours. Lift out the agitator, dip out slip and sieve into a barrel. Refill the blunger with the hose and put another batch to soak. These two operations take twenty minutes altogether. Pour the slip into draining rack. Clear water drains through, and a thick layer of slip forms on the rayon. This should be stirred three times a day with a rubber scraper, while holding the material taut. After two days the thin slip has become a thick slurry, and the quantity reduced by half. Holding material taut again, shovel the slurry on to the brick trough with a coal shovel. After one to two days clay is ready for wedging and storing in thirty or forty blocks wrapped in plastic. In winter inside drying on plaster takes one or two days if layer of slurry is not too thickly spread. When the clay is half dry plaster slabs can be stacked one on top of the other so that the clay is sandwiched between the plaster. This produces more even drying. To dry the brick trough, remove the nylon and wooden frame, and so allow maximum sun and wind. This takes one to two days in summer. In winter dry the plaster slabs in the kiln.

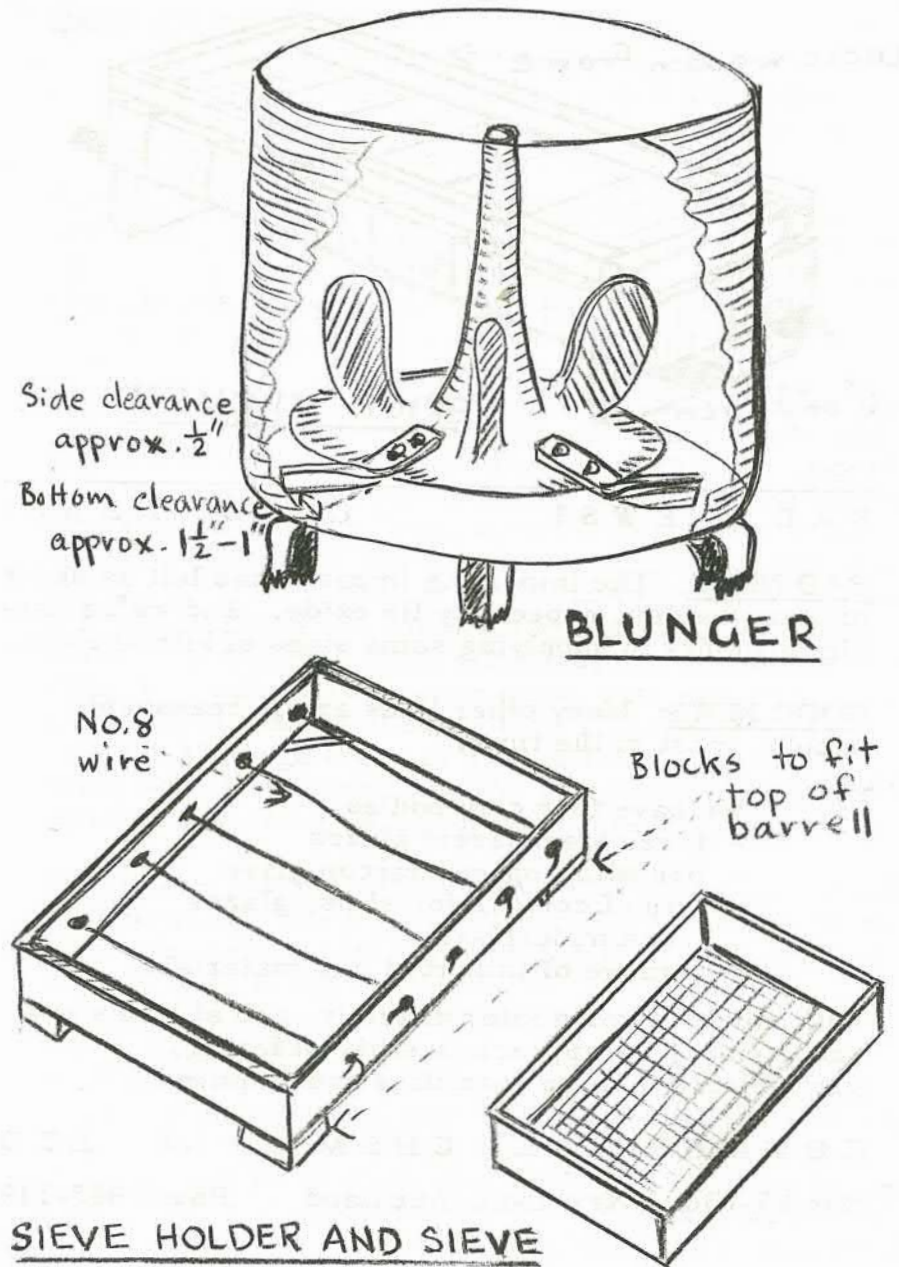
#### Conclusion:

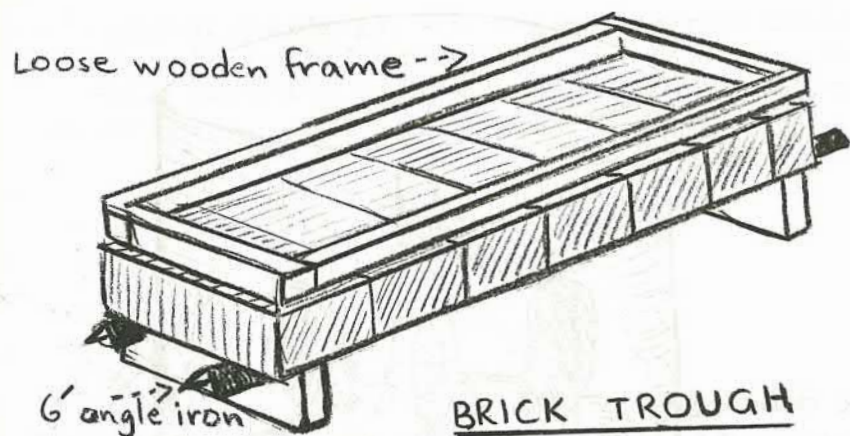
This is the nucleus of a system. It works in that the pottery has a steady supply of well-blended clay. But it needs reorganising so that each operation flows into the next, and each piece of equipment is in relative size to the last. At present the blunger can deal with a greater quantity than the drying equipment. Plans for next summer include placing the blunger on a higher level so that it will drain directly through the sieve into a draining rack big enough to hold the whole

contents of the blunger - a long narrow rack placed next to a larger brick trough. The existing two small draining racks can be used in the basement during the winter.



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## CANADIAN POTTERY

Helen McKenzie  
(now of Canberra A.C.T.)

Pottery in Canada, like any of the newer Western countries, has none of the tradition behind it that the pottery has from Europe and the East, although there are a number of excellent potters who have come from Europe bringing their craft with them.

More people in Canada are interested in making pottery than in Australia and New Zealand. This is probably due to the long cold winter during which recreational pursuits are chiefly carried on indoors. Many adults attend night schools, and, with the good distribution of ceramic materials and equipment throughout Canada and the U.S.A., the chances of having your own wheel and kiln at home are fairly good - if you have the money. Stoneware kilns (electric) are not much more expensive than earthenware ones, and both are readily available and much cheaper than in this part of the world. Although there is quite a lot of earthenware being done in Canada, most of the potters I specifically mention are doing reduced stoneware.

Rarely can potters earn a livelihood solely by the sale of their pots. They generally teach, but are seldom so weighed down with classes that they don't get quite a lot of time to pot themselves.

A few potters such as Kjeld and Erica Deichman in Sussex, New Brunswick, have been successful in making a living out of pottery. Last year the Canada Council gave the Deichmans \$8,000, plus travel costs, to go to Europe to study mosaics and salt glaze techniques. The Deichmans work in stoneware and porcelain, and have greatly developed the use of local clays.



In Toronto there is a group called "The Five Potters" who are doing good work. They are also pressing for a greater number of pots to be sent to shows by each potter, to try to eliminate people who manage to enter three lucky mistakes!

The potters I know best are from Western Canada, so this will account for my being able to tell you more about them.

Another potter on a Canada Council Scholarship is Tommy Kakinuma from Vancouver, B.C. His year of travel, work and study has been divided between Mexico, Hawaii and Japan. In Japan he first spent some time in Okayama, then in March had his own exhibition of pots he had made in Kagoshima. Following that he went to Okinawa, where he says the pottery is a combination of Japanese and Chinese.

There is an active group of potters at the University of British Columbia, who for some time have made the workshop their headquarters. The present instructor is Santo Mignosa, who studied in his native Sicily before coming to Canada.

Leonard Osborne, once an engineer, became so interested in pottery that he went off to take lessons with Margeurite Wildenhain. "Ossie" and his wife Mary both pot, and they had very successful classes in West Vancouver till the neighbours complained about the parking problem. So now they live on Vancouver Island and are on the "tourist route", so are doing very well.

In Alberta there has been a keen interest in pottery. At Medicine Hat, in the southeast corner of the province, there are excellent stoneware clay deposits which extend into Saskatchewan. It is from here that the stoneware clay comes for the Western provinces

of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Pottery is part of the Fine Arts course at the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art in Calgary. For a number of years Luke Lindoe was the instructor, and he gave the potters a good start. Luke is now Research Officer for the Northwest Brick and Tile Co. in Medicine Hat. Prior to this, as well as his teaching in Calgary, he started "Ceramic Arts", a pottery workshop of mainly handthrown ware - both earthenware and reduced stoneware of a very high standard. A number of Alberta's potters have worked here since: Walter Drohan, Walter Dexter - both one time students of Luke Lindoe's; and latterly Jane Askey from England and Wilma Baker from U.S.A.

In Edmonton, 200 miles north of Calgary, the potters were greatly encouraged by Mrs. Allan Wilmot, herself a potter, who worked tirelessly to set a high standard of work. When Sibyl Laubental (who had trained and worked for first class potters in Germany and Italy) arrived in Edmonton, Mrs. Wilmot made it possible for Sibyl to get a start. Sibyl then built up the Potters' Guild classes and started more classes for the University of Alberta Extension Department. Not only was Edmonton made "pottery conscious", but Sibyl went on to win awards in the all Canada shows and a much coveted prize in the Ceramics National in Syracuse, N.Y. Her death this March is a great loss.

