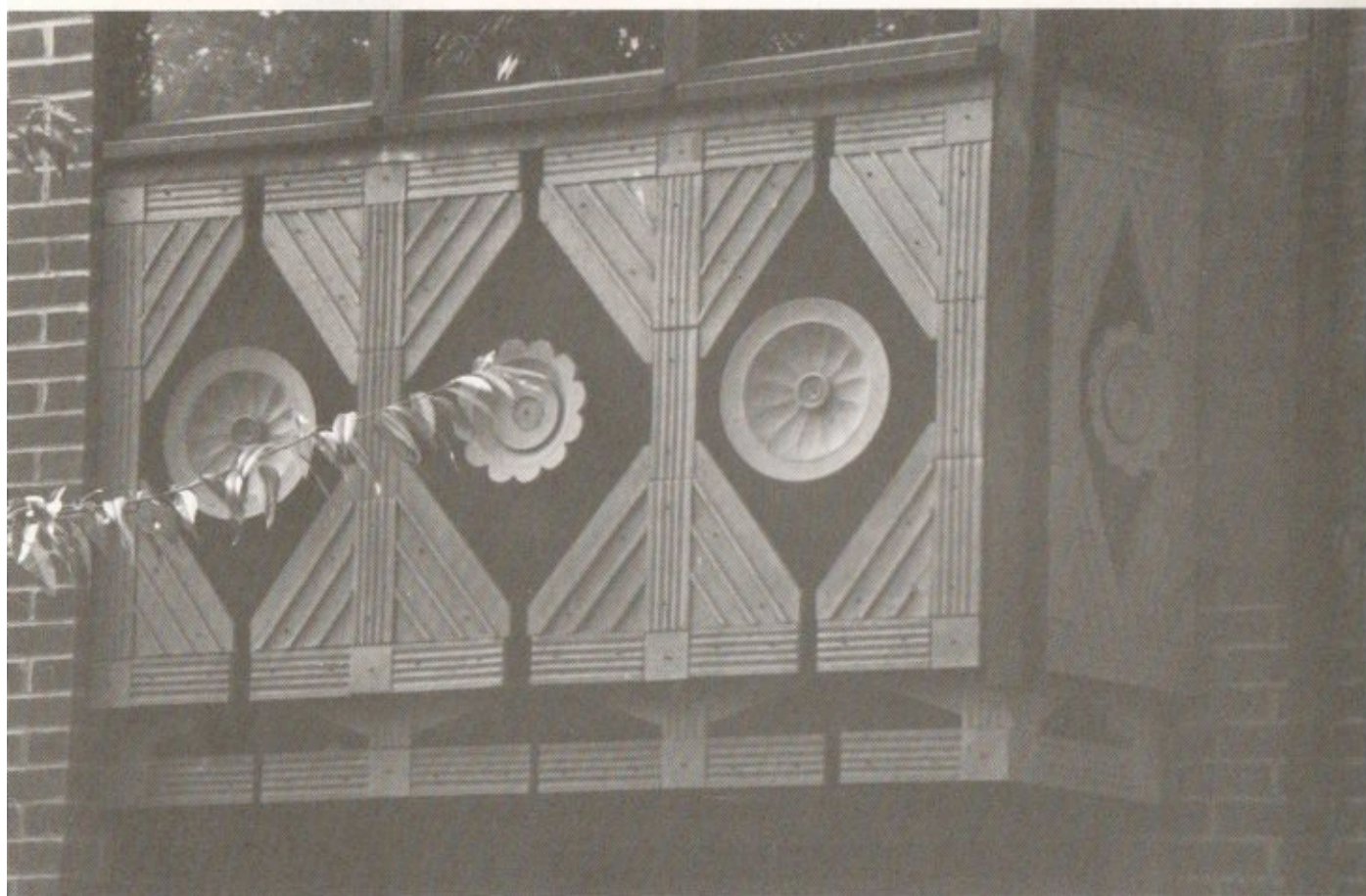


## ***David Ballantyne... a tribute***



David Ballantyne: Wall Cladding in terracotta, Reading

Many of you will, by now, have heard the news of David Ballantyne's Death.

