



Pot Chatter

CRAFT POTTERS

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Editorial

The month of September has been jam packed with activity. There is a movement towards the use of glazes and reduction to attain more exciting and rewarding results. There are books in the library which are getting a new lease of life as interest grows in the combining of materials for different and



at times glowing surfaces. Oxides are coming into their own again. It is no longer enough to just get a good glaze recipe and use it endlessly. Potters want to extend their palette and with the interest comes a need for knowledge. On a practical level there is much to be gained by working together and sharing both a common interest and a common goal. We look forward in the next few months with warmer weather making the Pottery less chilly to work in to produce some real achievements.

Lets make every pot an experiment and a new discovery.

ABOUT GLAZES AND GLAZING.

How about talking about glazes and what makes them work. I've noticed that so many people get a funny blank stressful look on their face at the mention of things like glaze analysis or a formula. A recipe is okay if someone else has tried it and maybe it hasn't stuck the pot to the shelf. But that's it. It's like they might catch something dreadful if they inquire too closely.

Actually getting to know a bit about what makes up a glaze makes the whole process of pot making more interesting. It's not necessary to become a chemist to understand it all. When I began potting there wasn't the science in it that there is today. It was all trial and lots of error. These days my computer does all the calculations. Still we had lots of practical experience. And any way you know the Chinese over all those hundreds of years never managed to get a glaze that didn't craze. So our progress has been quite remarkable by comparison.

Potters all have different interests or accents in their work. Some potters just enjoy using clay to throw pots or make them by hand. To some the clay form is a palette they enjoy decorating.

To others the whole performance is a good excuse to light a fire although there are not a lot of

pyromaniacs around these days. This is a pity in some ways because potters who have not been part of a wood kiln firing, or at least a reduction firing, have missed out on a whole exciting facet of the art of making pots. It's like missing out on a "right of passage".

But to get back to our glazes, probably the first thing to look at is what they are made of. You'll find they have the same ingredients as the clay the pots are made from, a range of oxides in the form of silica, clays and fluxes. The only reason glazes are held in solution is that it is a convenient way to contain them and to apply them to a porous surface.

A good material to look at first would be the clay we use in our glaze, and these are usually in the form of china clay (or kaolin) or sometimes ball clay. Ball clay is usually finer than china clay and can contain small amounts of potash, soda or magnesia. This means that it will shrink more and be less refractory. The latter means that it will melt at a lower temperature.

China clay provides both alumina and silica to the glaze. We'll talk about silica next time. China clay is formed from the decomposition of igneous rocks and is mined where deposits have formed. As you may know, alumina occurs in hydrated form as bauxite, the raw material of the aluminium plants. Pure crystals of alumina are second only to diamond in hardness. So when you put china clay into a glaze what does it do?

In short clay:-

1. Raises the temperature the glaze should be fired to, to become mature.
2. Makes the glaze more stable. (less runny).
3. Gives durability and hardness to the surface.
4. Improves the suspension of materials in the glaze bucket.

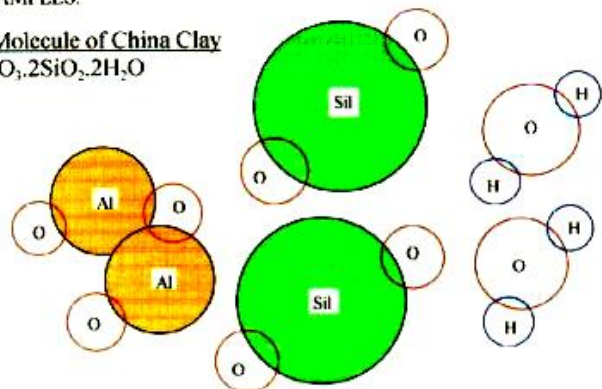
All these various materials are usually given a formula to represent all that goes to make them up. It's just a kind of shorthand and isn't too difficult when you get used to it. It explains the proportions of the molecules that make up the material. Below is a graphic representation of a molecule of an average sample of china clay. It gives a good idea of its composition. Later we can talk about what happens to these parts when heat is applied to them. As you can imagine the water doesn't hang around too long.

Bob Heatherbell

GLAZE MOLECULES

EXAMPLES:

A Molecule of China Clay
 $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3 \cdot 2\text{SiO}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$



Molecular Proportion: 1 of Alumina. 2 of Silica. 2 of Water.

FOR SALE

Bob Heatherbell has the following For Sale:

Temperature Indicator (Pyrometer). 0 to 1400 C. 13%Rh.

Made by Ether (PYE) England, More accurate than most, +/-2%
 \$290.00 including the Probe.

Silicon Carbide Kiln Shelves, 12 x 18 x 5/8. Made in England.

These shelves have not been used. Half new price at \$48.00 each.
 Especially suitable for reduction firing.

1 Bag of Podmore's White English Porcelain Clay, \$40.00.

Amiga Computer and HP Printer with Software.

Includes "Matrix" glaze formulation program.