Walter Dexter, who has lately been for a short time instructor for the Edmonton Potters' Guild, has been lured away from teaching by the Medalta Potteries in Medicine Hat to be their designer-consultant. Potters in Alberta were delighted to see industry take this step, for it is so unfortunate that there exists this gap between the studio potter and industry.

In Alberta, the Provincial Government has set up a Cultural Activities Branch. This sponsors programmes of instruction throughout the province in handicrafts (including pottery), painting and drama. Groups are hereby enabled to get started in out-lying areas. As yet the periods of instruction are too short as the instructors have such a wide field to cover, but a beginning has been made.

What are the problems of Canadian potters? The same, by and large, as ours. Potters in the newer countries such as Canada, U.S., Australia and New Zealand have not yet found their place in the community, therefore we tend either to show off by striving to be "different", or we try to copy the successful potters in countries who have tradition behind them. But we must not forget that we have a freedom that they have never had, and we should use this freedom wisely while we have it.

At the beginning of last year I read two articles to each of my five classes. One was "Extract from a Letter" by Professor C.L. Bailey, in the New Zealand Potter, Vol. I, No. 2. The other was entitled "Canadian Ceramics 1959", an article written for Canadian Art 66 by Nancy Wickham Boyd, a juror for the Canadian Biennial Exhibition of Ceramics, December 1959. Both made the same plea for honesty and purpose in the making of pots. As you have read Professor Bailey's letter, I will quote Nancy Wickham Boyd:

"..... It is safe to say that almost all primitive pottery was produced without any conscious effort to be original. The pieces were made to serve a definite utilitarian need. The most creative, and therefore the most exciting, examples were made to fulfil the needs of their time. They were not made to

express exclusively the creative urge of the craftsman ..... In past generations, the culture of the people was often reflected in the human qualities the clay possessed. There is something in everything we think and feel and say that distinctly expresses our particular way of life. What is said in another country or another century will not be the same. The biennial Exhibition of Canadian Ceramics should give an opportunity for Canadian expression. However, as a juror from another country, I got the impression from it that it had too little national flavour. There is much in the Canadian background that differs from others, and there is a vast amount to offer for inspiration that in this case will be 'original'."

Perhaps with the ease and speed of travel, which is making even the farthest away country appear on our doorstep, it will be increasingly difficult for potters to reflect a "national flavour". But even though our national characteristics are becoming less clearly defined, each community has its specific needs, and I feel that gradually the potter, if he remains constantly aware, will find his place in the community.

(Helen McKenzie taught pottery at Edmonton, Alberta, for some time. She has now returned to Australia, the country of her birth, and has decided to settle down in Canberra. Here she has bought a section, and while plans for her house and pottery studio get under way, she is working in the Geology Department of the C.S.I.R.O.)

DEVELOPMENT OF A POTTER  
(Extract from a letter)

Dorothy Hope  
Ewey Bay, N.S.W.

Beginning as a Technical College student some years ago I worked in my own pottery at home (eventually involving my husband) manufacturing pottery for Australian distribution, ending up with an unhappy compromise - mass producing hundreds and hundreds of articles under studio pottery conditions. This resulted in hours of long hard work, with some financial but certainly no aesthetic gain. This must often happen with potters when the "bread and butter" line suddenly becomes much in demand. However, we discontinued all that, realising it was all rather futile, and now I am back trying to make good pots and teaching others.

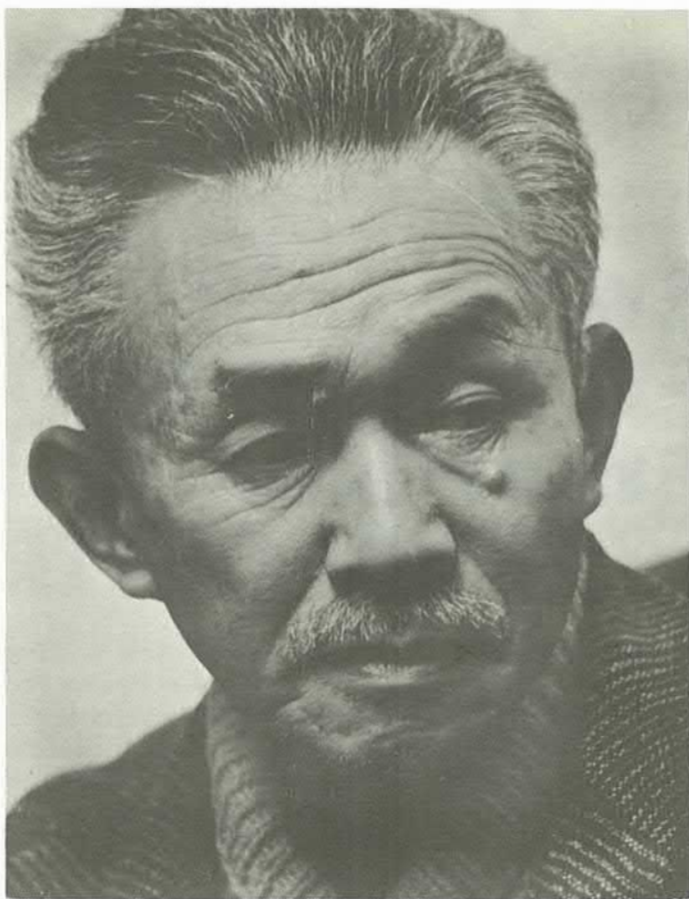
While I am very happy to be free of what developed into not much more than routine factory work, the experience has made me a lot more appreciative of the problems of the factory which is manufacturing pottery, whether art ware or industrial. I am impatient of the studio potter who tends sometimes to belittle the skill and knowledge that lie behind mass-production. The unfortunate part is that the natural desire to make that which "will sell well" so often results in a product that is objectionable despite all the skill that is put into its making.

It will be a wonderful day for Australian pottery when the potter who understands his material will be able to work with industry and influence design. Until then we can be satisfied by making pots to please ourselves and hope they will in turn please others.

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## O B I T U A R Y



DR. SOETSU YANAGI

(Portrait by Francis Harr)

Dr. Soetsu Yanagi died on the 3rd May, 1961, at the age of seventy-two, in his home at Komaba, Tokyo. Funeral services were held in the National Folk Craft Museum (Nippon Mingei-kwan). The magnificent Folk Craft Museum, of which Dr. Yanagi was founder and director, will remain as a fitting memorial to a Man of Tea, perceiver of beauty in everyday objects, and Buddhist philosopher of profound insight.

The philosophy of craftsmanship and the "quiet message from the inner world of Japanese truth and beauty" found its ideal exponent in Dr. Yanagi, and whether we are aware of it or not, most of us concerned with craft activity have been influenced by his thought. The Japanese craft movement of which Dr. Yanagi was the leader over many years, includes among its members Shoji Hamada, Kanjiro Kawai, Shiko Munakata, and is known to the West largely through the writings of Bernard Leach. A Potter in Japan provides us with an account of this craft guild, and of Dr. Yanagi's life and work. Many potters will recall Dr. Yanagi's introduction to A Potter's Book, but unfortunately beyond a few short studies his numerous works remain untranslated.

Speaking personally, I count myself fortunate that I am one of the many who have enjoyed the kindness and friendship of Dr. Yanagi. He was always ready to help others, and I recall that he went to considerable trouble to realise my wish to meet his old teacher, Professor Daisetz T. Suzuki. Although he endured a terrible period in Tokyo during World War II, and suffered ill health in his last years, Dr. Yanagi's life was one of achievement, and his message of beauty will influence for good the work of artists and craftsmen for generations to come.

Terry Barrow

## THE VISIT OF JOHN AND ANJA CHAPPELL

The stay in New Zealand of this young couple has been an interesting experiment for us all. This tall, bearded Englishman of enormous energy has opened our eyes in many ways, and the quiet grace and femininity of Anja has gladdened our hearts.

The transition from two years in Japan, that country of consummate craftsmanship, to New Zealand of the "she's right" attitude, must have been somewhat shattering, and John's absolute horror at many of our amateur ways has been most salutary for us. John's exhibition at the Wellington Centre Gallery last February of pots he had made in Japan and of some made since his arrival here, emphasised that he could practise as well as preach. He is as hard with himself as he is with us, and there is almost a classical severity about his work at this present stage.

In Invercargill, Dunedin, Christchurch, Nelson, Wellington, Palmerston North, Napier and Auckland, John has lectured, demonstrated and worked with local potters, using their facilities, and teaching how to use them better. However much many of us have argued with John over different questions, as soon as he starts to make pots the arguing gives place to respect. Perhaps the greatest benefit he has given us is a realisation of how long and arduous is the way to becoming a good potter. At the same time, the knowledge and technical skill he has so freely imparted should have the effect in time of raising our level of achievement.

John says himself that our enthusiasm is our greatest asset. This has been shown by the way in which potters all over New Zealand have responded when

called on to provide accommodation, transport and hospitality for John and Anja on their travels. Potters who have experienced this feeling of brotherhood when overseas will be glad to hear that New Zealand potters do not fall short of this quality. The grant of Fifty Pounds from the Arts Advisory Council towards travelling expenses has been a great help; and the co-operation of Adult Education in arranging schools is much appreciated.

The fact that a potter with an overseas reputation has come to our country and has been able, through his own personality, and with the co-operation of many people, to make a reasonable living for six months from his pots and his skill surely means that it is a venture worth trying again.

We wish John and Anja a worthwhile future in Japan or anywhere else they choose to live and work. We will always be glad they were able to spare us six months of their lives, and hope that some day they may return.

H.M.

There are a few copies left of books published by the New Zealand Potter:

New Zealand Rock Glazes - M. Bondy, 5/-  
Bernard Leach - Essays edited by  
Dr. T. Barrow, 10/-

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## POTTING IN JAPAN

John Chappell

Before describing what studying and working in Japan mean to me personally, I think I should say something about the reasons that led me to Japan in the first instance.

