



Peter Stichbury hung up his teaching apron at the end of 2010 with a slap-up morning tea at the Centre after 17 years of taking a very popular Thursday class. He has been a huge influence on students there and will be really missed. He has promised to keep popping in for a cup of tea. Thank you Peter.

Happy New Year

Peter Lange

The next three months are going to be very busy! There are at least 12 exhibitions lined up for the March-April period and of course the big event in our lives this year is the "Big Smoke" Conference at Unitec starting April 1st. This is one event that you all must get to we need you and you definitely need it. A weekend full of exceptional ceramic activities, tuition and social events. It would be great if all ASP members were able to book in - it's our 50th year, there's no need to travel, so the cost is minimal this year, and potters from all over the country (and some from off-shore) are coming to our place. Get your registration forms in early and get a discount! We want you at our party. Demonstrations, illustrated talks, bus tours, music, firings, food and drink, dancing even.

Just got in from checking out the Centre after a break-in over the new year - got a call from Susan to say that the women's toilet had been stolen, no evidence to follow up, in fact she had nothing to go on at all (actually I made that bit up, couldn't resist it) when I got there I found that the toilet pan was still there (to my relief), and that it was the cistern



The Great Drain Robbery

that had been nicked. In my opinion, as a cisterns analyst, I would say it's probably already on its way to Romania or wherever cistern prices are high right now. Weird or what? In the meantime the men's toilet will have to do in lieu, at least until we are flush enough to replace it. Keep an eye out for it on Trademe, it was bog-standard white and had a tell-tale whistle like a 747 taking off when it was filling up. I hope it's installed next to their bedroom and keeps them awake all night.

The "Playing With Fire" ASP book is under production in China - it's been an enjoyable and educational exercise for Stuart and me, and we have had a lot of support from potting people, Creative NZ, the ASP committee and Trien in particular. It got bigger and bigger and now it is 320 pages, with lots of photos of people and pots, and some compelling writing. It will retail for \$75 but ASP and NZSP members will get \$20 off that! So for \$55 you will get a fine hard-cover, full-colour book that celebrates the first 50 years of the ASP. There is a form with this newsletter to pre-order. The book is out in late March and it is a limited run so don't delay your order. Every ASP member should own one of these.

The Waiheke Sculpture on the Gulf walk is coming up at the end of January (www.sculptureonthegulf.co.nz) and there will be a ceramic component in the mix, and as usual a lot of other interesting sculptures on this beautiful 2km walk around the coastline.

There has been a marked dropping-off in casual use of the Centre over the last 6 months. Nobody seems to have any useful theories on why that has happened - it doesn't seem too expensive (and has been the same fee for years anyway) but whatever the reason keep in mind that the Centre is there to be used and we welcome casual users each afternoon and Saturday; for your modest fee you get a lot of equipment to play with, plus endless tea and coffee, friendly help and sound advice, therapy and gossip.

My first class of the year is going to be a bit like being back in school - a lecture on the difference between stoneware and earthenware, which racks are the right ones, and which clay and which glazes suit which kiln and get the results wanted. My class is not too bad actually, but there is a lot of confusion out there and more failures than there should be. We are about to introduce a Cone 5 option and the confusion will triple. It's not your pots we are worried about, it's our shelves and kilns. 100 students and about 30 choices of clay and glaze, what are the odds of disaster?

See you at the Centre during the year.

Cone5Down

The first meeting of 2011 for the Cone 5 glaze group will be held at the Centre on Sunday, 6 February, at 10am. New members are welcome at any time, so please feel free to come along! Any questions, please e-mail Suzy at suzy@dunser.com.

The Starving Artist

Susan St Lawrence

A little gem of an art cafe has opened its doors just around the corner from ASP. Pah Homestead, 72 Hillsborough Rd, the new home of the James Wallace Art Trust, can not only confidently boast about its art collection but also about its cafe fare.

Having feasted our eyes and hearts on some of New Zealand's best contemporary art, Carol and I satisfied our taste buds on the elegant cafe veranda overlooking Monte Cecilia Park. We can recommend the finger sandwiches (nostalgia with a tasty modern twist) and the whole mushrooms on rice. The French fries were light, fresh and (unfortunately) totally irresistible. The cafe scores a 10 across the board for affordability, taste, presentation and atmosphere. It also gets a bonus point for closeness to ASP and another one for ceramic celebrity sightings: L & J Dawson were spotted partaking of a cuppa after viewing the "Landscape and Self-Portrait" exhibition. It loses 2 points though for having only 3 female artists on show.

