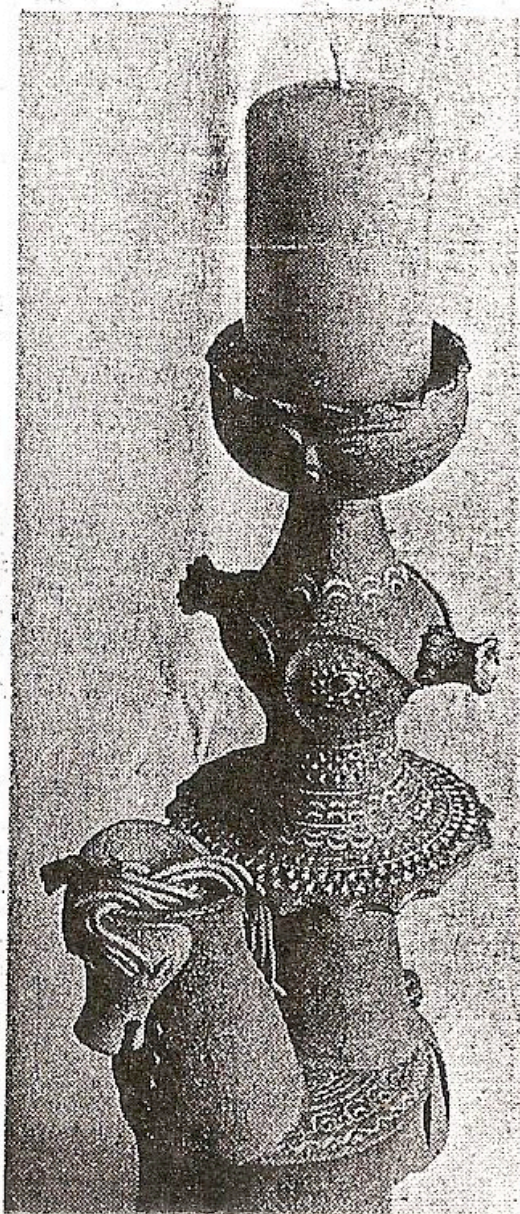


DAVID BALLANTYNE was an artist talented in many directions, able to apply his creative skills not only in his work as a potter and designer undertaking a wide range of public and private commissions, but in seeking to extend collaboration between makers, designers, architects and public. Modest and unassuming as a teacher and an artist, his creative influence has benefited generations of students and craftspeople.

One of four children of a scientist turned Unitarian minister and an artistically gifted mother, he studied painting at Liverpool School of Art, winning the Annual Travel Scholarship for figure drawing which enabled him to paint for six weeks in France. A postgraduate teaching course took him in the mid-Thirties to the Central School of Art and Crafts in London, where he came under the powerful influence of Dora Billington, the formidable head of ceramics who in her teaching was able to combine the technical skills of the ceramic industry with the creative approach of the studio potter.

Like his father, Ballantyne was a pacifist and refused to enlist, spending much of the war doing agricultural work. At this time he met and married Katharine Harris, a teacher of French, a partner who supported him in all his projects. As art master at Bridgnorth Grammar School after the war, he introduced the crafts of pottery and fabric printing into the curriculum despite the shortages of materials, impressing the school inspectors to the extent that they included the subjects in the School Certificate examinations. In partnership with Sir George Trevelyan, who became a lifelong friend, he helped produce craft objects for Attingham Adult Education College.



Education College.

In 1951 Ballantyne became a lecturer at Bournemouth School of Art, teaching ceramics and fabric printing before becoming Head of Pottery. Widely respected, Bournemouth attracted students from across the country, the well-organised course offering a sound liberal education in the craft, with David Ballantyne a skilled and enthusiastic teacher. At the same time he set up the Saviac workshop (made up from the initials of the inspirational slogan "seeking after values in an age of crisis", which summed up his own idealism and aspirations). Together with Peter Stoodley, a fellow potter and teacher, they designed and built moderately-priced items needed by the potter such as a geared kick wheel, described as the Rolls Royce of machines, gas-fired kilns and the like.

In the wider field of education he helped inject new energy into the Society for Designer-Craftsmen, the old Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. With Richard Grasby as Chairman, he introduced the licentiate scheme as a way of supporting makers at the start of their careers, an award which continues to be much appreciated. With equal enthusiasm Ballantyne later worked with Theo Crosby and others to promote and extend the crafts in building works, and also played an active part in the Dorset Craft Guild.

Unlike many artist potters he was ever conscious of the need to broaden horizons and, though a skilled potter, spent much of his time carrying out such diverse commissions as designing and making ceramic door furniture,



Candlestick: by Ballantyne

litter bins, roof tiles and terrace pots. An 18-year-long collaboration with the artist Ian Hamilton Finlay resulted in finely-crafted ceramic, metal and concrete objects. It also enabled him to use his skills as a calligrapher.

Since retiring in 1978 he had regarded himself as the "village potter", willing to undertake any sort of commission which came along, whether making roof finials for a local builder, spittoons for vineyards in the south of France or commemorative dishes. He recently completed and installed on Poole Quay a series of tile panels telling the history of the area. A retrospective exhibition at Wimborne in 1988 demonstrated the breadth of his achievements.

Whether investigating technical or artistic solutions David Ballantyne wanted to find out for himself. With equal vigour he could dismantle a car to find out how it worked, or practise his piano-playing, never satisfied unless he was note perfect. His openness to new ideas, the absence of any precious attitudes towards craft or art, and his willingness to share his knowledge and enthusiasm are rare and valued gifts in our materialist age.

Emmanuel Cooper

David Stamford Ballantyne, potter and teacher, born London 1 October 1913, married 1943 Katharine Harris (one son, three daughters), died Bournemouth 11 July 1990.