In England, as in other countries in Europe, and also I believe in the United States of America, there is at this time a very strong movement aimed at the revival and re-establishment of the various handicrafts, particularly handmade pottery. This movement has few, if any, roots in the traditional practice of the respective crafts, for the simple reason that at the time of the inception of this revival the traditional handicrafts had all but died out under the economic onslaught of the cheap and colourful products of the industrial revolution. Despite this handicap, until the late nineteen-thirties this small and in no sense popular movement was healthy and strong in itself - a slowly growing thing seeking for roots and a suitable background. It was gradually building an acceptable tradition and so enabling a handful of workers to produce work of increasingly high standards.

In England and in pottery this growth was largely shaped by the work and influence of one man, Bernard Leach, who, with his groundings in Japanese traditional techniques and an exceptional feeling for rightness in form and material, has done more than anyone else, perhaps more than the rest put together, to set English potting on a firm foundation. He helped a large group of English potters to grow away from the baroque eccentricity so evident at the turn of the century, and to evade the extreme

functionalism that fell like a blight on the craftsmen of the twenties and thirties.

Unfortunately the qualities which Leach tried to infuse into our native tradition are only absorbed by long and hard work, by years of study and experience. And even should a promising student find a capable teacher and devote himself to such a study, at the end he would still be in no position to earn his living. Even Leach, after some fifty years of potting, has in England only a very small part of the fame he gained so early in Japan.

To further complicate matters, this handicraft movement has become organised, publicised and highly popularised so that Art School classes are larger than ever, and every working potter is swamped with would-be students. Faced with the problem of producing qualified potters in a matter of three or four years, most pottery teachers tend to encourage the production of work that is likely to find a market either as a prototype for mass production or as highly coloured curiosities to catch the eye of a credulous public. Little is done to train the sensibilities of the craftsman-to-be and the classroom approach and the lack of proper workshop practice lead to work that is colourful in idea, occasionally good in design, but superficial in content and in feeling; different perhaps but seldom original. Because of the difficulty of earning a living as working potters upon graduation, many of the students themselves become teachers, thus completing a vicious circle.

So it comes about that those workers who are dissatisfied with the shallowness of the usual run of work and who come under the influence of Leach and his disciples, usually follow him wholeheartedly and

ape his work assiduously. The two parties in English pottery are the "Leachites" and the "Anti-Leachites". There are very few exceptions.

To any student seeking to enlarge his field of reference, the rest of Europe has little to offer. A few teachers stand head and shoulders above the rest, but the overall effect is that of a few narrow streams of experience across a desert of indifference. In all of Europe there might be a dozen or so potters with something to offer the serious student, while in Kyoto alone there are twenty or thirty masters with whom it would be an honour to study.

After some three or four years of potting in England, I came to a strong conviction that a visit to Japan was necessary to my studies - although it was to be several years later before my ambition was to be realised.

In the Far East, particularly in China, Korea and Japan, the potter has long been an honoured artist with a respected place in society, and in Japan the industrial revolution has done little to change this. Jealously guarded family traditions can be traced back for many hundreds of years. While some might claim a greater importance for the history of the craft in China and Korea, the great mass of the traditions of both these countries has been imported into Japan down through the centuries and has flourished and grown into an even greater tradition that is Japanese. Recent events in China and Korea make the chances of rewarding study in those countries seem doubtful.

I made the decision to come to Japan some five or six years ago, but it was much more difficult to implement than to make. My profits as a practising potter in England were so low that the idea of

saving enough money for the trip halfway round the world seemed quite ridiculous. Finally I spent nearly three years in Stockholm as an English teacher in order to save the necessary money. In the spring of 1957 I met Mr. Mosuke Yoshitake of the Tokyo Institute of Art in Industry. He had just been on a tour of study to the Arabia Pottery in Finland, and was visiting the rest of Europe before returning to Japan. We discussed at length my wishes to study in Japan, and on returning to Japan Mr. Yoshitake put me in contact with his friend Mr. Kunio Uchida, a potter in Kyoto with whom I have been studying for the past two years.

Although Mr. Uchida, in the Japanese manner, studied for more than twenty years before starting his own workshop, I don't think it is possible to call him a typical Japanese potter. He has been very influenced by foreign ideas of function and design, and his main interest is in the production of well-designed tableware, whilst a majority of the better known Japanese potters concentrate on ceramics for use in flower arranging and the tea ceremony. Mr. Uchida himself designs all the work that is produced by the workshop, and is personally responsible for all the decorating. Until a few years ago he also worked at the wheel, but the work involved in organising and running the workshop on its present scale now makes that impracticable.

When I arrived in Kyoto in January 1959 I spoke very little Japanese - "Hello", "Goodbye", "Yes", "No", and that was about all. I could read and write Kana, the phonetic Japanese script, and I had a certain knowledge of Japanese grammar, but I found it quite impossible to state my simplest needs. Mr. Uchida's English was about equivalent to my Japanese, but fortunately, his son, Kunitaro, then a high school student, was able to interpret for us.

On my first morning in the workshop I was led to a wheel and shown where the clay was kept, and, Kunitaro being at school, signs were made to suggest that I might like to practise by making some simple small plates to help me get the feel of things. One of the other students demonstrated for me and provided me with the few necessary tools, and then I was left alone. I should explain that though I had worked with a wheel for a number of years in England, during my stay in Sweden I had not potted at all. Also I had always worked with a kick-wheel that rotated anti-clockwise, while the wheel I was now facing was electrically powered and went the wrong way round. Furthermore, I had the greatest difficulty in sitting cross-legged for more than a few minutes at a time, and with this wheel there was no provision for working in any other position. I persevered for several days until with the greatest difficulty I could make a clumsy little plate in about five minutes, after which followed ten minutes walking round the workshop to restore the circulation in my legs.

Regretfully I decided it was impractical to continue like that. I had the belts changed on the wheel to make it turn in the direction I wanted, but as for sitting cross-legged, this could only be abandoned by putting my feet in the tray designed to catch the splashes of water and clay from the rim of the wheel. This meant occasional wet feet and perpetually clay-caked trousers, but it also meant that I could work at the wheel continuously instead of for five minutes every quarter of an hour. From this point forward my greatest troubles were over. Mr. Uchida, the other workers and myself, soon found we could communicate after a fashion in a crazy, not always polite, jumble of English and Japanese, and although we had occasional misunderstandings, none of them proved to be serious.

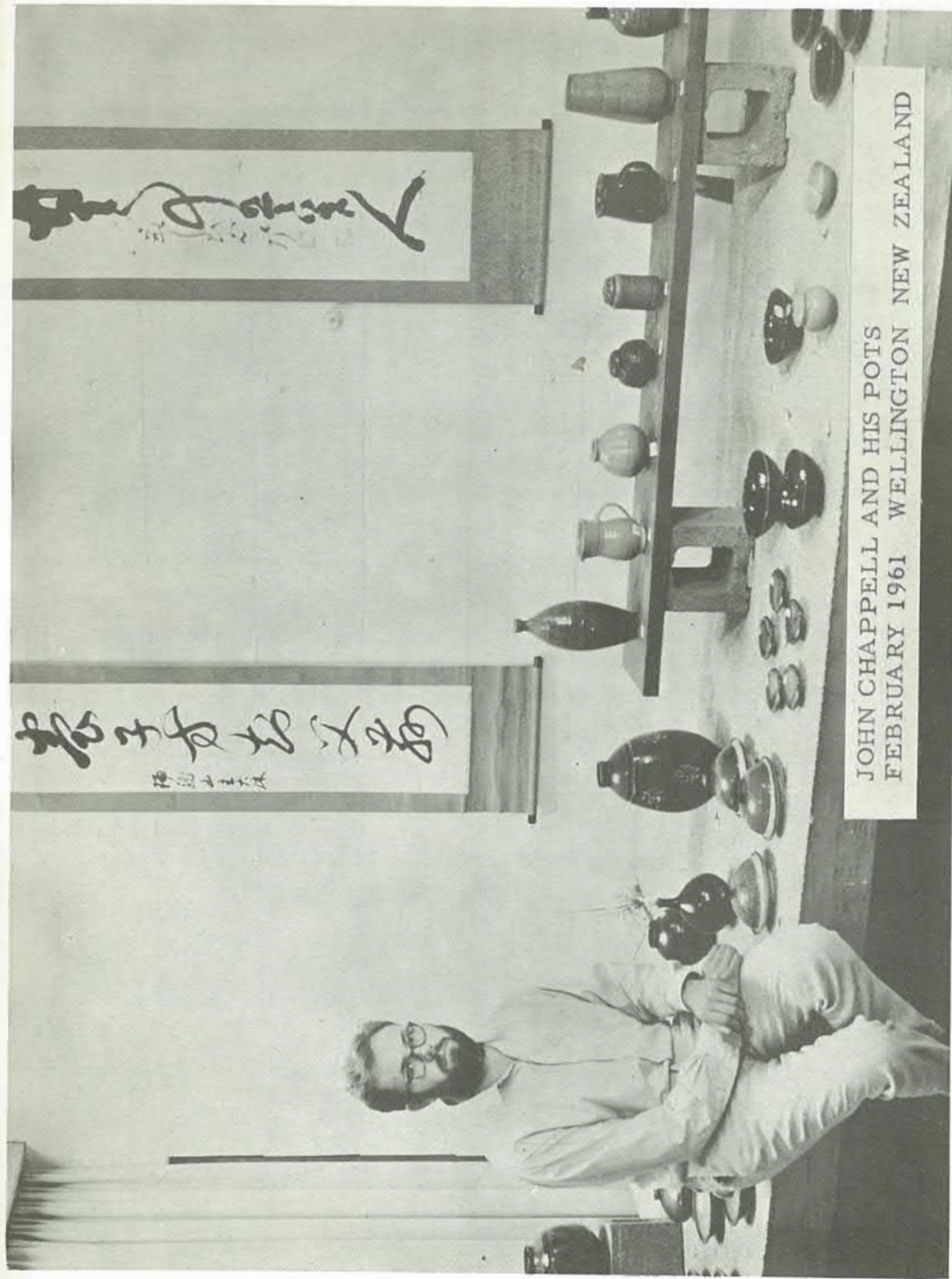
My wife and I have become very attached to living in Kyoto. We have made many friends and many people have been very kind and helpful. I am sure these years in Japan have meant more to my studies than anything I have done before, and I can truthfully say they have been two of the happiest years of my life. This was due in no small part to the ease with which I could, as a potter, fit into Japanese society. I no longer feel, as I did in England, that I am an outsider, and I have no need to apologise for being a potter. Pottery, very obviously, means far more to the man in the street in Japan than to his counterpart in England. The friendly people I meet wherever I go, on discovering that my reason for being in Japan is to pot, always bring up the name of Bernard Leach, and are usually conversant with the names of the leading potters in Japan. This contrasts strongly with England, where on mentioning the name of Leach to a casual acquaintance, the response is likely to be "Who does he play for?"

