



# ASP NEWS

June 2002

The Newsletter of the  
Auckland Studio Potters  
Society Inc.  
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CLAY**

**New Shipment in  
Fresh stoneware,  
earthenware,  
sculpture clays**

## Centre and General News:

*Peter Lange*

Bravo Peter Stichbury MNZM !! (it's the equivalent of the MBE for those still working in Imperial measurements). Peter has worked with clay for 40 or more years, in a variety of situations and countries, alongside legends like Bernard Leach and Michael Cardew, with students and in co-operative situations.

Always he has produced work of the utmost craftsmanship and utility, as a rule in high fired reduced stoneware, impeccably designed and glazed. At the sort of age when most of us would want to turn our kilns into a wine cellar he is still producing, and each year his (and Diane's) end-of-year Open Day gets bigger and better.

He teaches at the ASP Centre of course, and many of his students refuse to leave - even on those days when they may not be learning anything directly from Peter, there is always the good feeling in the class of being in the presence of a master potter. He commands the highest respect from his peers throughout NZ and overseas and we are lucky to have him as part of our team.

It's good to see many awards going to the artists of New Zealand these days - Greer Twiss has taught here and he was given a substantial gong.

There's a 48 hour firing about to happen - it's an experiment to study the effects of wood over that time; longer than a normal wood firing but shorter than an anagama. Others may want to do the same if it is successful. It's not a big kiln (30 cuft) and 4 people should get a reasonable number of pots out. But it is a lot of work.

Duncan, Lex and I have been invited to Japan in August to an international conference dealing with wood-firing and other issues. We will bring back a



trunkful of slides for a members' night - tea will be served in full kimono. Chester has arranged this contact with a potter in Aomori, northern Honshu who is bringing in 50 potters from around the world for 10 days to demonstrate, lecture and interact. I understand Bruce Martin from the Hawkes Bay is going too.

Just had the insurance bill for this year. It's gone up 25%! September 11<sup>th</sup> is given as the reason for this massive increase. That was a disaster, but please! Everyone all around the world is conned into paying another 25% because of a terrorist attack in New York involving two buildings in one street in one city in one country in one part of the world. Admittedly they were valuable buildings - replacement

cost is quoted as \$10 billion dollars more than the bill to rebuild the whole of Afghanistan after the bombing.

Down the end of Captain Springs Rd where the biggest risk is not hooded extremists but stray golf balls and stray kids (just had another break-in this week, a broken window, and the video player gone; once again no chance of insurance payout) we cop a massive extra bill from a parasitical industry that covers its butt faster than a Bedouin on a runaway camel. We have spent tens of thousands of dollars on insurance over the last 20 years and not one of our many recent burglaries is worth claiming on. We now have another buzzer over the back door, more security lights, a bucket of sheep's offal balanced over the door to the office (just kidding, but it's nice to daydream about), and no doubt the ingenious and lightning fast lads who rob us blind will be looking forward to overcoming these expensive new challenges.

Nicky Jolly has just had a special birthday. Not allowed to tell you which one but think of a number, double it, take away the number you first thought of, then do that again, then add 40 and you'll be in the area. Well done.

The new programme for term 3 is enclosed ... this present term is a bit down on numbers and we need to get them

*Continued on page 2*



*Duncan hard at work*

back up again. You may not want to come to classes yourself, but perhaps you have a friend who has admired your work and just needs a bit of a push ... give them that push. What about buying your loved one a course as an early birthday present - they might turn out to be great potters. What would have happened if a certain mum had ignored the notice in the window of the Lyon's tearooms at St Ives all those years ago? The new programme is similar to this term; note the addition of a repeat of the glass-casting course that was so popular in the first term. Book early for this one. Also the Wednesday evening advanced course is set to wind down by year's end to make way for the proposed Diploma course in the new year. More on that before long.

The Annual ASP Exhibition at Mairangi is in September – it's not as far off as you think. The Waiheke Exhibition was not the good seller we thought it would be given the range of smaller, less expensive pots. However it would be good if this was only the start of a longer relationship. It's a great Gallery and would suit a regular exhibition along with an enjoyable members' off-shore expedition each time.

