



NEWSLETTER No. 3 MAY 1985

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REFLECTIONS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Prompted by discussions at our last committee meeting I thought members might enjoy a brief history of our Association. I'm working purely from memory so nothing is in order and some bits may be missing completely.

We began in 1977 (or was it '78) instigated I think by Bruce Martin and Denis Lowe - oh! and a few others! Since that time we've either been involved with or initiated the following.

Schools. A salt school with Chester Kealie and the building of the first salt kiln at the Community College; English potters Derek Evans and David Seles, Japanese potters Professor Fonde and Mr Hyashita and country potter Paul Nelser. George Kojis might just slip in there somewhere too!

Lecture Evenings with both the English potters, and Japanese potters, English potter and author Murray Fieldhouse, George Kojis and a couple of "in town" evenings, one with Professor Fonde the other with Len Castle.

Exhibitions - from the first tentative "People and Pots" - a public relations exercise through regular annual shows - some selected (George Kojis, Howard Williams and Margaret Symes and I think John Clarke?) some unselected - all worthwhile.

Kilns - two salt kilns, and a two chamber diesel stoneware kiln, a raku, a pit and a fun filled but unsuccessful trench have all been built and fired.

Social Doos - we've fired together, eaten together, been on buses together, listened to an accountant, a geologist, a phoenix potter and occasionally each other. We've had "crit" evenings, demos, film projectors that wouldn't go and slide projectors that wouldn't stop. Even Santa has turned up on occasions.

Politics. We've funded craft council reps, fought sales taxes, been to court, faced council hearings and have just about rewritten the country's district schemes.

And that's only the bits I can remember.

BCB.

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Bob's reflections were prompted by our last committee meeting when it became apparent that many people did not realise how much we as an association, have quietly (but sometimes otherwise) achieved. An association is only as strong as its members. Our mouthpiece is the newsletter. It is interesting to note that in the main our contributors are those who have also put most into the Association as a whole - typing the newsletter (Jackie) digging trenches and pits and finding fuel for same, and building raku. But everybody can contribute - for instance, many of you have microwave ovens and many make pots for them. Please could we have your comments or observations on any problems you may have encountered in this field, and we can initiate some research. In the last week we have heard of three instances of stoneware dishes disintegrating in microwaves.

Subscriptions For all members who haven't paid current subs by 30/6/85, membership will automatically cease. There have been plenty of reminders - the crunch has come. And please put your name and address on the back of your cheques so that we know who you are.

Exhibition This will be held in Kaipukurau during the first two weeks of November, with the opening on 31st October. No, it is not a long way away, the calendar hurtles through the year, and suddenly we're faced with panic pots which won't dry. This is our first venture into the wild south - start now. To man it we need volunteers. A virgin sheet of paper awaits your offer to help. It will be at the next meeting - be prepared.

Talking of which the next meeting - will be held on May 29th. Unfortunately the cafeteria at the College is unavailable and so the venue will be Room 5213 at the Community College - I'm sure we'll all find it somehow. Please be there. Dave Lowe from Ralph + Lowe photographers, is coming to give us a few pointers on how to photograph our pots. There will also be general business.

### N.Z.S.P.

After my lengthy piece in the last newsletter, needless to say I have very little to report and things previously discussed are carrying on with usual gusto.

Membership directory for N.Z.S.P. members - This national directory is now being compiled. Unfortunately, or fortunately, you must be a member of N.Z.S.P. - enquiries to me please - I have plenty of application forms available. All the people who have not replied and filled in their questionnaires please do so now. The deadline is temporarily extended.

As usual I am your servant. Any queries please don't hesitate to get in touch.

JULIE.

### Crafts Council of N.Z.

Thank you for again letting me write some Craft Council news for your members.

At the executive meeting held May 5th/6th there were several items which are of particular interest to your members.