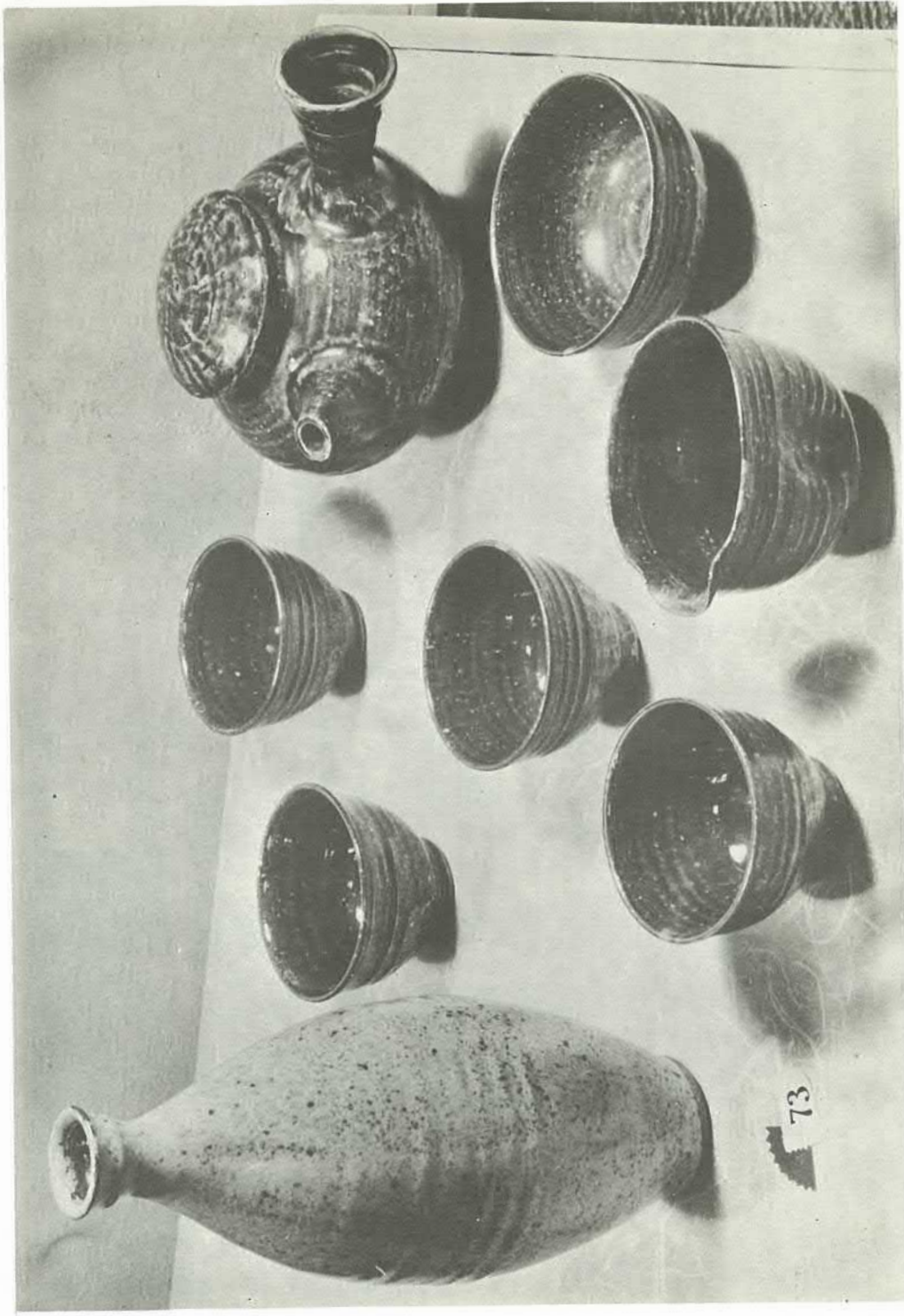
How can we explain this wide interest in pottery? In Leach's books he explains the importance of the Tea Masters in the development of aesthetic standards in Japan, and he often refers to the word "shibui", meaning "bitter, astringent, restrained", that is used in Japan as the greatest compliment that can be applied to a work of art. Japanese people quite commonly start a polite conversation about a picture or pot that might be present in much the same way as the English might talk about the weather or cricket, and the ability to make intelligent cultural small-talk is much admired, and many young people make some effort to acquire that ability. Most commonly they attend lessons in tea for a year or two. Through the tea-ceremony the Japanese have been trained to perceive certain qualities in works of art and certain words in their language, such as this "shibui", have



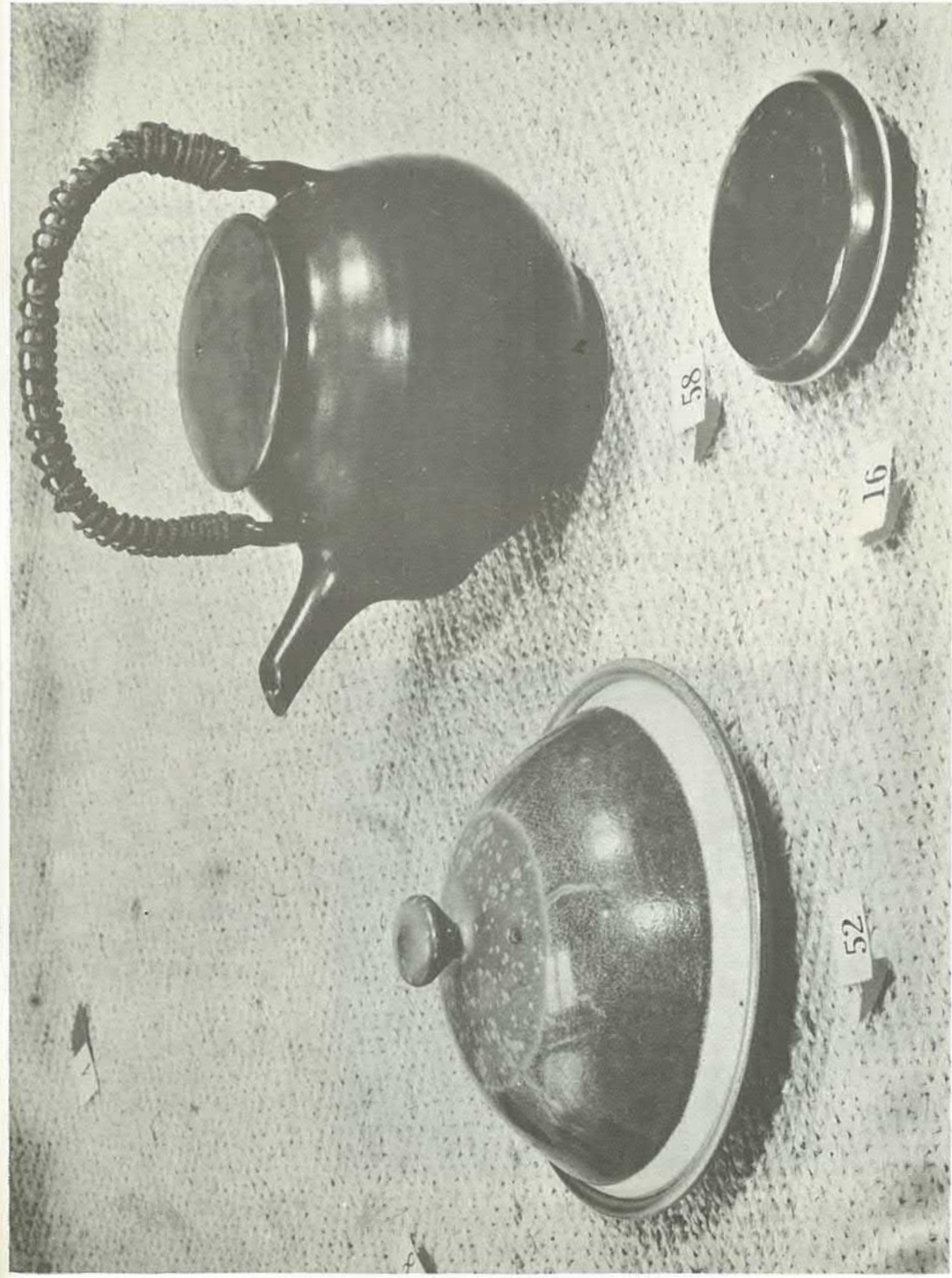
acquired special meanings, that are perhaps non-sensical to the uninformed foreigner, but to the Japanese are as clear as such expressions as "that's not cricket" are to the English with their highly developed sense of sportsmanship. The prominent part that ceramic utensils play in the performance of the tea-ceremony helps to explain the widespread interest in the craft, an interest that supports thousands of craftsmen throughout Japan, and that raises the leading potters to the position of public figures whose names are household words.

I have been fortunate enough to visit several of the pottery centres outside Kyoto: Mashiko, Shigaraki, Tachikui, Tottori, Izumo, and Matsue, and I have met many potters and handled many pots. Everywhere I have found interesting work and techniques I want to study. I hope to have the chance to study at all of the pottery centres that cover Japan, from Kyushu in the south to Hokkaido in the north, and it is my hope to live in Japan for many years to come.