See you at the Centre sometime ☺

## OUR WEB SITE

[www.ceramics.co.nz](http://www.ceramics.co.nz)

Great news! We have been given a grant of \$5000 from the Auckland City Council to help towards our web-site construction and maintenance. A lot of the work as a result of that funding will be done behind the scenes sorting out our database and linking it to the website. Hopefully within a month or so we will have a fully functioning site underway. It's already pretty impressive and worth looking at. If you go to "Gallery" on the site you will find the offer of space to show off your work to the world. The amount of information you are able to put there is very generous – room for 5 photos and an A5 page of text, including all of your address and contact details. Get the information to us as soon as you are able and we will install it on the site for only \$50 per year.

But Wait!! The first 10 will get this service for only \$25 for the first year. This information should be supplied on disk or email, and we can scan in photos. ☺

# Term 3 classes

## Monday Mornings - Peter Lange - 15th July to 16th September

This is a class for beginners and those with little experience. The course covers only wheel-throwing and basic glazing and firing. There will also be an opportunity to experiment with glazing and firing.

## Monday Evenings - Ian Axtel - 15th July to 16th September

An ideal course for those starting with clay, either on the wheel or slab-building. By the end of the term you will be familiar with many aspects of making good domestic ware.

## Tuesday Evenings - Renton Murray - 16th July to 17th September

An ideal course for those starting with clay, either on the wheel or slab-building. By the end of the term you will be familiar with many aspects of making good domestic ware.

## Wednesday Mornings - Duncan Shearer - 17th July to 18th September

This class is an excellent introduction to handbuilding. Duncan is an expert in this area and has also had a lot of experience with glazes. A good class for your first touch of clay or to experiment with form and surface treatments.

## Wednesday Evenings - Peter Collis - 17th July to 18th September

This course is designed to challenge those students who have already mastered their basic making skills. It is a chance to focus on design and to receive feedback about your work from your tutor. There will be a guest tutor for some of the course which will give students a chance to learn a more specialised technique, contact the Centre for more details.

## Thursday Mornings - Peter Stichbury - 18th July to 19th September

Teacher with over 40 years potting, teaching & exhibiting experience. The course concentrates on domestic ware. Extend your throwing, assembling and glazing skills. Peter is also keen to take on beginners.

## Thursday Evenings - Margaret Sumich - 18th July to 19th September

25 years potting experience. Throwing, handbuilding, raku - beginners and experienced students welcome. An ideal class for first time night students who want to try more than one approach to clay in their first term.

## Glass Casting - Rob Hooper - 20th July to 7th September 9.30am-12.30pm

Come and learn all about this amazing technique. You will start off making simple sand moulds for slumping sheet glass into. Then the course will cover all the stages of lost wax glass casting, including the various moulds, glasses, kiln firings and finishing required. The course fee does not cover material expenses (mould materials and glass) or kiln time, both of which vary according to the scale of your object.

## Allude

Ceramic Show of the Year (if not the last few years) "Allude" work by Bronwynne Cornish on show at Gallery No 5 in the Auckland City Art Gallery. In this exhibition Bronwynne has taken individual elements out of a range of Frances Hodgkins paintings and drawings and reproduced them in clay in three-dimensions using simple brushed-on slips, and placed them in front of the original paintings.

Most of the objects she has turned her unique gaze on are domestic pottery, but some include other objects like shoes and cloth. The effect of this juxtaposition, or allusion, is stunningly serene and while clever with one or two wonderful visual

tricks, is entirely captivating. To sit on the comfortable seat in the middle of this gallery and spend time studying the paintings and the pots and the cumulative effect of both is a great experience. This is an exhibition NOT TO BE MISSED by any ASP member.

The Auckland Art Gallery has a dismissive attitude to clay particularly in the form that most potters are familiar – the vessel, but now and then they let a little sneak through and they are to be congratulated for staging this exhibition. The last show of this stature was the unforgettable "Songs Of The Gulf" by Denis O'Connor nearly 20 years ago ☺



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## THE TILE by Kenneth Clark

Howard Williams

"The Tile" is published by the Crowood Press, Ramsbury, Wiltshire, SN8 2HR, UK, where it will have a retail price of £22.50 - or its current equivalent here in NZ\$.

