



Henry Hammond

by Sophie Heath, 2006

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Introduction

Henry Hammond (1914–89) is one of the quieter figures of 20th century British studio pottery but he was no less complex than his contemporaries, nor less dedicated to his craft. He led a long and successful career as a potter and a teacher of potters at the art school in Farnham, where he worked from the completion of his war service in 1946 until 1979. For much of this period Hammond had his pottery workshop in nearby Bentley, which, after 1954, was a joint studio with Paul Barron, his equally committed colleague at the West Surrey College of Art and Design.

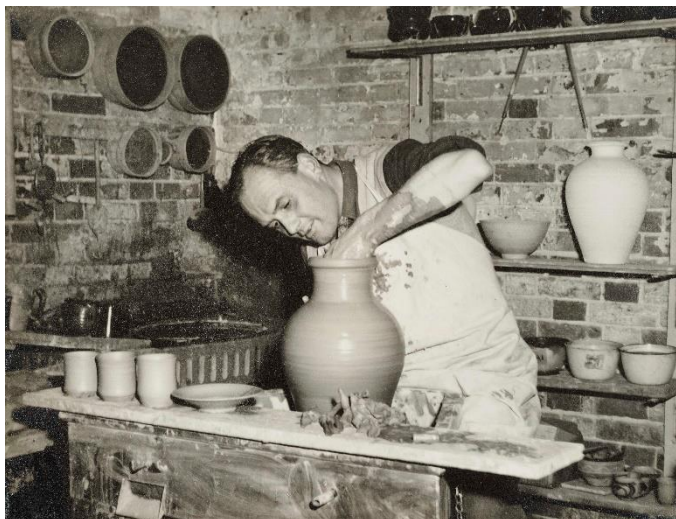


Fig.1: Photograph of Henry Hammond at the wheel, Alton, Hampshire. Black and white photography by Edwin Plomer, late 1940s–early 1950s. 16.0 x 21.0 cm (h x w). Crafts Study Centre, HAM/2567

Hammond's long association with Farnham and the local area is perpetuated through the preservation of his archive at the Crafts Study Centre, now part of the Farnham campus of the University for the Creative Arts. This valuable

resource includes sketches, correspondence, professional papers, and personal notebooks, all of which may be accessed at the Centre by appointment. A detailed index to the archive exists in hard copy. The CSC also has a small but representative collection of Hammond's pots. A selection of both the craftworks and archival material has been digitised and is available on the [VADS website](#).¹

The presence of the Henry Hammond papers at the CSC is especially fitting since Hammond was a founding trustee of the Centre in 1970. He was one of a group of visionaries who saw that the records and source collections of craftspeople represented a crucial resource alongside their actual production. Henry Hammond's rich archive is part of an unrivalled collection of such sources at the CSC, including celebrated figures such as Bernard Leach, Lucie Rie, and Ethel Mairet. The Crafts Study Centre held a retrospective exhibition of Henry Hammond's work in 1992 which drew on the archival material to illuminate his ceramics. John Houston's catalogue essay for this exhibition has been an important source for these web pages.²



Fig.2: Bowl with fish painted in blues, greens, and browns on white ground. Porcelain, thrown, with brush decoration in oxide pigments (cobalt, iron), clear-glazed, 1980s. 5.5 x 14.5 cm (h x diam). Hammond gave this pot to the craft-weaver Marianne Straub as a present. Crafts Study Centre, P.89.4

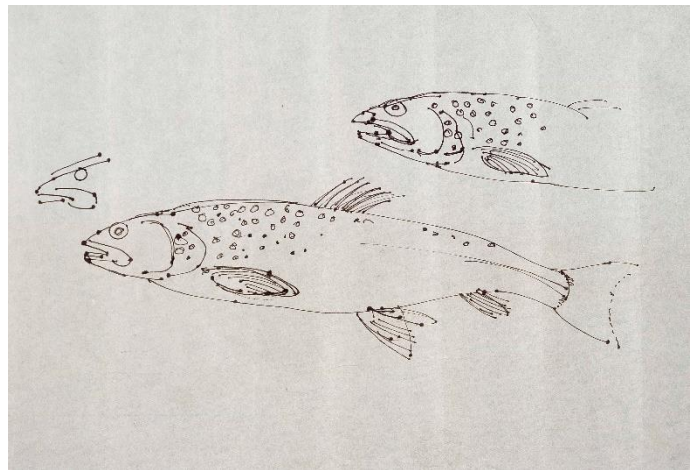


Fig.3: Sketch of fish. Pen and ink on handmade paper. 40.0 x 46.0 cm (h x w). Crafts Study Centre, HAM/1307