BOTTLE AND TEASET - John Chappell



CHEESE DISH TEAPOT AND TRINKET BOX -

John Chappell

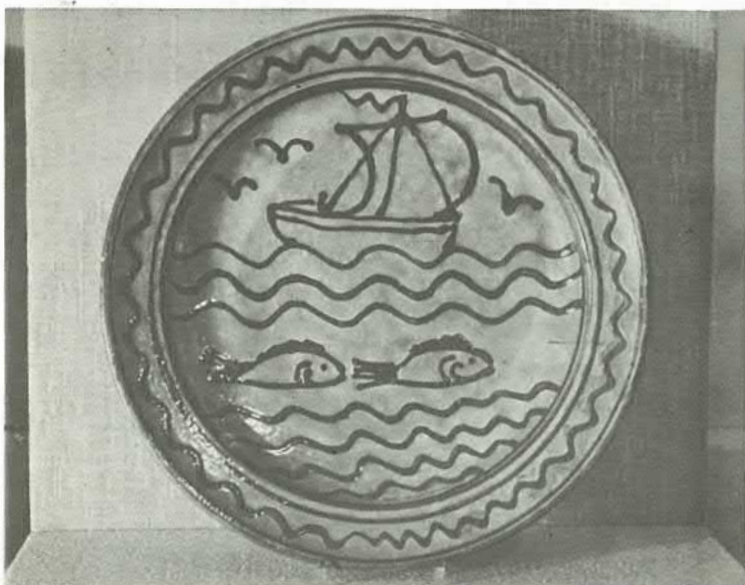


Stoneware Bowl  
Barbara Cass  
Diameter 7"



Earthenware Coffee Pot  
and Cup and Saucer  
Marianne de Trey

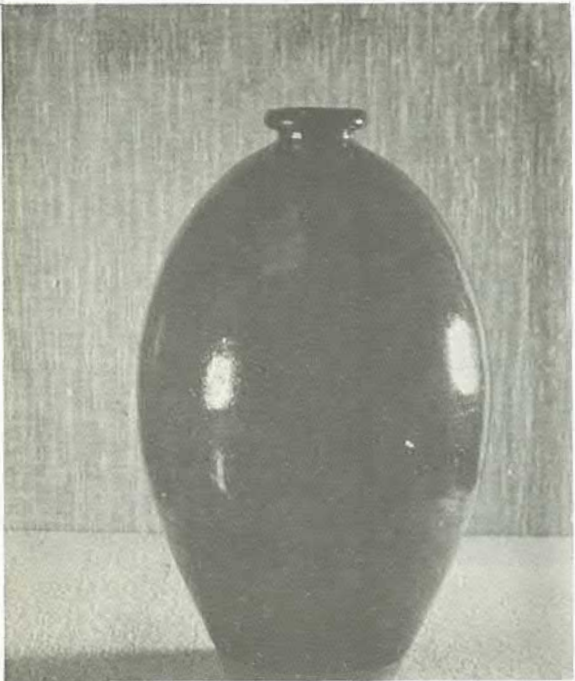
COLLECTION OF MODERN POTTERY CANTERBURY MUSEUM NEW ZEALAND



Earthenware Plate  
Michael Cardew  
Diameter 15½"



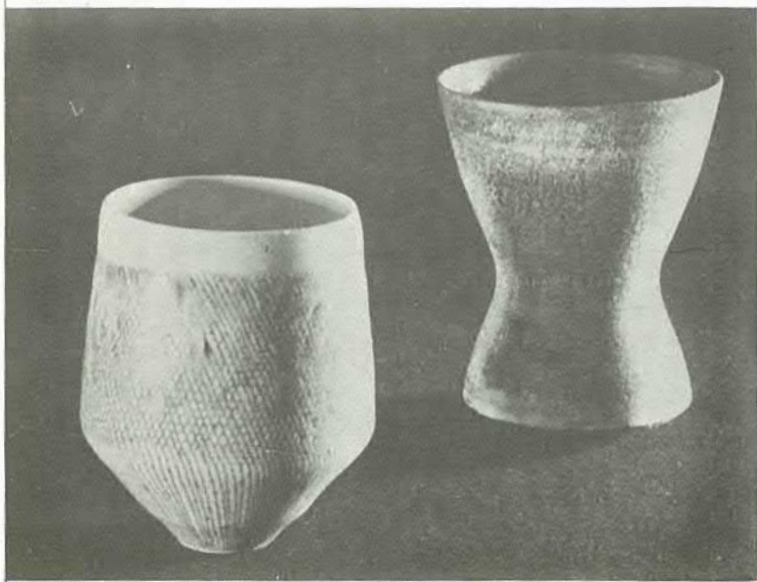
Stoneware Lidded Jar  
F. Harrop  
Height 6"



Stoneware Bottle  
Katherine Pleydell Bouverie  
Height 12"



Stoneware Lidded Jar  
Michael Cardew  
Height 11"



Stoneware Vase  
Hans Coper  
Height 6½"

Porcelain Vase  
Lucie Rie (in foreground)  
Height 5"

Photos: J.W. Reed

Stoneware Pots  
Sibyl Laubental  
of Edmonton, Canada



1.

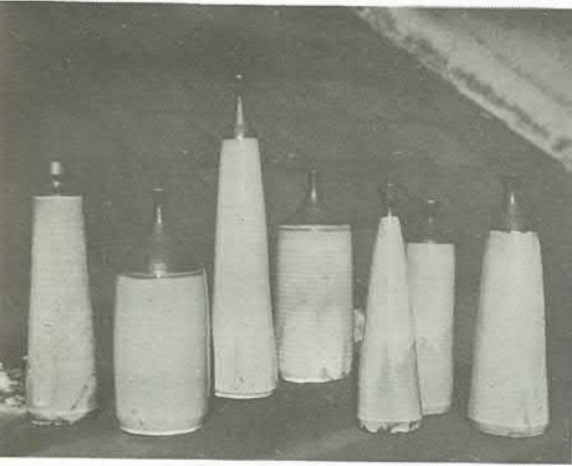
Pots on Cover - John Chappell  
Photos - John Bailey.

THE ORIGINS OF THE CANTERBURY MUSEUM'S  
COLLECTION OF MODERN POTTERY

Wyn Reed

For some years, whenever my husband and I visited Dunedin, we used to admire the Otago Museum's collection of the work of the English studio potters (acquired for a song) and lament that Canterbury had nothing of this kind to show. So before our visit to England in 1955 we asked the Canterbury Museum Trust Board for a grant to buy modern pottery for the Museum. We were given Fifty Pounds and ultimately spent over Sixty (which was paid cheerfully enough). For this incredibly small sum we were able to buy samples of the work of many of the leading potters of the day. Not all of the pieces are "museum pieces" or "exhibition" pieces, as our object was rather to give an all-round picture of the kind of work the English potters were doing for our local potters to study, both by seeing and handling, if possible.

Our first call was on Bernard Leach at St. Ives, and we were lucky to find him there. He was very charming and kindly gave us about twenty minutes of his valuable time, and then his son Michael, who was most friendly and helpful, took us on an extensive tour of this justly famous pottery. We were anxious to acquire one of Bernard Leach's own pots, but unfortunately we happened to strike the period just after his return from two years in Japan. He was very busy with his book, and had not done any potting for some time, and of his own work on display there was practically nothing for sale. He rather reluctantly let us have a small pot with a lovely glowing celadon glaze, but I feel that it does not really to the master justice. We also bought an attractive stoneware pot



Central School, London, 1960



Thrown and pinched London 1960

G R A E M E     S T O R M ' S     P O T S

Fluted stoneware vases, Montreal



Handbuilt pots, Montreal



(with a semi-opaque oatmeal glaze over brushed on slip decoration by David Leach, who had actually left St. Ives by then.

Our next call was on Harry and May Davis at Cam-bourne, Cornwall. Their pottery is in a converted mill and they work extremely hard, turning out an amazing quantity of high quality stoneware exclusively for household use: dinner services, teapots, cups and saucers, jugs and bowls. We bought a fine one-gallon jug, a teapot, and samples of their tableware, including a pale green translucent coffee cup and saucer.

On to Skinner's Bridge, Dartington, in Devon, where Marianne de Trey is pluckily carrying on after the tragic death of her celebrated husband Sam Haile. She was making beautifully finished and decorated majolica ware, and told us that she considered her strength to be in her brushwork. We bought a delightful bottle-shaped jar intended for a lampbase with a wax resist pattern, dipped in black slip, tin glaze and scratched pattern, and a coffee pot and cup and saucer with black slip and combed stripe tin glaze, all on a warm red body, and all incredibly cheap. I had the greatest difficulty in restraining myself from going on buying.

Our next call was on Katherine Pleydell Bouverie, who lives in a charming old manor house at Kilming-ton in Wiltshire. Her pottery was once the malt-house of an ancient monastery and I found it a vastly intriguing place. She made us so very welcome and insisted on my coming back for a whole day to work with her in spite of my protests that I was the veriest amateur. She was most generous with information, advice, recipes for glazes, and most previous of all, her time. My husband considers her to be both the

nicest and the best potter in England, with which I heartily agree. We were fortunate to secure for the Museum a very fine stoneware jar with a rich, speckled brown ash glaze.

From Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, we took a run to Winchcombe to visit Raymond Finch at his pottery in the Cotswolds. We were lucky in buying from him (within the price limit of Five Pounds we had set ourselves), a superb cider-jar with a lovely glaze that had been one of those happy surprises that very occasionally come out of a firing and can never be repeated. He was loth to part with it but finally decided to let the Canterbury Museum New Zealand be its final home.

Lucie Rie and Hans Coper were then working in the same studio in Albion Mews, London. We enjoyed visiting their attractive studio and seeing their fine pots but found their work much more expensive than that of other potters. However, we managed to find a typical example of the work of each: Lucie Rie's is a small vase, porcelain, the lines laid in with oxides under an opaque lime glaze; Hans Coper's pot is stoneware with slip-glaze over manganese.

James Walford and his wife entertained us in their lovely home in Surrey. He concentrates on reproducing the Chinese glazes of the Sung period. The collection includes a narrow necked bottle of his with a celadon crackle glaze.

Michael Cardew was in Africa at the time and we despaired of finding any pieces of his until quite by chance while we were grovelling about on our hands and knees in the basement of that delightful shop Primavera in Sloane Street, we found an exciting large decorated slipware plate and a big stoneware lidded pot, which I recognised instantly by the

typical fish design he used. We promptly bought both of these with great joy.

