

NEWSLETTER

April/May 2014

www.southernceramicgroup.co.uk/

Email : info@southernceramicgroup.co.uk

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Editorial

Green shoots are all around us at the moment both botanically and economically. As a potter though the seasonal change is not heralded by the emergence of spring bulbs but a reduction in the amount of hot water added to the bucket used for throwing. The warm weather has also brought a clutch of new members to the group and it is gratifying to see that we now total 116.

This edition of the Newsletter continues to show the variety and quality of the SCG members work. This coupled with an account of recent demonstrations and a full "Whats On" programme really illustrates the vibrancy of the group. Many thanks once again for all your contributions.

Keith Menear

2014 Summer Exhibition at the Bishop's Kitchen

We continue to look for new volunteers to join the exhibition team. Volunteers are needed to liaise with the Bishop's Palace, to organise submissions, stewarding, set up and take down, daily sales, payments, and the accounts. We are looking for someone to work with Jan and the team this year as Events Manager with a view to taking on an active role for next year. So, if you would like the show to continue, we need you to come forward and offer your services.

Jan Griffiths



What's On

West Forest Potters Evening sessions: Jeremy Steward (9th April 2014)

Open non-members at £5 per evening.

Wednesday 9 April, 2014 at 7:45pm at Polehampton Junior School

Jeremy trained in Cornwall and then in Cardiff before being invited to join Wobage in 1995 by Mick and Sheila Casson. Since then he has made wheel-thrown, wood-fired salt-glazed stoneware and porcelain.

“Alongside a driving motivation to make functional pots, I am inspired by the soft fluidity of the materials themselves; clay on the wheel, slip and raw-glaze.

My work is decorated in various ways; I often draw, a sort of wet scrafitto, while the pot is still on the wheel, or after the pot has been slipped. Otherwise they might be embellished with stamps, roulettes or finger-wipes, a vocabulary of abstract marks which are forever changing, but which consistently provide movement and fluidity in their accentuation or distortion of form.

My involvement with wood-firing and salt & soda-vapour glazing, forms an intimate and dynamic aspect to my making. Subjected to the vagaries of kiln atmosphere and flame movement, the pots celebrate a meeting between the conscious and unconscious. Control and intention exercised in the studio, is tempered by the inevitability of a certain unpredictability in the kiln-fire.”

Jeremy is a Fellow of the Craft Potters Association of Great Britain.

www.westforestpotters.org.uk/joomla/index.php/forthcoming-speakers

West Forest Potters Annual Exhibition (part of Henley Arts Trail 2014)

Venue 22 May Bank Holiday Weekend Saturday 3rd May to Monday 5th May 2014. Download the brochure from www.henleyartstrail.com



What's On continued



Ceramic Art London, 4-6 April, 10th Anniversary Royal College of Art

Ceramic Art London 2014 is the major selling fair for contemporary studio ceramics at the Royal College of Art and provides a unique showcase for contemporary studio ceramics featuring work from leading national and international makers. www.ceramics.org.uk

Courses events and activities at 318 Ceramics

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Farnham, Surrey GU10 4QT
United Kingdom

For more information [www.318ceramics.co.uk/
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Open Studios for West Berks and North Hampshire

May 2014 This web site goes live with 2014 information and events on 29th March. Sampler exhibition for 100 artists at Insight New Greenham Arts, Newbury (details on website www.open-studios.org.uk).

From the Kiln

Provisional information. A pop-up shop 4th June to 24 July at the Nicholson Centre Maidenhead. Covers 12 potters with distinct skills and styles selling pots and hopefully demonstrations to the public. More details in the next Newsletter

With thanks to *Martin Eastabrook* for contributions to this section

Steyning Arts Summer Art Trail

Alison Milner Gulland will be exhibiting at the Steyning Arts summer trail which is taking place at several venues in Steyning, Bramber, Beeding and Ashurst, during three weekends between 24th May and 8th June 2014.