Corellis Cafe, 46 Victoria Rd, Devonport, is also a recently opened cafe and has the added appeal of being owned and run by Ann O'Sullivan, one of ASP's own. Sitting at the top of the Devonport rise beside the rescued historic Victoria Picture Theatre, Corellis is a great destination or local hangout. Ann has created a comfortable drop-in cafe atmosphere with affordable, tasty food, freshly ground coffee and welcoming ambience. I can personally recommend the baked vegetable tart, coconut prawns and sticky date pudding (not necessarily all in one sitting). There's a range of seating from tables through to comfy sofas (claimed on Tuesday mornings by the local craft group).

Each month a ceramic artist is showcased eg. Carol Stewart, Fiona Lander and this month Susan St Lawrence (give Ann a ring if you would like your work on show there). Artwork on the walls changes continually. Last month was 'upcycled' handbags by a Devonportonian woman who revitalises old handbags in a most delightful way.

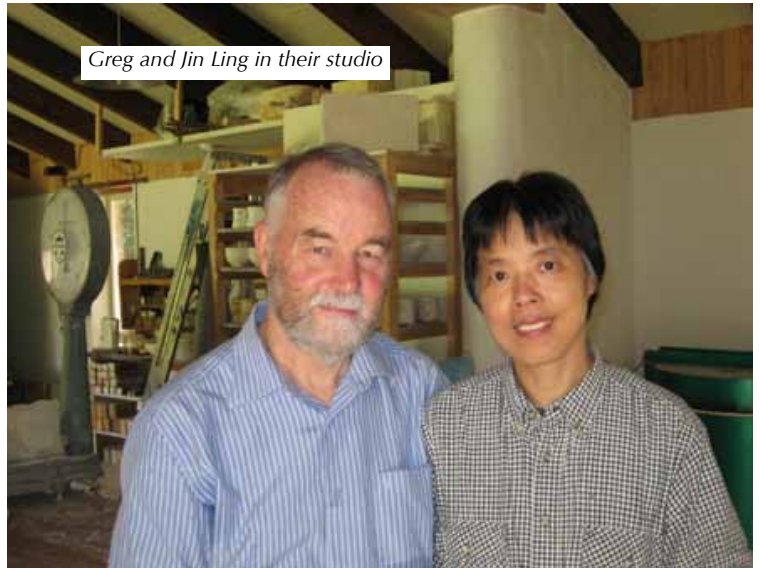
Corellis scores a 10 for affordability (there's always a \$15 dinner special), friendliness, taste and coffee. It gets a bonus point for a ceramic celebrity sighting of Barry Brickell taking a break from his Writer in Residence work on Mt Victoria. (Another bonus point for being at the base of the Best View In Auckland)

What I did in my Summer Holidays *Nadine Spalter*

On the way to our holiday in Ngunguru we passed the house and studio of Greg Barron and Jin Ling. I called in for an informal chat and found Greg to be more than accommodating and helpful with his knowledge.

Greg is a thinker, and a researcher, only doing things that sit well with his core values. He is committed to using local clays, making a porcelain body from the Matauri Bay china clay (he has kindly shared his recipe), and a stoneware body from a fireclay deposit in his immediate area. He spoke about an article he wrote for NZ Potters magazine 'Then and Now' called 'Of Making Clay and Travel' and then lent me a copy, and it is a fascinating read. In it he talks about how his early influences shaped the way he now works with clay, his belief being that using local materials for clay and glazes was essential. Through a workshop with Harry and May Davis in 1983 he learned to make his own blunger, and then through Adrian Cotter he learned how to make his own filter press. Greg is able to produce 80kg of throwable clay in a 24 hour period. Just in case you are not sufficiently impressed, he also built his own house and studio by himself using adobe rendered with lime plaster. He is very eco minded and has sustainability at the forefront of his mind. The windows are double-glazed, employing passive solar principles so that the sun heats the masonry floor keeping it warm in the winter, cool in the summer, and the way Greg puts it makes you wonder why we all don't go out and build everything by hand. He makes it sound so easy and in his understated way mentioned to my husband how he needed just a little help with the plumbing. Well call me a spoilt townie if you must, but I had to come home and google just about everything he said.