Passing through York we came upon Barbara Cass working in a small shop in The Shambles. She was a refugee from Germany and her work differs from the English style. It is valued locally and she has several large pieces in York Minster. She told us the Dean was an enthusiastic collector of Staite Murray's work, and had probably the best collection in England. We could not find any of Staite Murray's work for sale, and even if we had, the price would have been far beyond our means. We bought an interesting bowl of Barbara Cass's, a coarse stoneware body with iron sand, decorated with black borax glaze brushed on.

We visited the Craft Centre in Hay Hill regularly and from there, in addition to the many purchases for ourselves, we bought for the Museum a delightful jug of W. Fishley Holland's with his dextrous use of the traditional English slip-trailing decoration. We also acquired a very good lidded stoneware jar by Frederick Harrop, a fine little temmoku tea bowl by Geoffrey Whiting, and a small moulded dish by Helen Pincombe with clever slip trailing in brown on a yellow background.

So ended a very happy pottery pilgrimage. This small collection which I hoped would be a nucleus, has not been added to since, but I am hoping to persuade the Museum to take the opportunity of purchasing some work of New Zealand potters from the forthcoming exhibition to be held in Christchurch this year.

## POTTERY IN CHRISTCHURCH

Doris Holland

In commencing a review of the history of pottery in Christchurch, one is compelled to ask, rather dubiously, can less than two decades be called a history? For more than half this time, very modest and tentative beginnings showed little or no progress. Previous to the Risingholme era, a certain amount of plain, practical and very cheap domestic ware was hand thrown or moulded at the old firm of Luke Adams in Sydenham, but apart from the now unknown potters who worked at Adams, the craft was not practised at all in Christchurch.

Pottery classes, under the energetic direction of Margaret Frankel (now potting in Canberra), were commenced at the Risingholme Community Centre in Opawa almost as soon as it was officially opened in 1945, but little or no equipment was available, save a roomy old shed, already in use for carpentry classes. Both clay and firing facilities were supplied by Luke Adams, of whom all Christchurch potters have affectionate if sometimes rueful memories.

These early classes were always well attended by students who could produce only "handmade" pieces, until one memorable day a mechanically-minded husband produced a potter's wheel, a shaky affair which symbolised enormous possibilities to the more ambitious students. One can admire their undaunted enthusiasm in much the same light as one now honours the pioneers who climbed the Bridle Path over the Port Hills into Canterbury.

The eventual purchase of a large electric kiln and two wheels were the first steps towards establishing at Risingholme the well-equipped craftroom in use today,

which stands as a permanent reminder of the foresight and hard work of the original members of the Centre. But the acquisition of the kiln was only the beginning of a long period of experimentation and "self-help", as no experienced tutor was available, and the use of prepared glazes did not encourage progress beyond a certain point. However, Risingholme has undoubtedly been the starting point of 90 per cent of practising potters in Christchurch today, and the classes at the Centre are now producing earthenware of a very reasonable standard.

The first event to wean students away from Risingholme was a weekend pottery school of some importance in that it was tutored by two potters from overseas and one from Auckland. This school was notable for bringing a much wider field of techniques to the rather narrow experience of aspiring but immature potters. Also it marked a definite step forward from the Risingholme nursery, for it was a nucleus from this school, directed by Yvonne Rust and Jim Nelson, which organised the Craft Centre School of Pottery and other handicrafts. Apart from its significant geographical situation on the opposite side of town to Risingholme, the Craft Centre and Mr. Nelson attracted senior students who wished to take advantage of his experience in pottery and glazing techniques.

Risingholme must also be recognised as the birthplace of the Hillsborough Group, which is indeed a memorial to Dorothy R. Crumpton, who died in 1954 while Director of the Community Centre, and who was herself a keen potter. Her middle name "Rangi" is the mark of Hillsborough pottery. This group of five women is, to the best of the writer's knowledge, unique in New Zealand as an example of successful teamwork in producing pottery of modest professional standard.

The advent of the New Zealand Potters' Exhibition in Christchurch this year will undoubtedly establish an important milestone in the development of pottery in Canterbury, following as it does the visit and weekend school of the potter John Chappell. Both these should bring the realisation of more tangible and exacting standards in practical work and critical judgments.

#### CRAFT CENTRE INC. CHRISTCHURCH

The Craft Centre at 116 Springfield Road, now has 87 members, of which 38 are pottery students. Classes in Basketry and Cane Furniture are also held.

Since Jim Nelson's resignation was regretfully received at the end of last year, Mrs. Dunn has taken over as Director. Margaret Anderson is the honorary secretary. The Centre is not subsidised, but relies on fees, annual subscriptions and money raising efforts to keep it afloat. At the end of each term an Open Day is held, craft work exhibited and sold, stalls stocked, demonstrations given and visitors shown round. These days are one of the main sources of income, though Adult Education sponsors some classes in Pottery each term, which is much appreciated.

Students have always prepared their own clay, digging and collecting it from three different localities. They mix their own slips, and a good supply of chemicals is available for those who wish to do research in colour. Earthenware only is made, for students feel there is a vast range of possibilities in this field, as yet hardly touched on in New Zealand. They intend to continue research and experiment along these lines for some time to come.

Potters visiting Christchurch are most welcome to visit the Centre.



FIFTH  
NEW ZEALAND POTTERS'  
EXHIBITION

24th September - 4th October, 1961  
DURHAM STREET ART GALLERY CHRISTCHURCH

Official Opening 23rd September, 8 p.m.  
by Mr. A.A.G. Reed

(Limited number of admission tickets for the opening  
night obtainable at the Gallery)

Earthenware  
Stoneware  
Porcelain  
Ceramic Sculpture

Hours: Monday to Saturday 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.  
Sunday 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

RECEIVING DATE -

NOT LATER THAN 1st SEPTEMBER 1961

NEW ZEALAND ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS  
EXHIBITION OF SCULPTURE, POTTERY AND  
GRAPHIC ART

to be held in Wellington, 4th to 26th August, 1962

Receiving day for Works: 3rd July, 1962

Opening: 3rd August, 1962

Eligible Works: Sculpture, Pottery and Graphic Art  
by members of the Academy or kindred New Zealand  
societies and by non-members in the Wellington  
Province.

The maximum number of works which may be sub-  
mitted is:-

Sculpture	Six pieces
Pottery	Six pieces or group of pieces
Graphic Art	Six works

Exhibitors may submit in more than one field, and  
may submit up to six works in any field.

The Academy will pay freight both ways on accepted  
works only.

Works may be for sale or not for sale as the artist  
wishes. Entry forms will be issued at a later date.

ANNUAL EXHIBITION - October 1961

Receiving Day - 12th September

FESTIVAL OF WELLINGTON 1961  
INDUSTRIAL DESIGN EXHIBITION

RESULTS OF CERAMIC COMPETITION

Coffee Set

First prize of 100 guineas Mr. M. Smisek, Nelson  
Second prize of 50 guineas Miss D. Blumhardt, Wgtn.  
Third prize of 20 guineas Mr. R. Cowan, Wellington

Judges Comments: The first prize was awarded to a set of excellent design. The pot had a positive character and the three pieces - coffee pot, sugar basin and jug - complemented each other very well. The set which won second prize included a very good pot with a fine spout. The third prize went to a set of good quality and fresh colour.

Ovenware

First Prize of 50 guineas Mr. R. Cowan, Wellington  
and Second prize of 20 guineas equally to - and Mr. J. Laird of Palmerston North  
Third Prize of 10 guineas Mr. M. Smisek, Nelson

Judges Comments: The judges unanimously agreed that no entry fulfilled all the requirements necessary for the award of a first place, and therefore bracketed two pieces in the first and second places. These two, while satisfying the functional and manufacturing qualifications, were considered aesthetically to be more fitted for serving a meal in a kitchen rather than on a dining table. A casserole of classical form and pleasant texture was awarded third prize.



MUGS AND COFFEE SETS ENTERED FOR INDUSTRIAL DESIGN COMPETITION - Photos Evening Post



**BRICESCO**

## Electrikilns

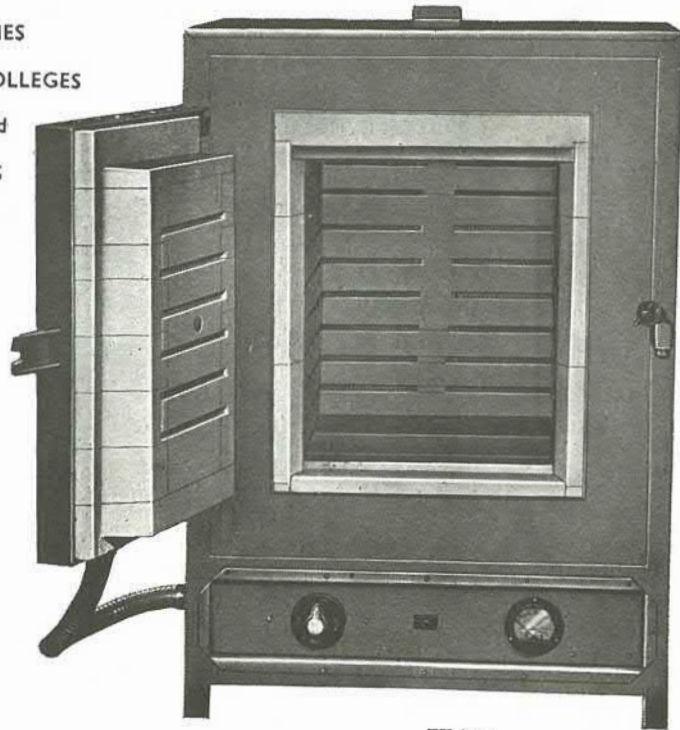
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50 ART AND TRAINING COLLEGES

INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH and

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For further particulars write to New Zealand Agent:-

Miss Mavis Jack,  
62a, Tinakori Road,  
Wellington, N.1.

