

Obituaries

Eileen Nisbet 1929-1990



The many friends, ex-students and admirers of her work will be grieved to hear of the death of Eileen Nisbet on the 9th July. This came after a long illness during most of which she courageously carried on teaching and working.

She was a student at Hornsey College of Art just after the war and later at the Central School, an early CPA member and an Index member of the Crafts Council from the beginning. Her work had three main stages: press-moulded earthenware dishes, handbuilt ceramic wall pieces and more recently and most importantly her innovative porcelain sculpture. These were made of assembled pieces of extremely thin sheets of porcelain, shaped, pierced and sometimes decorated in coloured enamels to form free standing sculptures with themes such as flower, teapot or aeroplane. It was with these porcelain pieces that Eileen Nisbet established her reputation which was growing internationally as she exhibited in more and more galleries overseas. All her work was characterised by her exquisite drawing and acute awareness of form; the craftsmanship throughout was impeccable. Eileen Nisbet taught for many years first at Harrow but mainly and for many years at the Central School in London where her sympathetic approach, sound practical advice and tireless support for the students will long be remembered and sadly missed.

Relating the bare facts about her working life as a potter and her contribution to teaching is simple enough. I am just not able, however, adequately to describe Eileen Nisbet's talent except to say that it was of a rare order, the highest order. Those of us who knew her must be thankful for that privilege; the ceramic world has lost a true artist and we a dear friend.

Mick Casson

Audrey Blackman 1907-1990



Daughter of a chemical engineer, Audrey Blackman, who died in July, was educated in Germany at a *Kunstgewerbeschule* and later in England, completing her formal education at Goldsmith's College, London. She travelled widely with her husband, always carrying with her a notebook in which she jotted down

sketches and ideas for her ceramics and paintings. She shared her husband's professional interests and together they created the magnificent azalea and rhododendron bog garden at their home on Boar's Hill, Oxford, which was a mecca for colleagues and admirers from all over the world. Whatever she did and wherever she went she was always bubbling over with enthusiasm.

Audrey was, for many potters and artists, an enthusiastic supporter, constructive critic, advisor and friend. She helped to form associations including the Craftsmen Potters Association, as well as being a founder-member of the international Academy of Ceramics. In her modelled figures she was able to express the traditional world of academic Oxford to which she belonged with her professor husband. Hers was the brilliant ability to retain for herself the traditional, formal lifestyle of her contemporaries yet at the same time to understand, appreciate and assign a validity to the attitudes and aspirations of the new generation which was developing in Oxford and beyond. Her technical ability moved with the times: her early work was dominated by tin-glazed earthenware, later she turned to unglazed stoneware in which much of her most significant work was made.

With a commission from Pennsylvania for a series of porcelain figures portraying named characters from ballet, she struggled with, and conquered, the difficulties of firing delicate porcelain figures; supporting a toe so that it remained exactly in position, or an arm outstretched, holding a rose without slumping during firing and further, achieving the finest of porcelain fabric to give translucence to the draperies which conveyed the delicate, lithe-some quality of the characters they portrayed.

Yvonne Cuff

David Ballantyne 1913-1990

SAVIAC (Search after values in an age of crisis).



The death is announced of David Ballantyne on 11th July, 1990 aged 76 in hospital after an illness of only a few days. David was born in Liverpool and studied painting at the Liverpool School of Art before taking the ATD Course at the London Institute of Education. After the war he taught Art at Bridgnorth Grammar School where he met his wife Katharine. He leaves his wife, four children and six grandchildren.

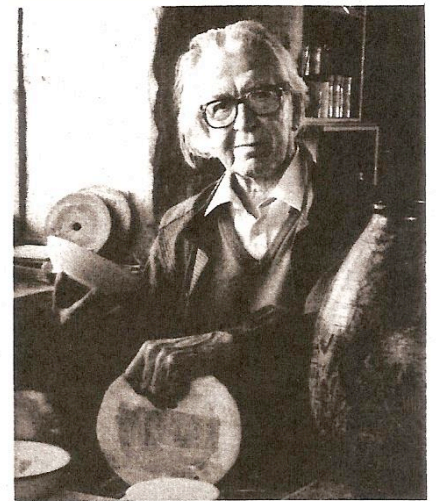
In 1950 he was appointed to the Bournemouth (later Bournemouth and Poole)

College of Art to teach pottery and fabric printing, remaining there until his retirement in 1978. During the 1960s he established a course rivalling the much better known and supported Harrow Course for the training of studio potters (a limiting designation he never accepted). He was an inspired and inspiring teacher.

Throughout all this time and until the week before his death he was continuously active in the role he himself created, that of a craftsman designer responding to briefs given him by private clients, architects or public bodies. There was no one else so capable of working in a wide range of ceramic media and other materials with such imagination and artistic integrity. The world has lost a truly original man.

Peter Stoodley

Bernard Forrester



Bernard Forrester well known for his lustre decorated pots, sadly died earlier this year. Born in Stoke on Trent in 1908, Bernard continued making and exhibiting pots until shortly before his death. At his funeral Marianne de Trey and David Winkley spoke warmly about the man and his pots. Marianne wrote about Bernard's work in *Ceramic Review* 112, 1988, on the occasion of his retrospective exhibition at the Dartington Gallery, Shinners Bridge Totnes.

There will be a small retrospective exhibition at Devon Guild of Craftsmen, Riverside Mill, Bovey Tracey 22 September - 28 October.

John Chambers - A Kent Potter (1938-1990)

The many friends and potters who knew John Chambers will be sorry to hear of his death. He will be particularly missed and also remembered by the members of the Kent Potters Association not only as its kindly and tolerant Chairperson in the early '80s but for his earthenware slip trailed plates à la Toft - a potter he much admired, and latterly for his Raku.

In particular one recalls his unselfish hard work at the KPA Raku weekends where both at the Whitbread Hop Farm and at Bore Place he constructed and fired huge wood-fired Raku kilns and patiently fired scores of other potters pieces.

As the Kent Potters Association in 1982 was going through a soul searching process about professional standards, aims and objectives John, a quiet and reserved man gave a thought provoking address.