1. A letter from Campbell Hegan, Chairman of C.C.N.Z. is to be sent to the N.Z.S.P. in reply to Howard Williams proposals for the restructuring of the Crafts Council.
2. Bob Shay, an American potter, has been invited (I think by Q.C.II Arts Council) to spend three months in New Zealand running workshops, summer schools etc. and preparing an exhibition to coincide with the 1986 Wellington Festival. The C.C.N.Z. has been asked to assist in organizing workshops.
3. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is considering preparing a crafts exhibition to be sent to Australia in 1988 as part of New Zealand's input into the Bicentenary celebrations. The exhibition will tour Australia and possibly Asia.
4. Goods and Services Tax. If anyone would like a synopsis of the White Paper I can Aerex copies in Gallery 242. The precis is 8 sheets A4 at 8c per sheet.
5. Discussions are taking place between all relevant organisations, Internal Affairs, Q.C.II Arts Council, N.Z.C.C. and others considering the possibility of making low interest loans available to crafts-people. Don't raise your hopes too high! wheels in Wellington grind exceedingly slow. But there is positive initial agreement on the desirability of such a scheme.

6. An informal apprenticeship scheme is being initiated by the Crafts Council in conjunction with Hagley High School in Christchurch. It involves third form selected pupils spending one day per week with one of up to ten craftspeople. It is hoped the scheme will begin with the new school year.

No further developments in the tertiary proposals. It is still with the Department of Education.

7. Hawkes Bay's voice is being heard around the Executive table of the Crafts Council

Regards to you all.

GILLEN BROADBENT

We were very pleased when Bruce and Estelle Martin agreed to write something for the newsletter. We thank them for this thought-provoking sensitive piece.

### Looking for Standards - it Matters.

Have you asked yourself lately why you are a potter? Asked yourself the reasons you are involved with clay? Dare you ask yourself whether you are achieving anything? Do you have any real commitment towards what you are trying to achieve? Do you live to pot or do you pot to live? Have you ever asked "Does this pot 'say' anything?" Does it even fulfil the function for which you made it? Would you admire it if it were made by someone else?

If you can answer any or all of these questions honestly then you are already on the right road to making progress towards a higher standard. Be aware of your own ego and do not let it get in the way. Mostly it is better to feel somewhat dissatisfied with your work and to strive for the pot that is just that much better. Only in this way will your work show a consistent improvement, albeit at times almost imperceptible.

Do you ever look at some of your earlier pieces of work with the thought that the pots show more depth of feeling than your current work even though your techniques have improved? Try and put some life into your work! Don't be fooled by so-called 'Public Taste'. Your sensitivity is what is important! Be confident but not arrogant! Is growth as a potter more important to you than growth in your bank balance? Put your own spirit into your pots - if you have a lively spirit you will make lively pots; if a sensitive spirit then you will make sensitive pots. If your spirit is dead then do not bother to make pots at all.

To make progress you need to learn from the best that is available. Study the best, be it from special tuition, from books or by studying museum collections and always give of your best. Don't ever be satisfied with less. When you are asking about the standards of your own pottery, or of the standards that you would like to attain, then think about the following: The standards already perceived on what constitutes a "Good Pot" are the culmination of five thousand years or more of potting history. These criteria are not likely to change greatly over the next five thousand years. If your pots become archaeological finds sometime between now and the year 6985 (and this is quite possible if your pots are fully fired and the human race continues to exist long enough) then what conclusions will the finders come to about our present civilization. Let us leave the best record of our times that we can.

These questions we are putting to you are the questions we are constantly putting to ourselves because --- It Matters!

ESTELLE AND BRUCE MARTIN.

We would love to know what is happening in the wider world of Gisborne, Wairoa and Kaipukurau, not forgetting Tokomaru Bay. News from Association members in these places would be gratefully accepted into print.

While hanging around waiting for our regular contributors to be inspired by their muse and send their "piece" in, I came across a catalogue of an exhibition in the Museum of Modern Art in Mexico City. Twelve craftsmen were the exhibitors. The catalogue was beautifully presented and each artist had written a "statement". Manola Ruiz, one of the first stoneware potters in Mexico, an internationally known potter, wrote this : -

" CLAY - you are the earth, you are fundamental. Through our intimate silence I have come to know your strong and honest attitude. I remember my first meeting with you. Casually, I tried again and again to make you do what I wanted, until, after many disasters, I learnt that you, very patiently, were trying to teach me. And I learnt. And you were learning to know me too. You knew my problems and were showing me the way. And, little by little, with your help, we reached a mutual understanding. We have had many beautiful moments together. And also disasters. But when you and I are on the same wavelength, the result is an indescribable happiness.

Clay - I respect you profoundly. "

It loses a bit in my translation, I'm afraid.

MARGARET.

REMEMBER - NEXT MEETING MAY 29th 7-30 P.M.

SEE YOU THERE.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE ROOM S213.

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