ADVICE FOR A BEGINNER POTTER

Notes from Joan Jack when she tutored morning class in 1982:

A DESIGN FOR EVERY POT

(1) Before throwing – or hand building, consider what you want to make, not five minutes before throwing. Design the pot – by drawing, side / end view or any added pieces. If possible use lined or graph paper. What size and what amount of clay.

For narrow necked articles allow extra clay and remember to cut off what is not needed.

(2) Before throwing: Will pot need decoration and if so what type?

Draw several pots with different decoration and decide what glaze to use.

What decoration looks best with this glaze– will it suit the pot?

(3) Have several balls of well kneaded clay ready and make a number of pots the same.

Now choose the ones most like the pot you designed.

Now throw – be relaxed, breathe deeply, be critical, don't short change yourself, take care to make what you want. Keep two of these pots, you may ruin one turning or bisquing.

(4) Now the waiting, keep your drawings, so that you can finish the pot you designed.

Careful design – careful finishing off – careful decoration, glazing and firing will make for a better pot.

(6) Get in the habit of doing this and your pots will be much the better for it – and you won't be faced with a whole board of bisqued pots and no idea what to do with them.

Time spent in preparation is time saved in the end.

Don't say "I'll try it" – **DO IT!**

Submitted by Jan Moresby

South Street Gallery Awards

The Awards this year were very well supported with over forty attending and I suspect June Reay who was the judge had difficulty making her choices. There were certainly some surprises, Hanne Bjorklund walked away with the award for three separate categories for 5 years and over. Lynda Lines took two for her class and hard endeavours were well rewarded, Jeannine's entry which was a work of art stood out as a thoughtful study and gained her the most creative award. Potters worked hard on their entries this year and are to be commended. I personally would like to see more entries, especially from new potters. Perhaps next year will bring out the innovative and we will see even further evidence of the skills of our group.

Janice Heath was given the prize for most improved potter by Lizz Johnson whose comment was that she had a wonderful class of hard working students.

Supper was as over the top as it usually is, "good for the soul and bad for the diet" but appreciated by us all, what a great way for potters to spend time together!

The evening concluded with a visual tour of some of the treasures of China and Taiwan in the National Palace Museum collection. We have to thank Hakon for what is a wonderful collection of pictures on CD. It made a memorable end to the evening.

Our grateful thanks to Mike McLure whose technical expertise made this possible with a whole new facility in the field of computers.

Gas Kiln Activity

There was a concerted move to sort out the glazes and their usefulness this last month. Initially we needed some good sized small pots on which to test them and Anneke came to our aid and threw somewhere in the region of two dozen pots. These were then glazed and double glazed in club glazes by a group of members. Richard, Rodger and Baden Phibbs a member picking up on his membership after some years of absence. The test pots were fired in the

Woodhead Kiln to cone 10 and are on display in the shed with a chart detailing the glazes. There has been considerable interest shown in these tests and the glazes were used to fire some large plates which have been in the gas kiln shed waiting to be fired appropriately.

Do you remember the Paul Winspear Workshop?

Jan Moresby, Jeanine, myself, Hakon and Kaye Lunn a new student potter had a wonderful day glazing these pots and learnt a lot from one another. These plates and some of the pots supplied by members to help 'fill the kiln' were duly fired in the Woodhead kiln, it took two firings and knowledge and experience gained all round.



There were also two firings at CPN using the gas kiln and Rodger and Baden made a good job of these. Baden gave the following notes as it was a new experience for an old diesel firer:-

It was an 8 hour firing with a pre heat the previous evening. In comparison with the diesel it was very straight forward with all the controls calibrated for easy use.

- 1) Pyrometer lagging behind when compared with the cones.
- 2) Top of the kiln slightly hotter than the bottom.
- 3) Temperature rises regularly on the whole.
- 4) Primary air control hyper sensitive, even a dog's tail can make an adjustment.
- 5) Only one glaze ran onto the shelf.
- 6) Gas tank need to be watched for freezing up. Controlled by trickling water over it.
- 7) Plenty of room for small pots and tests. Members must not be shy about this.
- 8) Overall a satisfactory firing. **Baden Phibbs.**

Costing for this firing is available and as a result there will be an increase in the costs of firing the gas kiln but this is still to be worked out.

Great stuff you two. It is a real thrill to see this gas kiln taking off in such a positive way and the short firing time and the really beautiful pots make it well worth it. We have lost a great deal of the magic and excitement that reduction firings used to bring. Some of our members have had first hand experience of this now and see pottery in a different light.

We expect to see some of the results of this activity during the Exhibition.

Glaze Recipe "October".

I'm printing this recipe from Janet De Boos first glaze book, because it is one used extensively by members of Craft Potters in the past and very popular. The recipe is on page 106 and the number 154.

We called this glaze "Tomato Red". New members may like to try this as a high iron glaze in the electric kiln.

Soda Feldspar	50
Silica	20
Bone Ash	10.5
Calcite (whiting)	6.5
Ball Clay	7
Talc	6
Red Iron Oxide1	10



C.P.N. Committee Notes

Thanks to Sarah Hutt for the donation of a table that will be helpful in several ways. We appreciate this type of gift, it makes Craft premises seem like 'Home'.