Life

Henry Hammond was brought up in a blue-collar household in Surrey. He undertook his early training at Croydon School of Art between 1929 and 1934. These studies included pottery but placed an emphasis on sketching and watercolour. He gained his final Diploma in 'Process reproduction', covering commercial techniques of printing and typesetting.

In 1934 Hammond went up to the Royal College of Art on a Royal Exhibition Scholarship where he enrolled to study mural decoration, with a portfolio ranging from landscape drawings to designs for stained glass. However he quickly transferred to the Pottery Department, which offered a more anarchic and technically challenging environment. The Head of Department, William Staite Murray, was notorious for his bohemian style, sporting bowties and Parisian silk shirts, and for his tireless promotion of potting as Fine Art. But Hammond recalled it was some time before he came face-to-face with this charismatic figure. He responded to the grass-roots culture where students experimented with raw ingredients, competed fiercely for time on the wheel but shared glaze recipes, and followed their own artistic calling.³

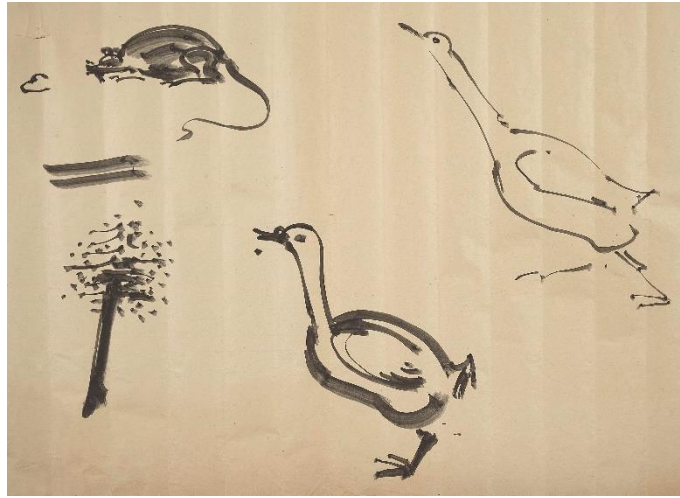


Fig.4: Various brushwork sketches including ducks and a rat. Brush-painting in ink on paper.
Crafts Study Centre, HAM/1305

Hammond first encountered Staite Murray personally when the Professor saw one of his newly-fired pots – ‘a lovely deep green bowl with a red fish painted on the side’ and invited him into his office to discuss it over a cup of coffee.⁴ Hammond found Staite Murray an inspiring teacher, though he never gave technical lectures and rarely provided direct instruction. In one exchange Staite Murray demonstrated a brushstroke for Hammond, declaring ‘every line you draw must have a firm beginning and a full stop at the end’.⁵ Such esoteric instruction struck a chord with his pupil’s thoughtful sensibility and attention to detail. Staite Murray’s conviction that potting could be a profound artistic expression confirmed Hammond’s commitment to clay. Tutor and student shared a very personal approach which brought emotion and spirituality into art and making.



Fig.5: Bowl with dark glossy glaze and contrasting pale dragonfly motif. Stoneware, thrown, tenmoku glaze with motif reserved in wax resist, 1980s. 8.0 x 10.5 cm (h x diam).
Private Collection



Fig.6: Bowl with fish painted in blues and browns on olive-green ground. Stoneware, thrown, with brush decoration in iron oxide, c.1983. 10.0 x 14.0 cm (h x diam). Bought from the Craft Potters’ Association.
Private collection

Following his Diploma show in 1937 Hammond exhibited with some of his RCA cohort at the Brygos Gallery in London and showed in the Paris International Exhibition of the same year. Over 1938–39 he was teaching part-time at both the Richmond and Farnham Schools of Art. In 1939 Hammond was offered a permanent post at Farnham which was held over for him when he was called up.