**British Ceramic Service Co. Ltd.** England

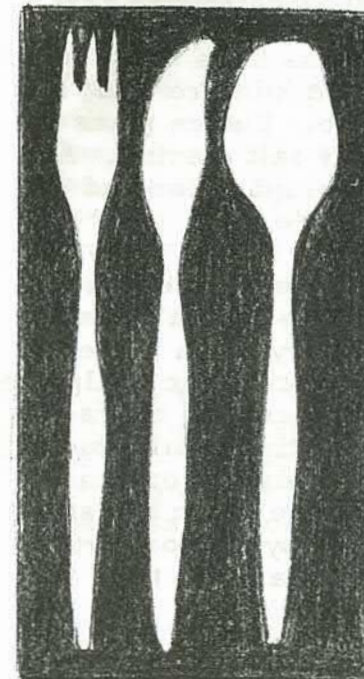
43.

### Drinking Mug

First Prize of 50 guineas Miss M. Jack, Wellington  
Second prize, 20 guineas Mr. J. Laird, Palmerston Nth.  
Third Prize of 10 guineas Miss O. Jones, Onehunga

Judges Comments: The first prize went to a mug of clean and straightforward shape which met all requirements and was of considerable distinction. Its decoration consisted of a simple contrast in colour and texture. A well balanced mug with a well related handle received second prize. The third prize was awarded to a mug of good shape and which fulfilled the functional requirements well.

### THE ART OF THE POTTER



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THE ART AND DESIGN CENTRE  
PALMERSTON NORTH UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Jack Laird

The Pottery is a branch of the Art and Design Centre located in separate buildings in the grounds of Palmerston North's new University College, between a lagoon and the bend of the Manawatu River. It is housed in an old building that has been substantially altered and thoroughly adapted to its new purpose by removing all internal walls and adding large new windows, modern sinks and draining boards, shelves, racks, cupboards, damp and dry stores, and a bulk clay store. There is a tutor's work room and a small experimental glaze laboratory, for the investigation of the possibilities inherent in New Zealand's raw materials. A separate building houses the kilns, the first of which, a seven cubic foot electric kiln with a working temperature of 1250°C, is installed and operating. The concrete foundations for a forty cubic foot two chamber fully draught kiln are laid, and construction is about to commence. Future plans include another draught kiln for salt glazing. A lean-to outhouse is used for clay preparation and maturing, and raw materials storage.

The pottery opened at the beginning of the year with sixty students, the majority of whom are part-time beginners, and offers an introductory and a three year course in ceramics, including ceramic sculpture and architectural decorative ceramics. All courses are geared to the needs of the part-time adult student, and further, intensive special schools are organised at weekends and holidays. These are taken by established potters in New Zealand, and by visitors from overseas who can be persuaded to spare the time to teach.

There are seven kick wheels, and it is planned to add a power wheel for the use of students suffering from disabilities which prevent them from using a kick-wheel. Local clays are mixed to produce earthenware and stoneware bodies, and students are encouraged to search for and use as many local materials as are available.

(This Centre has been established largely through the energy and drive of Jack Laird himself, who is the principal tutor. It is an interesting and worthwhile development in Adult Education. Proof of its value is that pupils travel from Wellington and Masterton for weekly lessons. . Ed.)

SIXTH NEW ZEALAND POTTERS EXHIBITION - 1962.

If we adhere to the original sequence of Exhibitions it will be Dunedin's turn to have the Sixth Show next year. Due to the initiative of the potter, O.C. Stephens, and the Visual Arts Society, the First New Zealand Potters' Exhibition was held there in 1957. We have, however, been approached by the Manawatu Society of Arts, who request that the 1962 exhibition be held in Palmerston North in their new Art Gallery.

In accordance with our rules, this matter will be put to the vote of all subscribing New Zealand members of the New Zealand Potter in our December issue. In this issue both Dunedin and Palmerston North will be asked to put forward their respective claims.

## N E W S

During the first week in March a new institution was opened in Invercargill - a Ceramic Club. Founded some months previously, its members have been busily engaged in altering and renovating a large work-room made available in an old brewery owned by Mr. H.T. Speight of Dunedin. An electric kiln has been built and trial runs have established its efficiency. This has mainly been the work of Max Skerrett, husband of one of the members. Members and their husbands have helped in the setting up of the room. The official opening took the form of a six o'clock party. The Club meets once monthly, as a get-together night, but the members work morning, afternoon or evening, as convenient. So far it is just a hobby for all though in time some members hope to sell their work.

At the Annual Meeting of the Wellington Potters' Association Inc., both Nan Berkeley and Muriel Moody were elected jointly to the presidency. Nan has just left to go round the world, calling on as many potteries as possible en route, but will be back before Muriel and her husband and son leave on their travels in January.

Potters seem confirmed travellers. Helen Dawson of Dunedin is now in England, having flown to Portland, Oregon, to a Rhododendron Conference, and having had a good look at Canada and the U.S.A. on the way to Europe. Graeme Storm has been teaching in Montreal and is soon to go to a Summer Camp in the Laurentian Mountains where he has a position as an arts and crafts tutor for eight weeks. In September he returns via Japan, Hong Kong, Manila and Australia, and is due in New Zealand about 19th October.

Peter Bruce-Dick, an Englishman who caught the pottery virus in New Zealand, is shortly going to work with Michael Cardew in Nigeria. While passing through Australia Peter met and worked with several potters in that hospitable country.

Mirek Smisek and his wife and family leave in August for a six months working holiday in Japan.

Margaret Frankel, formerly of Christchurch, is a member of a pottery group in Canberra. She and her husband have an interesting collection of pottery in their modern and beautiful house.

Cecily Gibson, who comes from Canberra also, recently took part in a six-woman international exhibition of pottery in Tokyo at the Mitsukoshi Department Store. Cecily has been working and studying in Japan for the past year and is at present in Kyoto. The Exhibition was well received, and was visited by Hamada, Kato Hajime, Arakawa, Kaneshige, Fujiwara, and several other famous potters interested in seeing what these foreign women could produce.

In the peaceful atmosphere of Reikorangi, disturbed only when salt-glazing is in progress, Wilf Wright is working full-time as a potter. Beside the big salting kiln he has a small two-chamber stoneware kiln attached to the same chimney.

We have heard of an experimental studio in Belgium, at Dour, south of Mons, where young potters, sculptors and weavers can work free of charge. The patron is a brewer and farmer, Emile Cavenaile. Potters from any part of the world are welcome as long as they have "something to give and something to learn", and the studio is expected to be self-supporting, which means hard but rewarding work. Perhaps some

of our travelling potters might care to pay a visit and work for a while.

The Napier Pottery Group is at last installed in permanent quarters after some years of being very unsettled. Their new room at Gordon House, 24 Priestly Road, is a huge concrete basement in the bottom of a very old house converted into flats. Extensive painting has been required, also the building of shelves and cupboards, and this has been done by a few able-bodied members. Some plumbing and the electric wiring had to be redone at considerable cost. The membership has increased and it is planned to hold several weekend schools throughout the year. Plans are going ahead for the building of two wheels, and with the large electric kiln purchased last year the Group will soon have an excellent set-up.

At a general meeting of Auckland potters called last March a group called the Auckland Studio Potters was constituted. Chairman, L.M. Beck; Secretary, Mrs. B. Brookes; Treasurer, Miss M. Robinson; Committee members, Mesdames M. Milne, P. King; Misses O. Jones, P. Perrin, V. Clear, M. Hardwick-Smith; Messrs. P. Stichbury, D. Pierce, T. Bayliss, D. Watkins. The Auckland Museum authorities have made available their Assembly Hall for limited meetings of the group and so far two meetings have been held. The first was a general discussion with colour slides of previous New Zealand Studio Potters' Exhibitions, and of Peter Stichbury's Nigerian experiences; the second an address by Wallace Gunson on Oriental Ceramics, illustrated by actual pots. Plans are being finalised for an Auckland Provincial Potters' Exhibition to be held at the Museum from 30th August to 10th September. Entries are limited to potters in the Auckland province, and the closing date is Friday, 11th August.

## FIFTH

## NEW ZEALAND POTTERS' EXHIBITION

### THE WORK OF CRAFTSMEN NEEDED

The Secretary for Industries and Commerce, Dr. W.B. Sutch, would like to provide the public offices of New Zealand Trade Commissioners overseas with suitable objects made by New Zealand craftsmen. One obvious need is for a well-designed ash-pot. For the Fifth New Zealand Potters' Exhibition twelve entries are permitted. If every potter entering would include an ash-pot with his entry, it could be of value to both the Department of Industries and Commerce and to himself. The designing of an article both simple and useful should heighten our awareness. The ash-pot should be roomy, suitable for an office; make less prominent the cigarette debris, yet be easily cleaned; and should be reasonably priced. No lettering, ferns or tikis, please, yet something that is New Zealand and would be respected abroad.

It is possible that the Department may also choose from the Exhibition some vases, bowls, cigarette boxes, or anything else suitable for these overseas offices, if the work is of sufficiently high standard. Let's see what we can do.

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Stoneware and Porcelain - D. Rhodes	55s.
Clay and Glazes for the Potter - D. Rhodes	43s.6d.
A Book of Pottery - H. V. Poor	55s.
Complete Book of Pottery Making - J. B. Kenny	49s.6d.
Ceramic Sculpture - J. B. Kenny	55s.
Craftsmanship & Design in Pottery - W. B. Dalton	55s.

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## EXHIBITIONS

April 11 - May 7 - Napier Art Gallery. Pottery by Wailyn Hing, woodcuts from a collection of the late Dr. Maharia Winiata brought back from Peking and mounted and translated by Wailyn Hing, paintings and scrolls in the traditional Chinese manner, by the Auckland artist York Ming Lowe.

The woodcuts are printed on fragile rice paper and are a cheap method of having copies of good paintings for the home. They deal mainly with the subject of bamboo, orchids and birds: subjects of great beauty to the Chinese artist. Artists become well-known for one style of painting (perhaps of bamboo, or orchids), they rarely become masters of three.

The pottery is stoneware, made by Wailyn Hing in Auckland, with a delicate beauty that comes from her Chinese inheritance.