Kelvin Black has started a pottery cookbook collection and is asking for submissions of recipes and pictures of relevant pots. A great scheme and one that could benefit us both practically and financially. Craft Members have a reputation to uphold here!

The group are hoping to organise a 'buddy' system whereby new members would be introduced and helped along by a mentor. There is a list on the notice board and if you wish to offer your services in this direction or perhaps avail yourself of same – add your name.

The old chestnut of what clays to put through the pugmills is raising its head again and the committee would like to do a survey of members to find what clays are used the most, and which ones members would like to pug. Again there is a list of members on the board for you to record the clay you use.

The committee have made a decision to have a Christmas Party again this year, naturally the details will have to be ironed out later. **WATCH THIS SPACE.**

In house news

The big new sign outside the pottery has been painted by Trevor Briggs, he didn't like the posts so came back and painted them as well. Thank you Trevor you are the salt with which we are savoured!

On the 2nd September there was a hands on demonstration given to a group of Trafalgar Active Seniors by Rodger, Jan and Sarah. Good work guys! Good for the community!

Thanks due to Kelvin for constructing the new pelmets in the gallery, and getting a good price for us for the wood. Nice one Kelvin! Lyn and Rob may be back by the time this hits the streets and I know Lyn will be pleased with this effort.

Welcome home the two of you and we know you had a good holiday. We really missed you.

Foxhill School Gala

Carolynn Hill has asked if there are any members who would like to support a Gala to help Foxhill school to raise funds for a school bus. The Gala is to be held on 10th November starting at 12.00 p.m. A site for this Gala will cost \$10.00 and the school will provide a trestle table. If any of our members are interested please ring Carolynn at 541-8155. There will be free advertisements through The Mail which could give us some publicity we must take advantage of such occasions.

Pottery Crawl

An action packed day is planned for the 14th October not 7th October as in the last Pot Chatter. Betty Dick has it all worked out. New members will enjoy this and see some of the potters on their home ground.

On Friday 12th October, there will be Raku glazing at CPN from 11.00 a.m. Bring chairs for Raku and pen and paper for any tips that may be available. Betty Dick.

Exhibition

This is the time of the year when we look at the countdown, tally the pots in the making, reject one or two that have failed along the way and panic about whether we will have something that meets our own criteria. Last Class was 26th September, if you have pots unfired ask for help from those who fire regularly or try to get in with a buddy.

Please lend your support on clean up day -- SATURDAY 13TH OCTOBER

It is vital that everybody lends a hand on this day, there is a roster at the shed please check and put your names down for the jobs you wish to do. You may be able to go down and do your bit a couple of days before hand that's fine. It can be a fun day working together.

Bring something for morning tea and if you can do nothing else this could be your contribution.

The old cliché of many hands make light work is never more true than on CLEAN UP DAY.

If in doubt call Rodger Ph-544-4755 or Uta Ph-541-8953 or any of the members who know the ropes and we will help where we can. **BUT DO COME!!!!**

Make a note of the days when pots have to be at the gallery for the sales table or delivered for the Exhibition.

Last but not least be there on the opening night for the gathering of all the potters. This is when we catch up with old friends and meet new ones, see the progress of some of those who were beginners and now hold their own as bona fide potters. There are nibbles and drinks this is when we let our back hair down and have a good time. See you on the night.

Gallery

Before the exhibition, cheques will be made out to the last day of gallery sales. Sales table cheques will be issued after the Exhibition closes and the gallery will return to normal immediately after that. Contact me if any of that part of it worries you.

Richard will organise the keeping of the sales sheets and Eftpos and there may be some changes in procedure. Those of you on roster duty read the instructions very carefully and *PLEASE DO ASK* if you are not sure, we want you to be happy with what you are asked to do.

One more request from the gallery. When taking cheques where possible use the stamp as we are getting cheques made out to all sorts of potteries, if our stamp is on it there is no argument.

See Jeannine or Lyn (when she is back) about the organisation in the gallery or on the sales table.

Subscriptions

The financial year begins on 1st May through to the 30th April. Traditionally we have always paid at the Annual General Meeting held some time in June, I remember long queues of members lining up and putting the newly elected treasurer through his paces on the night. This seems to have fallen away and it is a pity as this is a time when we are slightly down on funds due to the winter drop of on sales in the gallery. Also the time allowed for the reduced subscription for early payment is getting later and later. Any subs not paid at this point in time will be at the full rate of \$45.00 and should be paid by 31st October.

This Pot Chatter has gone 'oversize' due to two committee meetings, a general meeting and extra activities, but I hope all the information is readable and useful.

Thank you to those who have submitted articles, information, and requests. This is the stuff we need to bring us together, it has been hard work but fun to do.

Happy potting to you all. *Maggie* **Editor** Phone 544-8768

Quote.

This is a bit tongue in cheek! “ *Doing pottery is like prostitution. At first you do it for love, then you do it for friends, then you do it for money. I recommend keeping the love in it.* ”

Bonita in San Francisco.

Wanted A Cowley Wheel if you have one for sale phone : 544-5853 Hugh Macmillan