As I was leaving he mentioned casually how being committed to working with clay was essential if one wanted to continue with it. Bang. Some people have a sixth sense, and this statement



Greg and Jin Ling in their studio

stopped me in my tracks. Is this what is holding me back? The I'll-never-make-it syndrome (it's incredible how I manage to make it all about me), and we spoke, not enough, about the realities of trying to make a life in clay when I am plagued with self-doubt and a mountain of felspathic guilt. I had already been there 40 minutes, and with children now wondering whether or not they really could pick up his large pots, I was forced to leave, and to leave Greg in peace. But I will certainly be cornering him at the next function to glean some more words of wisdom. I can smell the therapist in some people a mile off...

Greg Barron's Porcelain recipe:

40 parts china clay
30 parts Potash Feldspar
22 parts Silica
9 parts FX Ball clay
up to 3 parts Bentonite

Holiday Special

Renton Murray

I'm not sure if the office has any news as it's been closed for nearly three weeks. We have been in the news though. The ladies toilet has been robbed of the cistern and it was amusingly reported in the Herald in "Sideswipe". So that will be one of the first jobs of the new year. Followed of course by a very necessary culling of the ware racks and bisque shed.

Apart from the Monday morning class I think there are a few spaces left in the other classes, so please ring or email the office if you wish to start the new year with a class. We will be happy to try to get you into a suitable class.

Happy New Year to you all, see you at your Centre soon.

Interview with John Dawson

Jacqui Brown

How would you describe your work?

My work would be best described as decorative but functional.

What first got you interested in ceramics?

I had my first experience of wanting to do pottery while watching a neighbour throwing a pot on an old Leach wheel in the garage of their house. From that moment on I just wanted to have a go but it wasn't until many years later that I had the chance.

How has your style developed?

I started making the bog standard things like mugs, bowls, casserole dishes, basically what people wanted and what was the trend at the time which was in the mid 60s. It wasn't until I left NZ and came to England that things really developed. I linked up with a friend who wanted to start a business but had no real experience in making, and then I came along, so we came up with ideas of what would sell. It wasn't until I went to Goldsmiths College that I was able to diversify and work in the medium that I always wanted to play with and that is porcelain. Also, being at an art college you had to justify anything that you did hence the real development of a style as I was about to compete in the Big Wide World of ceramics.

What would you say your signature form/glaze/clay is?

This of course is porcelain using a celadon crackle glaze. The forms range from altered bowls and anything that people would care to use in a domestic environment.

What is your most used tool?

A blow torch!!

What piece of advice has helped you in

the construction of your work?

Not to be frightened of the medium and just go for it - after all clay is just clay no matter what type it is.

What do you wish you had known many years ago that you know now?

That there is a life outside working for an institution and had I had the confidence to just break free and do what I really wanted to do. Oh to be thirty something again.

Your worst pottery moment?

Opening a glaze firing to see everything had melted because I had completely overfired the kiln. Everything was destroyed - all because I was distracted and a bit complacent about the power of heat.

Do you have any ritual/lucky charm/talisman to bring you luck while you are working?

I always work with the radio on playing lovely calming music.

I don't like chat when I work so I tend to be isolated in my studio away from people.

One of your favourite pieces?

I don't have any favourite pieces - if they stick around too long I start to see faults in them.

What motivates you?

It certainly isn't the money as there are no millionaire potters so it must be that wonderful feeling of making and the gentle unaggressive nature of the art.

Any new projects coming up?

I am working on a collaborative exhibition with a teacher friend from the prison. She has written a book about teaching art in prisons so the exhibition will show the dark side of prison culture in the form of her amazing drawings made into decals on my porcelain pots (see pot in photo top right).

What can we expect to see at your next exhibition and when?

The work with my friend from the prison but this will be part of the editions to be shown in London later on this year. The exhibition is to be at 'Avid' in Wellington. Sorry folks in Auckland.

John is teaching the Tuesday night class for the first term this year



A Close Call

Kelvin Bradford

I had a most unpleasant experience firing my kiln yesterday which may be worth mentioning as a warning to others.