April 17 - May 5 - Centre Gallery, Wellington. Mingei Ceramics sponsored by the Japan Society of New Zealand and arranged by Dr. T. Barrow of the Dominion Museum. This Exhibition presented for the first time in New Zealand is a representative collection of ceramics of the Folk Art or Mingei School, gathered from various collections in our country. The Mingei group of potters is widely recognised for its distinctive contribution to the ceramic art of modern Japan. Although these potters seek inspiration from traditional crafts, their work is creative and contemporary, frequently of profound beauty, and always of practical use. The Folk Craft movement of Japan is associated with the names of Dr. Soetsu Yanagi and master potters Shoji Hamada and Kanjiro Kawai. A section of the Exhibition included traditional ceramics of the type that influence the Mingei potters, and also

examples of their influence on the studio potters of England.

May 31 - June 9 - National Art School, Sydney.  
Studio and Pre-Industrial Pottery arranged by the Potters' Society of N.S.W. in association with the National Art School.

In recent years in Australia there has been an increasing interest in studio pottery, but until now a representative collection of overseas contemporary work and examples of historical pottery which have influenced potters has not been readily accessible to local pottery students. This was one reason for the exhibition. It was also considered that the exhibition should provoke some thought as to the value of art in the community. Our present age is one of extraordinary scientific advances which are reshaping our environment and our way of life. That we also advance culturally will depend on how successfully we integrate the humanities and the arts into our community and into everyday living. The pottery exhibited was chosen for its historical and aesthetic importance and consisted of examples of primitive pottery, tin-glazed and slip trailed earthenware, stoneware and porcelain, and examples of work from fifty contemporary potters. Among these present-day potters the work of sixteen New Zealanders was on show.

B O O K S

Drummond, 21 Little Russell Street,  
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Specialises in books on Pottery and other crafts.

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## INTERCHANGE OF LETTERS

Seaboard Joinery Ltd.,  
151 Marua Road,  
Mt. Wellington,  
Auckland, S.E.6.

3rd November, 1960.

Mr. Bernard Leach,  
St. Ives, ENGLAND.

Dear Sir,

Approximately two years ago, friends of mine returned to New Zealand from a period of study in England, one subject studied being pottery. On their return they gave me a set of drawings, purchased in England, and from them asked me to construct a potter's wheel. The fact that it was a Leach wheel and your special design did not have any significance for me as I had not previously been associated with potters and pottery. The first two wheels cost me £50 each to make. This led to various folk asking me to give a price for a wheel, so we made up a batch of twelve to give a reasonable chance of economic manufacture.

The problems were many, including not being able to procure steel shaftings or bearings of correct dimensions: we eventually had to grind shafts to suit metric bearings. By the time this lot had been finished they cost approximately £50 each to make. We put a motor on one and sold it for £57; then put a small advertisement in the "For Sale" column in the newspaper. Plenty of folk wanted me to give them one, but nobody would produce cash or could see their value, so we just put them aside for some months. Then I heard that Peter Stichbury had returned to New



Zealand and wanted some potters' wheels. He and his wife came out to inspect. I was in a state of "sink or swim" while they sat on the wheels, treadled them, and finally said, "Well, they are just what we want", which gave me a feeling of elation. After convincing the Education Department that they were a necessity, it was only a matter of days before nine wheels were on their way to Ardmore College. Since Mr. Stichbury has been doing such a good job at Ardmore we have had a number of enquiries, some quite persistent, so a third batch has been completed, this time of thirty odd wheels which we have hopes of selling.

But now that others have been writing references and wording advertisements as you will notice in the New Zealand Potter Vol.3 No.1, page 52, I am beginning to feel that we are capitalising on your name, and although I am at present several hundred pounds out of pocket, I do not feel happy continuing to develop the sales and assisting the ever-increasing interest here in pottery unless I have your sanction and blessing to continue using your designs and classifying them as such.

I have read a lot about your own experiences and struggles to establish your industry, and send my congratulations on setting such a fine example to the world.

Thanking you, I await a reply with anticipation,

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) L. COHEN  
 Manager,  
SEABOARD JOINERY LTD.

The Leach Pottery,  
 St. Ives C.  
 ENGLAND.

20th January, 1961.

Dear Mr. Cohen,

Thank you for your letter 3.11.60.

Let me answer forthright that you are welcome to use the design of the "Leach" kick wheel freely for the benefit of yourself and the New Zealand potter. I take a £1 Royalty from each wheel here but want to waive it in New Zealand. We worked it out from older models and did not pay for them after all.

I have a specially warm feeling towards your new school of potters to whom I am a sort of ancient uncle!

When you are asked for power for the wheels you have my authority to say that God gave men, and women, legs to use, and that "Power" is for the factory.

It might be possible to make a more adjustable seat for different lengths of leg I think.

The cost of our wheel here is approximately £30.

With best wishes

Sincerely

*Bernard Leach*

## BOOK REVIEWS

A Book of Pottery - From Mud Into Immortality,  
by Henry Varnum Poor.  
London, Pitman 1959. 192 pp. With Colour Plates,  
Half tone illustrations and line drawings.  
New Zealand Price 55s.

The author is one of America's leading ceramic artists. He is also a painter, and is president of the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. In this excellently presented volume he discusses his philosophy of potting, methods of work and decoration, studies in design, and ceramic sculpture, as well as slips, glazes and enamels, kilns and practical helps and definitions.

The strength of this book lies in the author's presentation of his own philosophy of potting. It is good sound stuff, and is as much a philosophy of life as of potting; its earthy tenets are similar to those which inspire a number of our own stoneware potters.

For me its weakness lies in the chapters on form and decoration. H. V. Poor is a painter, and he states quite clearly that he started doing pottery for the pleasure of decorating it. This statement is borne out by his pots as illustrated.

Nevertheless the book contains a wealth of technical information and the line drawings in the text are delightful.

W. W.

Notes from a Potter's Diary by W. B. Dalton, A. R. C. A.  
London, Pitman 1960. 80 pp. With half-tone plates.

This book could perhaps be interesting to those of us

who have not read Mr. Dalton's first book "Craftsmanship and Design in Pottery" as it is more or less a precis of this volume. But it seems to me that it is neither detailed enough for the beginner nor different enough from the other book to make it valuable for the more advanced potter. However, the book is well-produced and there are some fine illustrations of historic pots.

H. M.

Stoneware and Porcelain. The Art of High-Fired Pottery by Daniel Rhodes. 217 pp. with 55 pages of photographs. New Zealand Price 55s.

Those who own or have read Daniel Rhodes' previous book, "Clay and Glazes for the Potter", will not be disappointed in his latest, dealing particularly with high-fired pottery. His first two chapters give an interesting and informative, though necessarily abbreviated, history of stoneware and porcelain, from about 500 B.C. up to the present day, Oriental, European and American. It is perhaps rather disappointing that in the eighty-two pots illustrated, there are no others than early Chinese and Japanese pots in American Museums, or modern American.

The coverage of the book is excellent, and will prove a wonderful source of practical information to both the beginning and experienced potter. The author deals with bodies and glazes in great variety and detail, referring the reader to his "Clay and Glazes for the Potter" for some of the glaze recipes already given there.

There are, in addition, chapters on throwing, firing and kilns, and a final one on work organisation in a pottery.

If New Zealand potters can apply the "Know-how" to be found in this book to their own work, we should see some very fine stoneware at future exhibitions.

Freda Anderson.

## STUDIO POTTERY

Peter Rushforth  
 Head of Ceramics Department,  
 National Art School, Sydney.

Hamish Keith's review of the Fourth New Zealand Potters' Exhibition, New Zealand Potter Vol. III No. 2, p. 32, seems not only a criticism of a particular exhibition, but it is almost a philippic on certain types of studio pottery. What he says could no doubt be applied to much of the studio pottery which is being produced in many countries throughout the world.

As I am paid to impart my knowledge of studio pottery to an appreciable number of students at the National Art School, Sydney, I am constantly reminded of the seemingly obvious to which Keith pungently focuses our attention. Whilst it behoves the critic to pull down what is false, there is nevertheless the tendency that the more positive virtues become buried in the ashes of damnation, and it is for that reason that I attempt to seek the answers to the problems that the reviewer leaves unresolved.

To separate art from craft, the mundane from the spiritual, the so called fine arts from practical arts and then make the artist a special kind of person, is to prolong the nineteenth-century attitude that art is the prerogative of the painter and the sculptor. This attitude which is implied in the review is the anti-thesis to what most progressive thinkers and educationalists are fighting for in our present age. The industrial revolution and the atomic age give mankind a vista of freedom and security but, left in the wake of changes wrought by industrialism are disunity, conflict, the mass production of ugliness, and the danger that man will become subordinated to systems and

machines. Positive steps towards integration of the arts and everyday living have been made by Walter Gropius in Germany and later in America. In the early days of the Bauhaus painters and designers worked alongside craftsmen directing them what to make, but this method was later discarded for the ideal of making the craftsman an artist-craftsman. In England and Japan the reaction to the spiritual vacuum created by the machine is now well known to us through the work of Bernard Leach and Dr. Yanagi.

Awareness of these things is manifesting itself in many countries, and pottery has been one medium chosen by numerous people to bring creativity and a search for beauty into everyday living. That there is activity in New Zealand and elsewhere in making things, activity not only by quaint old ladies, but by people of all ages, is a healthy sign that people seek beauty (or value), which is considered by many to be a basic human requirement. It is quite possible that the quaint old ladies might be nearer to the scheme of things than others whose activities do not go beyond the passivity of pressing buttons.

The main criterion to the validity of making things by hand in this twentieth century and offering them for sale, is whether the products have some aesthetic value, a value which is singularly lacking in the output from the assembly line. At its best the machine might give us well-designed products, but I do not think it is capable of producing works of art - this has been one factor in the return to crafts in our present age. That there be many amateurs is inevitable, for in spite of the fact that pottery is one of man's oldest crafts, studio pottery belongs entirely to the twentieth century. With the guild system defunct, and the desirable master and apprentice training practically extinct it becomes the responsibility of art colleges and individual potters to rebuild a foundation from which young potters can develop.

The potter, whether professional or amateur, needs no justification, the positive qualities of the activity are only too apparent, it is the potter alongside the architect and designer who can create the atmosphere and environment of our age.