For further information on membership and Steyning Arts or if you are a local artist and would like to take part in our association please email contact@steyningarts.co.uk. More details of the event at <http://www.steyningarts.co.uk/artists.html>

Alison Milner Gulland

What's On continued

What a difference a year makes. We took over the Creative Gallery in Wareham on 20th March, 2013 – so it's very nearly a year ago as I write.

The Gallery had been formed eight years before by two painters Cliff and Graham Towler, and Rosemarie James, Shairose Jetha and myself had sold there during that time. Cliff and Graham also run a graphics company from the first floor of the premises, and had the ground floor space principally to showcase their art work.

It's been an interesting year – I've introduced a "Maker of the Month" series – an invited maker is featured every month to keep a fresh look to the displays, and I've brought in some other makers on a permanent basis - jeweller, silver smith, glass maker and photographer – to give a broader appeal to the regular stock of the Gallery. Most of the resident makers help out in the Gallery, and make while they are on duty, and I try to make when I'm there too – this gives me making time at home, as well as reducing commission to those who help with the serving of customers.



Dave Walker's exhibition from 2013

So far so good

This year's programme of guest makers is varied: February saw Rose Hatcher's feltwork, during March we hosted Peter Thomas' wood turned bowls and more, and during April we have a display of our resident photographer's work Caroline Walker "Faces and Places" showing pieces from her travels to exotic climes.

So far so good

After two months during which we will highlight our resident artist/makers centred on Purbeck Art Weeks (24th May-8th June) the emphasis for guest makers turns to ceramics/glass.

July: Lance Jones – blown glass
 August: Dave Walker – naked raku pottery
 September: Ian Harris – sculptural ceramics
 October: Emily Stracey – comic animal sculptures
 November: Pippa Hill – animal sculptures
 December: Christmas gifts by resident artist/makers

Do please come and visit us if you are in the Wareham area – St John's Hill, Wareham, BH20 4NB or visit our website www.creativegallerywareham.co.uk where you can like us on facebook too!

In 2015 I plan a programme of guest makers who will all have a clay connection – to be called "A potted history", showcasing the work of my tutors, fellow students from Goldsmith's College in the 1980's and groups who have helped me keep focus over the thirty years plus I've been potting! I will be producing a calendar to celebrate my guests (as I have for this year), and hope that many visitors will join me in this celebration of my journey through years of making.

Happy making.

Fiona Kelly

What's On continued



Ceramics in the Spring Oxmarket Centre of Arts, Off East Street, Chichester 1st to 13th April

A number of SCG members have got together to organise a selling exhibition along with 3 artists including Ron Moody's harbour scenes and Dee McNamara's glass wall panels. Open 10am to 4.30pm except Mondays. See www.oxmarket.com. or www.southernceramicgroup.co.uk

Jan Griffiths

Art in the Garden - 24 May to 1 June

Evergreen, Trampers Lane, North Boarhunt, Hampshire, PO17 6BU:

Jan Griffiths is holding an open studio event showing ceramics for the home and garden with invited ceramist April Stephenson's smoke-fired work. Plus Dee McNamara's contemporary fused glass and Nichola Blake's metal garden pieces. All invited!

Jan Griffiths

Members News

New Members

A very warm welcome to new members:

Dudley Moore of Christchurch
 Ruth Smart of Bognor Regis
 April Stephenson from Southampton
 Anne Turner from Fordingbridge
 Janet Branscombe of Bognor Regis
 Pauline Somerville of Bognor Regis
 Jane Dunning from Portchester

Interested in becoming a member of the Southern Ceramic Group?

Application forms can be found on the group website at:

<http://www.southernceramicgroup.co.uk/Information/SCGMemberApp.pdf>

Next Committee Meeting. The committee meets every few months or so and our next meeting will be on the 5th June 2014. If you have anything you would like to bring to our attention please contact Sandie Dixon 2sandie@tiscali.co.uk or any other member of the committee.