From 1939–46 Henry Hammond fought for his country, touring several front lines. He served in North Africa, taking part in the decisive battle of El Alamein in 1942. Later in the War Hammond fought in the Invasion of Sicily. Many of his creative contemporaries, and servicemen in general, found World War II profoundly disruptive and traumatic. In contrast Hammond seems to have responded positively to the challenges and dislocations of wartime. He was entranced by the new horizons of his soldier's life and made many watercolour sketches and lyrical journal entries capturing foreign landscapes. In a notebook with dates from 1942 Hammond wrote 'Orvieto was like the old conception of the New Jerusalem with its shining golden sun like the *Shekina* which lit upon the Ark of old';⁶ this is juxtaposed with notes on Italian vocabulary and grammar, and a violet is pressed between the pages. As well as the romance of strange places Hammond seems to have taken the risks and necessities of war in his stride. In post-war Britain many preferred to put the grim equations of combat out of mind but a colleague of Hammond's at the art school in Farnham recalls an evening where:

Henry enthusiastically described the operations of a reconnaissance party for the artillery, helped by diagrams drawn by finger in beer on the bar counter of the old Wheatsheaf.⁷

Certainly the taste Hammond discovered for travel never left him; he made many trips to Europe, and farther afield, during his lifetime.

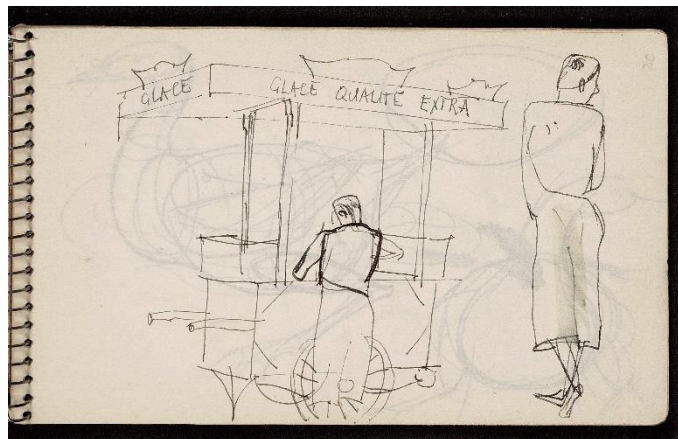


Fig.7: Sketch of French street scene with an ice-cream stall; from a spiral-bound notebook of sketches made during Hammond's trip to France in 1952. Pen and ink on notebook page, 1952. 11.0 x 18.0 cm (h x w). Crafts Study Centre, HAM/874.20

In 1946 Hammond resumed his teaching career at Farnham where he worked until 1979, rising to become Head of Department. He built up a well-respected ceramics course at the West Surrey College of Art and Design, weathering the continuous changes in tertiary education through the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. Hammond fostered a diverse group of staff, whose permanent and visiting tutors included potters of all persuasions from Gwyn Hansen to Jacqui Poncelet. Indeed, he didn't limit his students' encounters to ceramics, or even craft; Sebastian Blackie describes the range of guest speakers he invited:

His desire to explore different ways of enriching the course was infinite and he clearly enjoyed bringing together strange combinations – painters and architects, knitters and brickmakers, material scientists and religious thinkers. Like some demonic chef, with an insatiable appetite to experiment with new

recipes, he continually stirred the pot; nevertheless he ensured his maverick behaviour was balanced by the stabilizing influence of his long-time professional partner Paul Barron.⁸

Paul Barron joined the team at Farnham in 1949 and worked there until his retirement in 1982. He was an unpretentious man whose commitment to clay and his local community chimed with Hammond's values. In an obituary for Barron Hammond paid tribute to his friend's ability to motivate struggling and distracted pupils.⁹ Together they achieved a course which delivered a practical training in craft pottery but equally required aesthetic judgement and aspirations.

