

January Potter's Day: Gordon Cooke

Jan 21st, 2006 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Knowl Hill Village Hall

In this Issue

- Penny Murray reports on Steve Woodhead's work
- Susan Day reports on the November AGM which was followed by Duncan Ross' presentation.
- Ann Hay reports on Duncan Ross' presentation.
- Application forms for January 2006 Potter's Day with **Gordon Cooke** are now enclosed. Please return this form as soon as possible so that numbers can be confirmed.

Reminders

- The **April Potter's Day**, will be on Saturday **April 8th**, with **Amy Cooper**.
- If you have not renewed your membership please forward your subscriptions to Mary Lomas **ASAP** to ensure that you continue to get your next newsletter!



Gordon Cooke will be demonstrating his hand built sculptural pieces. These will include press moulded and slab built planters; leaf resist sculptural pieces and rolling oxides on porcelain.

A delicious buffet lunch contributed by members makes this an extra special day out, so please consider bringing us a sample of your favourite dish to share. You may even go home with some new recipes to try!

Annette Burgansky

Feb 8th, 2006 at 7:45 PM

Polehampton Junior School

Annette's background is in knitted fashion ware and she has brought her knitting expertise to her ceramic forms. She virtually 'knits' her vessels before making a plaster cast and casting the vessels in porcelain.



WFP Annual Exhibition

Feb 26th to March 4th

Henley Exhibition Hall

Please note that our 2006 Annual Exhibition will be much earlier than in previous years! This main event allows guild members to showcase and sell their work. Exhibition forms and invitations to the preview will be sent to all members in January. We would like to encourage everyone to participate, especially new members. We hope that the photographs of last year's event in the previous newsletter will inspire everyone to exhibit at least one item.

Anita Peach

March 8th, 2006 at 7:45 PM

Polehampton Junior School



Anita worked as a Technical Artist and Cartographer before studying Ceramics at the University of the West of England, Bristol. She gained a BA Hon's Degree in 3D Design and graduated in 1995. She now lives and works in Somerset.

Anita has been making clocks for several years and has done extensive research into the history of time measurement and making links with her Cartographic past. Her work falls into two categories, the more serious pieces reflect her interest in History and Architecture as well as her technical background. Beside these there are more exuberant clocks which express the fun she gets from working with clay.

WFP Committee

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Steve Woodhead has a passion for teapots. Having just completed *The Teapot Book* (Jan 2005, Published by A&C Black), it was not surprising that he opened the evening with slides of teapots, discussing the aesthetic and functional aspects of teapot design. He showed us examples from potters around the world, illustrating the different spout styles in particular. A Mick Casson teapot showed the style that Steve's own design is based on and examples of his own variations on teapots. He trained at summer schools under Derek and Margaret Frith. In order to develop a personal style, he advises looking at someone else's teapot when throwing one. Through his slides, Steve showed that anyone can make a teapot regardless of one's preferred building style; be it thrown, coiled, or slab built. His own work has evolved from solid domestic-style teapots to purely sculptural, non-useable teapots.

Steve's enthusiasm was apparent as he demonstrated the assembly of a teapot: giving us some useful pointers about how subtle changes in the lids, handles, feet and spouts can affect the overall look of the completed pot. He uses Valentines Earthstone clay (<http://www.valentineclays.co.uk>); a white clay that is very plastic and lovely to throw.



His basic and functional teapot has a flamboyant and oversized foot ring. The addition of three knobby feet provides a 'lift' to the pot. A 'tuck' in the foot ring where the feet are positioned accentuates this effect (see picture on back

page). He throws the rim of the pot to a sound thickness to ensure a good fit for the lid and protect against damage during the life of the pot. It is important to Steve that all surfaces of the teapot that touch other surfaces (such as tabletops) are smoothed and cleaned.

To decorate the lid, top of the body of the teapot and the foot ring he uses a serrated cogwheel on a wire. The grooves formed are excellent for the runny glazes to interact and flow over the foot ring without sticking to the kiln-shelf during firing.