Demonstrations

Ian Gregory Demonstration. 2 March 2014. Petersfield Community Centre

34 SCG members and their guests enjoyed a day of talking, making (and eating) at Petersfield Community Centre, lead by ceramic legend Ian Gregory. Ian reviewed his life in and out of art and ceramics. Early in his career he acted on stage and TV, was an aspiring rock star and pin up. But he had to make a living to support his wives, children and country estate, so it had to be ceramics. Using slides, he talked us through those early days, showing us examples of the exquisitely modelled pottery houses, furniture and equipment which are to be seen on www.ian.gregory.co.uk.

Ian was the co rediscoverer of paper clay. Vegetable matter, especially straw has been and is used to make adobe bricks – unfired, sun dried bricks, for house and other buildings. Paper clay incorporates about 2% fibre into any type of clay, and is available commercially. Or you can mix/make your own - see below.

Ian showed us how he uses it for making his creatures and plinths.

He flattened clay (you could roll it out), and formed it around a sausage of bubble wrap: no slip needed to join the edges. The result looked a bit like an unbaked Cornish pasty. He worked and folded the pasty so it had a crease at the front (for the forelimbs) and one at the back for the hind legs. Hind and rear legs were made from tapered coils, and attached to the body. A head with ears, eye, nose and mouth was attached – and hey-ho – a sleeping Ian Gregory dog was born. A small opening was made to allow the gases from the bubble wrap to escape during firing.

Paper clay forms are left to dry in the usual way prior to bisc firing. Once dry, they can be decorated/ coloured, and / or glazed. They are suitable for single firing. One advantage of paper clay is that it can be dried quickly (for example on a radiator) without cracking.



Ian Gregory: Lazy Dog

During the making, Ian answered questions and offered advice. For making forms (for example dogs) standing on legs, he advised using a 'placer' – a piece of flat clay (rolled or pressed out, about 1cm thick) on which he placed 3 or 4 sheets of newspaper. The dog would then be built on the placer, and fired on the same. This protects delicate structures (legs) from mechanical or heat movements. The newspaper burns off during firing, and the model is less susceptible to damage while it is being handled.

Demonstrations cont



An alternative to using a placer, is to make a plinth. Plinths are readily made by pressing paper clay into a cardboard box. This gives sharp and regular edges for the plinth. The clay shrinks as it dries, so the plinth can readily be removed and decorated/ carved once leather hard. The animal can then be built on top of the plinth.

Paper clay can be used to repair cracks or breakages in either paper clay or non paper clay bodies. A dilute solution of sodium silicate is applied to the broken surfaces, and soft paper clay is applied to the surfaces which are then brought (and held) together. These repairs are successful on unfired clay, and in many instances on bisc fired pieces prior to glazing.

Tall pieces, (mainly dogs !) with long legs, or relatively heavy bodies can be supported using metal (or wooden) kebab skewers. Ian made 4 legs from rolls of paper clay, pierced them down their length with skewer which he pushed into a polystyrene block. Joining the limbs with a roll of clay (a bit like a Roman arch) he had the body and limbs. A head with ears, eyes and nose was attached at one end, a tail at the other. Skewers were located strategically to support bits which might sag, and the legs were sculpted by paring away to the desired form.

The pieces were left to dry to leather hardness with the skewers in place. If left overnight, the skewers should be given a twist to make sure they could later be removed: (if they cannot be removed then no matter – wooden skewers can be trimmed short and left to burn out during firing).

Making of Standing Dog

After a fine ‘American’ lunch, we got out our clay. Ian got us to make an ‘object’ – animal, mineral or vegetable in 3 minutes. We then tried to make the same object with our eyes closed – a fine exercise in motor memory.

After this, we all had a go at making a ‘creature’ using clay, skewers and polystyrene blocks – and some very fine creatures were made in a short time. These were taken home by the proud creators, still skewered to their building blocks.

The two creatures which Ian made were auctioned at the end of the day in support of Ian’s favourite charity www.SightSavers.com



Thanks Ian, it was an entertaining and instructive day

Zyg Kruk

Demonstrations cont.

Paper Clay and Red Pepper Salad

You can buy paper clay from retailers – not all of them carry the full range, as paper clay can be made from earthenware, stoneware or porcelain, with or without grog.