Tiles are fascinating, whether seen en masse in the Alhambra or individually in the home. They lend themselves to an extraordinary diversity of treatments, and are compelling to makers and collector as well as to the layman. Even with the wealth of history, makers are still developing and exploring new techniques that involve art and design.

This book gives an overview of making, decorating and using tiles. It emphasises the range of methods employed together with the use of graphic imagery particular to our time. Some thirty techniques are illustrated and explained. Tile-making using earthenware, stoneware, porcelain and payer clay is described, combined with the decorative techniques of painting, screenprinting, sgraffito and many others.

The work of leading tile designers is reviewed, with details of their approaches and applications. Practical information is also given: uses for tiles including walls, floors, roofs, fireplaces and stoves; details on how to fix tiles, ranging from murals to swimming pools; and advice on how to protect work from threats such as frost, movement and vandals. Written by a distinguished tile designer and maker, and with over 300 lavish illustrations, "The Tile" is sure to captivate everyone interested in learning and appreciating the skills of this beautiful ceramic form. Work by New Zealand artists in this book includes Brian Gartside, Jo Luping, Howard Williams and Porteous Tiles.

Kenneth Clark was born in New

Zealand but has lived and worked in England since the early 1940s. He studied at the Slade School of Fine Art and then at the Central School of Art and Design. He has been involved in ceramics for over fifty years, during which time he has been in partnership with his wife Ann in running Kenneth Clark Ceramics. He has also acted as designer and consultant designer to various other firms making either ceramics, tiles, wood or metal.

While he retired from Kenneth Clark Ceramics in 1997, he and his wife continue working as freelance designer-makers. This is his fourth book on ceramics. In 1990 he was awarded the MBE for services to Art and Design, and in 1991 he was awarded the Silver Medal of the Society of Designer Craftsmen.

An exhibition of Kenneth Clark's pottery to launch the book in New Zealand was held at Avid Gallery, Wellington on 3 May

## "The Figure in Clay" by Betty Blandino

Book Review by Anneke Borren

Published November 2001 by A C Black Publishers, London, UK

ISBN - 07136 52055. UK retail price £25.

As potters, we are all aware of the generic use of clay in representing humans, and vice versa, the descriptions of clay vessels as human body parts - "the foot of a pot, the belly, the neck, its bottom, the hand(le)", etc.

This book gives an instantly recognisable history of the development

of the human form in clay - a précis being the chapter headings:

Earliest Clay Figures

The Figure painted on Clay

The Pot as Figure

Some Clay Figures in the Western Tradition

Other Traditions

The Figure in Contemporary Ceramics

Having visited the Czech Republic and the Republic of Slovakia last year, I'm in tune with the Middle European Venuses with which the book starts, the Venus of Willendorf, 30,000 - 25,000 BC being the most famous, and connect them instantly with a Picasso quote of today:

"Art is a way of seizing power by giving form to our terrors as well as our desires."

Another common thread is how often clay objects have been used to service and commemorate the dead - one of the latest discoveries of course, in 1974, being the mausoleum of Qin Shi Huangdi, the "Chinese Soldiers" of 3rd Century BC China.

Betty Blandino's style of writing and the use of photographic examples, make this book very easy to browse through, as well as informing one with many details of fact. So often the clay figure is the chronicler of our understanding of the past, and an anthropological feast of emotional experiences all over the world - "everyday", "ritual", "political", "human", "pathos", "joie de vivre", "satire", "sexuality", "celebration", "horror", "tragedy".....

*Many of the images used I'm familiar with, but what struck me often was the size-awareness - the book cover uses a Badakian figure from Egypt, 4,500 - 4,000 BC, which feels so modern, and is sized in actuality, 11cms by 4.6cms - so much smaller than I envisaged.*

*As is acknowledged, it would be impossible to represent all anthropological material available, and there are quite a few omissions, as in my personal favourite, Cycladic figures.*

The contemporary section is mostly UK based with, for me, an important discovery in the person and work of expatriate New Zealander, William Newland, who arrived in the UK in the 1940s and worked in London University's Institute of Education - Roy Cowan and Juliet Peter surely met him - an interesting link with NZ's early history of clay.

This is definitely a book belonging in my clay library, and a recommended buy.