In 1969, when North Sea Gas was first being pumped into the grid, I was advised to seek out the Head of the Ceramics Department at Bournemouth Art College, one David Ballantyne, for guidance on the modification of kiln burners and combustion chambers to prepare for the new gas. He was a recognised expert on the subject.

Two years ago, at his retrospective exhibition at Walford Mill, we were given a glimpse into the man's astonishing capacity. Most of us find our niche – a method and style – in which we feel more or less comfortable, and stick with it. Not so David Ballantyne. Every new task represented to him a new world for research, design and innovation. Whether it was extruded building materials, lustre calligraphy (see cover), decorative faience tiles, earthenware wine tasters, spittoons or converting kilns for natural gas, he became an expert in everything he undertook. –*The Editor*



## ***Richard Grasby, former President, writes—***

In a Chelsea drawing room David Ballantyne was speaking about standards in making to designer-craftsmen sitting on fragile gilt chairs. This was over twenty years ago, and my first meeting with David, then Secretary of the Society of Designer-Craftsmen. The promotion of good craftsmanship, its processes and practices, education as the key to creation – these things were his constant theme, and the foundation of his own vigorous inventive life. His brilliant performance in a whole range of disciplines from painting and ceramics to calligraphy and music spoke well for his beliefs.

Trained as a painter, he won a travelling scholarship which enabled him to paint in Europe for six weeks, a practise which continued for almost every year of his life. A recent work was a painted mural of the Creation.

As Co-ordinating Secretary of the Society of Designer-Craftsmen for many years, he made an unmatched contribution to its renaissance. The membership category of Licentiate was his concept; a thriving group of young designer-craftsmen whose potential is assessed at their final year show, has joined the Society as Licentiates and works towards full membership.

David Ballantyne was deeply concerned with the practical problems besetting the designer-craftsman. He devoted much energy to professional practice, to the agreements struck between client and maker, and to the stages and processes through which any commissioned work would have to pass. He produced codes of practice and advice on all aspects of the maker/client relationship. These have influenced many organisations with which he has been associated. Through this and much other work he enhanced the professionalism and the status of the craftsman.

Many generations of students will recall his ability to encourage and to enrich the people he met. The Dorset Craft Guild seminars that he gave were concerned with design, but in essence were 'ways of seeing', and perhaps it is the latter for which so many of us will be grateful to David. By the example of his own wide-ranging work, by the excitement he had for experiment and by his ability to co-ordinate



hand skills with conviction of purpose and fine judgement, he drew us along his own road of exploration. He made us see the commonplace in a new way, and that is surely a great gift.

Huge plates of spaghetti before Council meetings at 6 Queen Square, thundering disagreements over his stringent selection procedures, missing a train and redesigning the annual exhibition on beer mats in the station buffet, laughter into the early hours after conferences at West Dean, his workshop full of prototypes, drawings, people and gull-grey vases – it was a joy to share these things with him. Everyone who knew David Ballantyne must have a lasting recollection of him: his immense creative ability, his dedication to teaching, his craftsmanship combined with a powerful intellect; I shall recall his friendship.

*Richard Grasby*



Wedding Celebratory Platter by David Ballantyne

*David Stamford Ballantyne. Potter, painter, designer-craftsman, and teacher. Born London 1st October, 1913. Studied painting at Liverpool School of Art and ceramics at the Central School of Arts and Crafts. Taught art at Bridgenorth Grammar School from 1951. Lectured in ceramics and fabric printing, becoming Head of Pottery at Bournemouth College of Art. Fellow and Honorary Co-ordinating Secretary of the Society of Designer-Craftsmen. Founder Member of the Dorset Craft Guild and of "Art and Architecture". Married 1943 Katherine Harris (one son, three daughters). Died Bournemouth 11th July, 1990.*