Making your own paper clay allows you to experiment. These are my recipes

Take 1 roll of soft toilet tissue (weight is about 150g for a full roll), break up into sheets, place in a 4 litre container, and pour on 1 litre of very hot water. Stir vigorously to make a uniform slurry – use a stout stick or a plaster stirrer (attached to a slow speed electric drill). Tesco, Lidl or Sainsbury loo rolls are fine, as are more expensive tissues.

If you are using powdered clay, add this to the slurry and keep on stirring. The proportions to use are 7.5 kg of clay (powder or block) to 150g of paper. If you juggle with the sums this makes the paper clay 2% paper by weight – you can vary this, but 2% is a good start. Add a bit of water if it gets very stiff.

If you are using your favourite clay from a block, then cut or break this up into pieces as small as you have the patience. Add them to the slurry, stirring all the time, adding water (cold or warm), stirring all the time. I use an old food processor with a cutting blade. I add about 1kg of clay (broken up into chunks) to about 150ml slurry plus 100 ml water. Run the food processor until the mix forms a uniform goo (about 5 min), scoop it out and make the next batch.

If the paper clay is too runny to use, dry it on a plaster batt. If it is kept wet (in a plastic bag), then it can start smelling and become discoloured as the paper starts to break down (microbial action). A way round this is to add some mild bleach (for example a couple of baby bottle sterilising tablets to the water used to make up the slurry). Alternatively, you can dry the paper clay as flat sheets- if kept dry, it will then keep indefinitely. Reconstitute it with water.

When making paper clay from dried clay powder, observe usual safety precautions for handling powder (protect your eyes and wear a breathing protector). A good mix to start with uses ball clay 70%, china clay 20%, flint 10% + 2% paper; add grog as you see fit. This mixture fires happily up to stoneware temperatures, but is equally good at earthenware temperatures.

There was a very fine spread for the American lunch – thank you. For those who liked the red pepper salad here is the recipe

500g red peppers, de seeded and sliced
 400g tinned tomatoes
 70g anchovies (in olive oil) – chopped; these are salty so no need for extra salt
 2 large garlic cloves – crushed or diced
 Extra slug of olive oil
 Generous dollop of freshly ground black pepper
 100ml water

Place all the above in a suitable dish into a microwave.
 Max setting (850 watts in mine) for 30 min.

Eat hot or cold. Any left over, zap in a blender to make a hot or cold soup.



Members Profile

Charles Stileman



I first started potting in the early 1970's at evening classes at Morley College in London following on from my interest in archaeology. I enjoy developing pottery glazes which utilises my research experience, having developed alloys as a Research Metallurgist and my study of geology and mineralogy. I continued classes at Morley College until 1990 when I moved down to the Romsey area where I joined the Southern Ceramics Group and bought my own kiln.

I make functional stoneware pottery fired in a toploader and all my work until a few years ago was thrown on a Leach kick wheel before getting an electric wheel. Most of the materials such as quartz, feldspars and clays used to formulate glazes are derived from "granite", which has been broken down by weathering and formed into mineral deposits by geological processes. I like the idea that in making up glazes one is reversing this process. Because of the wide range of materials available the choice for combinations is endless.

I make up all my glazes from raw materials. Instead of adding colouring oxides to the glaze, I prefer to add these in the form of a slip applied to the raw clay before the initial "biscuit" firing. During the subsequent "glaze" firing interesting colour effects can then result from interaction of the glaze with the oxides.

I had been experimenting with wood ash glazes taking ash from the fireplace. I found that over dark clay, without oxide, this gave an attractive bluish "chun" colour this being a purely optical effect. I had previously used a dolomite glaze which gave a pleasing grey colour over black slip containing cobalt. To my surprise on applying the wood ash over this black slip it reacted to give an attractive blue. Likewise over a copper containing green slip I found it gave attractive greens and blue greens.

While using wood ash glaze on pots for an exhibition in 1997 I found that only one out of five batches of ash from the fireplace gave the correct colour response. Because of this unpredictability of ash from the fireplace I have developed with my computer programme an artificial ash made up from raw materials. Colours obtained are almost identical to those from natural wood ash without the need for tedious washing and sieving. My articles on natural and artificial ash glazes were published in Ceramic Review CR181 (2001) and CR202 (2002) respectively.