This particular kiln is a 30cuft gas. It has had hundreds of firings since I purchased it new in 1996. Without warning the hose exploded at the junction where it attaches to the kiln and caught fire. Fortunately I was nearby and was able to immediately turn off the gas and extinguish the flames. Had I been some distance away the workshop could have been destroyed. There was nothing visible to indicate anything was amiss. I would recommend any one using a gas kiln to check that their regulator is functioning correctly and check the condition of the hose where it attaches to the kiln. Possibly shorten it by 2.5cm in case of hidden corrosion.



"Still life with boy, melon, aubergine and butternut"

Susan St Lawrence is having a Still Life exhibition at Corellis Cafe, 46 Victoria Rd, Devonport, until 31st January. Open every day 7.30am - 10pm

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“Peter’s Group”

Petra Molloy

I have been trying to recall when I first joined Peter’s class. It could have been as long ago as twelve years, maybe longer, that I stepped through the ASP studio doors and into the world of the Thursday Group. I think Jim was there at that time, and Terry too, who has recently returned after a long absence, and Trish joined not long after. Peter immediately sat me down at a wheel and instructed me to make cylinders. I do remember that much. Twelve years is a long time. If I’d started as a ten year old, it would have taken me through to twenty-two, the whole of my formative years. That I started closer to fifty, in no way lessens the major impact that Peter’s Thursday Group has had on my life.

Thursday has so long been the definitive day of my week, the day to leave the ordinary stresses of daily life and step into the Thursday world, that now it is hard to imagine life without it. Of course there still will be a Thursday morning class at ASP, and I’m sure it will be invaluable. But Peter’s class was very special. Not only was it a place where everyone was accepted and warmly welcomed, a place of camaraderie and laughter, but also more importantly, underlying every class of every Thursday, was his unfailing constancy to his aesthetic vision, and his desire to provoke in us the very same vision. He wanted to engender an appreciation of the profound simplicity and beauty of ceramic form, to create in us the desire to make beautiful simple pieces and then to glaze them with uncomplicated integrity.

We have been most fortunate to have had him as our teacher, friend and mentor for so many years, and I know he will be sorely missed. Thursday morning was a time of fun and belonging, of learning and laughter and massive morning teas, and we will all miss that part of our lives, that belonging to Peter’s Group. Thank-you Peter and thank-you Thursday group for the wonderful hours I spent with you all.



Peter’s farewell morning tea

ASP classes for 2011

In the first term, we will have NO CLASSES from the 28th March till 1st April due to the National Ceramic Conference. The studio will be closed for the Conference Master Classes.

Note that classes fill up quickly but you can always secure your booking with a deposit of \$50. Class fees (for Monday till Thursday) are for a 10 week course \$230 for non-members (\$207 for members) and for a 9 week course \$207 for non-members (\$187 for members). Wednesday Evening Absolute Beginners’ class is \$150 (includes clay, tools and firing fees).

Classes for the first term are as follows:

(Mornings from 9.30am – 12.30pm, evenings from 6.30pm – 9.30pm)

Monday morning and evening: 7/2/11 – 11/4/11 (9 weeks) no class on 28th March

Tuesday morning and evening: 1/2/11 – 12/4/11 (10 weeks) no class on 29th March

Wednesday morning: 2/2/11 – 13/4/11 (10 weeks) no class on 30th March

Thursday morning and evening: 3/2/11 – 14/4/11 (10 weeks) no class on 31st March

Wednesday evening 6 week beginners class (6.30 – 8.30pm): Course 1: 2/2/11 – 9/3/11

Course 2: 13/4/11 – 18/5/11

Term dates for later in the year are on our website

Woodlands Park School in Titirangi, is looking for a good single phase kiln. Phone Catharine on 817 3232 or email titirangid@gmail.com

I loaned my small alligator chainsaw to someone and I can’t for the life of me remember who it was, but I think it was a potting friend. If you have it please let me know. Thanks Peter Lange 6306942

ASP CENTRE

Opening Hours

Monday - Thursday: 12.30pm - 5.30pm

Friday: 12.30pm - 4pm

Saturday: 10am - 4pm

\$3 per hour

(up to a maximum of \$9 per session)

Centre Director: Renton Murray

6343622

NEWSLETTER

Editor: Peter Lange. Phone 6306942
Please send any copy or photographs to
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