The spout was of traditional design and trimmed after throwing. He drills as many holes as possible for the spout to cover as this ensures plenty of tea in the spout when pouring. This creates a good pressure and a good pouring pot. The

spout is cut 1mm below the pot rim .

He used two counter-balanced handles for the pot: a small, solid rolled handle at the back, and a loop at the front of the pot, above the spout. This provides a safe holding position for pouring. Slip was used for attaching the handles. He showed us two other styles of handles that changed the character of the same pot. His handle of multiple rolls of clay, imitates poles of bamboo tied together (see picture on back page).



Above: Counter balanced handles provides safe pouring position
Left: Alternative handle style

The addition of feet provides the finishing touch. They are, like the knob of the lid, a coil of clay with pattern rolled on and then folded to form a loop. These are attached with slip. The location and size of the feet: two on either side of the spout and one directly under the handle or the reverse, also changes the final look of the pot. The feet help enormously with runny glazes. A wax decoration is done between glazes and is fired to cone 9.



The lid fits superbly and it is of a locking style. Two lugs of clay are attached to the lid, lined up with the loops of the knob on the lid, while a corresponding notch is cut in the neck of the pot. The lid is put on and turned round away from the notch and the lid is locked in place. An air hole is put by the notch cut, not in the top of the lid.

Steve gave a very enjoyable and informative talk. More information about Steve and *The Teapot Book* is available at <http://www.teapotbook.com/>

Members Social

Report by Penny Murray

Oct 12th, 2005

The October meeting was a social gathering of thirteen members. It had proved impossible to book a speaker. The weather that evening was lousy and we assumed that this kept members at home! A few members brought unusual pots for us to see, including Lucie Lambourn's interesting teapot collection. Thank you to those who came in support.

Duncan Ross

Report by Ann Hay

Nov 9th, 2005

Duncan's talk followed the AGM and was necessarily limited for time. He showed us slides of his work documenting the development of his work from some of his earliest pieces through to pots which had come out of the kiln just a few weeks ago.

He trained in general arts at Farnham, enthusiastic in other crafts such as fabrics and knitting, and his work shows the influence of some of these techniques. His wife is a tapestry weaver and we saw slides of some of her work too.

Duncan started by making thrown pots and bowls and experimenting with glaze-on-glaze, particularly blue chun over tenmoku, or tenmoku over celadon. Then he became hooked on slips, in particular terra sigillata. He does not need to burnish his pieces, as he applies his slips very thinly using an airbrush, then adds resists, or nets, or fishnet tights(!) and sprays another colour over the top, or sponges on other slips. Sometimes he will use sgraffito: cutting deeply through the base slip and filling the grooves with a different colour, letting it dry and scraping the surface flat with a razor-blade. One thin coat over a contrast slip and then firmly rubbed in places removes some of the top slip, with attractive results.

He throws his pots and turns them, the inside as well, but his decorative interest is the outside. The shapes he chooses to throw tend to be such that the exterior will be the prominent surface. The inside is usually decorated by sponged slip on spray, giving a mottled effect.

His clay is Staffordshire Marl, with molochite mixed in for him by PotteryCrafts. He finds it much more obedient than grog as a temper. The clay for the slips he fetches 'from up the road' in a wheelbarrow. As it is always slightly different he tests each new batch once made up. The slip is pulverised and dried. To 1.5 kilos dry weight of clay he adds 1.5 gm deflocculent. This used to be Calgon but now he uses sodium hexa-metaphosphate (difficult to obtain unless you have a contact in a chemistry department, but Bath Potters Supplies now stocks it.). He mixes this in a bucket with 8 litres of distilled water and leaves it to rest for two days. Clear water will have gathered on the top and about three inches of sludge collected on the bottom. Without disturbing the sludge, he syphons off the rest with a tube. Alternatively, one can make a hole in the side of the bucket three inches up, plug it with a cork. and then by removing the cork the whole lot comes out easily. The result is a strong orange-red with natural iron oxide, but he can add stains to the basic mix.