I have held two solo exhibitions in Romsey (in 1997 and 2000) and one in Bedfordshire in 2003 and have exhibited annually with the Lower Test Valley at King John's House, Romsey. I have also participated in exhibitions with the Southern Ceramics Group.

The Southern Ceramics Group has provided the opportunity to make many potter friends and over the years to attend lectures given by well known potters such as Mick Casson, Mike Dodd, Wally Keeler, Sven Bayer, Tim Andrews, Clive Bowen, Ian Gregory to name a few. I get great pleasure from the Glaze Group (formed in about 1999) of which I am a founder member where with kindred spirits we continue to share our glaze results, problems and ideas.



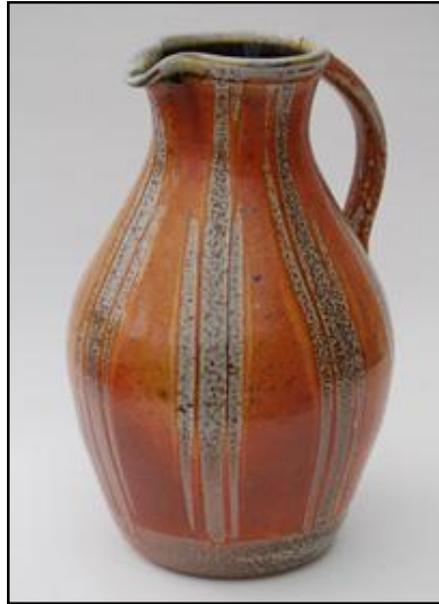
Glaze Group Meeting

Glaze Group Meeting: March 2014

The glaze group meets on the second Tuesday of alternate months.

The Glaze Group met at Diana Carter's house. This month present were Charles Stileman, Tony Thompson,, John Howell, Di Wren, Diana Carter and three new members, Liza Hughes, Pat Greenland and Barbie Plais-tow.

John brought along several pots by David Frith, John Jelfs and Neil Tregear (see photos) and a discussion and analysis of them proved very interesting.



Di brought a pot she had glazed using white clay with an iron oxide slip over it, covered with a blue slip and bisque fired. It was glazed with Charles' artificial ash glaze and double glazed with a Red iron oxide glaze to Cone 6 This produced quite an impressive chun effect. However, Charles had some pots he had fired using an iron bearing clay and fired to a higher temperature and these had a similarly good chun effect.

Pat was interested in finding suitable glazes for realistic sculptural work and the group made several appropriate suggestions.

Barbie had been experimenting with Charles' artificial ash and had produced some exciting colours.

The meeting concluded with lunch

New members are always welcome at Glaze Group, which meets every two months. The next meeting will be on Tuesday 13th May. Contact Charles Stileman.

Diana Wren

Tribute

ERIC JAMES MELLON

A tribute to Eric Mellon from Diana Wren with photographs from Rose Bates

Memories of Eric Mellon.

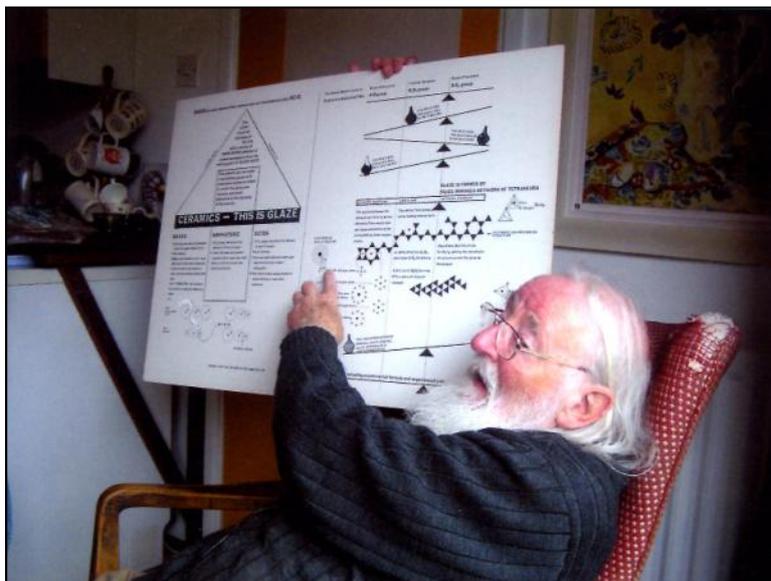
I met Eric in 2006 when I was stewarding a Southern Ceramics Group exhibition at the Ox-market in Chichester. He had come to look at the work we had on display and was very interested in everything he saw. He fell into conversation with me and I told him I was a member of the SCG Glaze group. He was full of enthusiasm and told me all about the glazes he had devised and the book he had newly published on the subject. He invited the Glaze Group to visit his house to see his work and promised to explain his glaze formulations.