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# classified

All phone numbers in these sections are in the Auckland free-calling area unless an area code is explicitly stated.

## For Sale:

I have a Talisman electric potters wheel for sale, plus a stack of bats and tools. The wheel is in good condition, \$550 ono Phone Anita 09 402 7991

2 cuft front loader, old-style, single phase. Pyrometer probe OK but gauge broken. \$100. Phone Jude 6220290 or 6300911 (AH)

Cowley wheel. Single direction, excellent condition. \$400. Phone Evelyn 6246508

John Lawrence has white bisque tiles available at \$26 (plus freight) for 68 tiles. Ph 06 3746371

Clay For Sale: The ASP has a good range of Macs Mud. Plus we also have a pile of Raku Red on hand.

"Len Castle, Potter". This book will be published during October 2002. We have forms at the Centre for advance orders, either the \$85 Standard Edition or the \$300 Collector's Edition.

## Wanted:

Pottery Tutor at Nathan Homestead. Thursday evening class term 3. For hand-building, slabwork. Basic throwing. Ph Pat 2670180.

Tutor for a Boys' Club at Greenlane for 4 – 6 weeks. 12 boys 12 – 16 yo. Phone Stan 6388171.

Missing from our library: "Handmade Tiles" by Frank Giorgini.

## Electricians:

Electrical Ltd are experienced in kiln installations. They have installed our Centre kilns and do a great job. Phone 6365031.

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# exhibitions

There's a new gallery opened: Red Herring – 9 Mt Eden Road.

## The Gold Coast Ceramic Award:

First prize (acquisitive) \$A10,000. Entry forms at [www.ceramicaward.com](http://www.ceramicaward.com) by 28<sup>th</sup> June.

## The 53<sup>rd</sup> Faenza Award:

We have an inferior copy here to copy from. Better to check the form on [www.micfaenza.com](http://www.micfaenza.com). Entries in by 13<sup>th</sup> July.

## Masterworks:

At the Viaduct: Katherine Smyth - a new potter on the Auckland scene; from Wellington and with a background in food. Very stylish pieces. June 10<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>. At Ponsonby: Jeff Mincham from Australia until June 16<sup>th</sup>.

## Albany Village Gallery:

John Green's exhibition 16<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> June.

## Pots of Ponsonby:

Margaret Sumich in the Window  
9th June to 23rd June  
Jeff Scholes in the Window  
24th July to 11th August

# notices

Stolen from the old building: Our video player. A broken window in the kitchen from the same incident to repair as well.

## Whoops

Ian Firth's obituary in last month's newsletter was wrongly attributed – it was written by Howard Williams.

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## May Members' Night

Ceramic Workshop in China 2001

Greg Barron and Jin Ling drove down from Whangarei through a storm to make it to the ASP for our monthly meeting, bringing their own video and player (sensible), and took us by way of very well shot video through their three month adventure in China. Greg obviously has a steady hand (and that may be reflected in his wonderfully thrown work) because his camera stayed very firmly on the subject without wavering or dashing about, making the two hours of film very easy to watch, with time to take in the range of very interesting images.

Many different scenes like the bronze foundry with work on larger-than-life figures, kiln building, factory workers throwing, water-driven clay stampers thumping up and down, work in progress at the workshop they attended with 12 or so other international potters. The politics and tensions of a group like this were interesting too, with the odd nose out of joint and patience stretched on occasion, a sort of Ceramic Big Brother.

The "Slide Show From Hell" was repeated from the Big Smoke weekend, and it finished off the evening on a relaxed note. It was a pity that there were only about 10 members there. Out of 300 it's not such a good rate, and I guess the question of holding these evenings at all should go back to the Committee again for review. We have a Presbyterian sense of duty to entertain our esteemed members at least once a month, but there is a risk in inviting speakers from a long distance. The good side to it was that those who did turn up had a worthwhile evening. Thanks to Greg and Jin Ling.

So .... The June Members' Night will be in July (possibly)

## ASP New Members

Welcome to:

Mark Brockie (great to see him up and about)

Ruben Harries

Noelle Jakeman

Otago Potters Group,

Anita Yee

Nancy Wilson (good to have you back too).