The bisqued pot, which has been fired to between 960-980 degrees, is decorated and put into home-made fire-clay saggars. These are simple rings with a circular kiln shelf as a base with another on top so that they can be stacked. The pot goes in the saggar upside down surrounded with sawdust. Different wood-dust gives different effects in smoke-firing, as do the addition of things

like seaweed and fir-cones. The kiln (he uses propane gas but any kind of kiln would do, even a dustbin if you have no close neighbours) is fired over three hours to 700 degrees, to keep the sawdust smouldering. He allows it to cool naturally.

Duncan answered all sorts of questions and suggested we looked on his website. He also directed us to the Clazee website www.clazee.com which is a sophisticated chat-line with all sorts of questions and answers. He invited us to visit his studio in the house built by his wife and himself: Daneshay House, 69A Alma Lane, Hale, Farnham GU9 0CT (tel. 01252 710704.). Please call ahead to arrange a visit. For more information, go to www.duncanrossceramics.co.uk.

West Forest Potters AGM

Report by Susan Day

Nov 9th, 2005

The AGM was well attended - eventually. At the published start time of 7pm there were five of us in the room! I suspect that some did not notice the earlier start time, and some arrived in time for the start of Duncan Ross's slide presentation. As Duncan was late due to an unexpected and unhelpful road diversion it meant that there were enough members present to vote in the unchanged Committee. We, the committee, are happy to continue for another year but I do think it is important that we have some new faces joining us next year. If you are interested in learning more about any of the roles please call or email me.

The financial position of the Guild is improving year on year and we had a healthy surplus at the end of the financial year. This puts us in the happy position of needing to spend some money. The first area is some new additions for the library. If there are any books that you would like to see in the library please let us know. Likewise, contact me if you can think of other purchases that the guild would benefit from owning.

The Potters' Days continue to be well received and we also make a profit on these days so we will continue to have two each year. The next one is in January with Gordon Cooke.

The Annual exhibition is from 26th Feb to 4th March next year. This is much earlier than in other years so please start making now!

The current membership is 49. A few people have still not renewed their subs. If you have forgotten to, please send your cheque to Mary Lomas as soon as possible.

If you would like a copy of the full accounts, please contact Lucie Lambourn.

Diary Dates

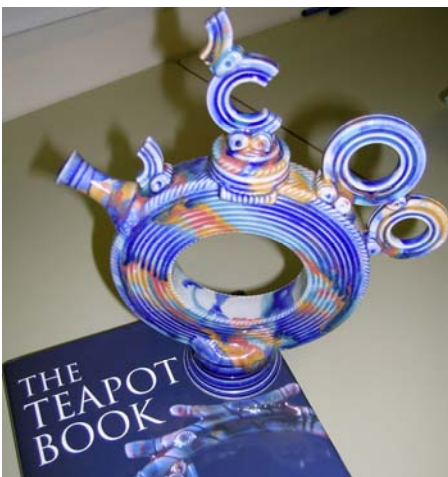
Crafts Council Gallery, Dec 8th — Feb 26th, Table Manners International Contemporary Tableware, www.craftscouncil.org.uk

Ceramic Art London, March 3rd — 5th, presented by the CPA, Royal College of Art. www.ceramics.org.uk



Above: Comparison of teapot with, and without the application of 'feet'

Right: Steve showing how his lids are constructed with 2 lugs at opposite sides which secures the lid when placed in the teapot.



Left: One of Steve's more extravagant designs.

Right: Teapot with 'bamboo' handle.

Above: Detail of oversized foot-ring showing 'lift' and 'tuck' above the teapot's feet.



Above: Duncan's presentation, which followed the AGM, was well attended



Left: 'Flared bowl', one of Duncan's recent works and more examples of his recent pieces