We were very excited to be going to see such a famous potter. We planned a picnic. Everyone took along a dish they had made – a potter's lunch.



What a wonderful experience. First of all, we looked at his collection of art work, not only his own pieces, but those of many famous potters - I was very excited to see some Picassos. I was also enchanted by Eric's lovely wood engravings, and buying one from his exhibition at the Forge Gallery.

Next he gave a brilliant tutorial on glaze making and we saw his impeccable triaxial glaze tests and experimental work.



He showed us examples of his drawings and paintings. His considerable skills inform his beautiful sensual pottery. He amused us by displaying his collection of kimonos, which he said had been worn by his various life models.

Tribute

After lunch, during which he devoured sausage rolls with enthusiasm, he took us out into his garden and insisted we went home laden with apples from his trees, and signed copies of his book.

This was a really amazing day, which I think none of us will ever forget. What a generous, amusing, clever man! He will be much missed.

Rose wisely took her camera with her and I am sending you some of the pictures she took that day. There is Eric showing us a glaze chart, his collection of kimonos and works, enjoying lunch, and in the garden by the apple trees with the group.

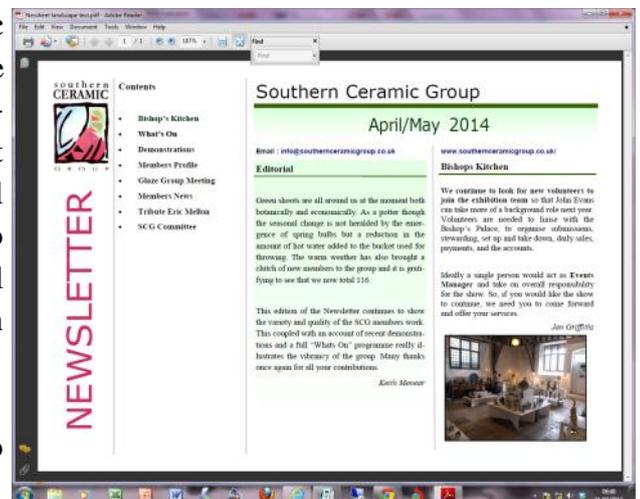
*Diana Wren
Rose Bates,
Southern Ceramics Glaze Group*



Newsletter

We have been publishing the SCG Newsletter in electronic format now for six editions. Its assumed that most people view the Newsletter on their PC or tablet screen and to facilitate this the format could be changed from its current portrait to a landscape format (see example). This would allow the full page of the newsletter to be displayed rather than having to scroll down the screen. However, we know some people still print out the newsletter and this may not be so convenient in this aspect ratio.

We would love to hear you views on this proposed change to keith.menear@hotmail.co.uk



Keith Menear

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NEXT COPY DEADLINE : 17th May 2014

Please send contributions to : keith.menear@hotmail.co.uk

Next Newsletter due : 1st June 2014

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If so please contact Rolf Hawkins

email: rolf.hawkins@winchester.anglican.org

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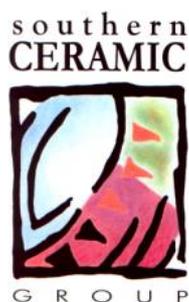
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