Henry Hammond's own pottery was squeezed by his teaching and administrative commitments. Although he always maintained a ceramic practice, he produced relatively few pots; friends describe a perfectionism which limited the number of finished and exhibited works. Also he had myriad other interests – gardening, cooking, travel, singing, comparative religion – which got in the way of practical studio time. The rich texture of Henry Hammond's daily life is vividly recorded in the so-called 'commonplace books' of his papers. These pocket notebooks contain, cheek-by-jowl, shopping lists, notes on world mystical traditions, sketches, transcribed poetry, names and contact details, food recipes, agendas for meetings, train times and much else besides. A sequence from a page headed 14 July 1969 follows:

Sports shop Machyinlleth; Mr Morley [address]; 1 kodachrome film; Tweed @ 27/6 per yard; Guys St Thomas SE1; Scholarships abroad 1970/71, Churchill Fellowships; PT classes 31 1/2 hours, PT classes 69B West St; Clear bright light – the sun within, Soul of Tarsas – blinded by it, Kali – Sekhmet; Thuigee connected with Kali; companion – Love ... Mantra – sound energy – to magnetic energy; Apotheosis birth of a god ... Professor Robert Gardner Head Liverpool School Architecture; cherry jam, 5 lbs stoned morello cherries, juice of 3 small lemons ...¹⁰

Nevertheless, over a long career Hammond's pots were exhibited in a variety of venues. His ceramics were included in the British Council wartime show of crafts that toured the United States. He showed with the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society (established in 1886 at the beginning of the Arts and Crafts movement) and an article in the *Studio* from 1959 observes that Hammond was a regular exhibitor at the Primavera gallery (retailing applied arts) in Sloane Street.¹¹ He held joint exhibitions with David Leach (1978, Casson Gallery) and Sebastian Blackie (1984, Beaux Arts) and in the 1970s his work appeared in an exhibition in Amsterdam alongside pots by many illustrious contemporaries including Lucie Rie and Michael Cardew (*Engelse Ceramiek*).¹² There are good public collections of Henry Hammond's pots in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Paisley Museum and Art Gallery.



Fig.8: Bowl with brushed iron-oxide decoration of oats. Stoneware, thrown, with brushwork decoration in iron-oxide, matt glaze, pre-1980. 9.5 x 19.5 cm (h x diam). Private collection

Throughout his working life Hammond was an active participant in many organisations promoting the crafts from the Craft Potters' Association to the Society for Education through Art. In a different context Hammond was a dedicated member of the Anglican congregation in Farnham. After his retirement from the West Surrey College of Art and Design in 1979 Hammond continued with his extra-curricular activities and potted in his Bentley studio. He also travelled widely (he made a trip to India in 1976). In 1979 he was awarded the OBE and in 1980 the MBE. He died in 1989 in France, *en route* to a Buddhist retreat.

William Staite Murray

William Staite Murray (1881–1962) was an influential and inimitable figure in British studio pottery between the wars. He came to ceramics later in life as family expectation kept him in Holland managing a tulip farm. After military service in an administrative post during World War I, he resolved on a creative path and, by living within his wife's dress allowance, became a self-taught potter. Staite Murray practised ceramics as an artist, making unique and often large pots, charging high prices, and giving them expressive titles such as *Vortex* and *Morning Mist*. By the time he was appointed Head of the Ceramics Department at the Royal College of Art in 1925 he had an appreciative following and worked all year towards one stellar exhibition in the smart galleries of Bond Street. He seems to have been initially inspired by the pottery wares of the Japanese tea ceremony and their combination of aesthetics with meditation. Staite Murray pursued an expressly spiritual approach in the making of his own pots. He became a practising Buddhist and studied Zen philosophy and, through such ideas, found transcendent significance in the physical acts of throwing and decorating pottery. For Staite Murray his profound emotional involvement in the whole process of crafting pots was what imbued the works with individual expression; this was also their claim to Art.

Paul Barron

Paul Barron (1917–1983) grew up in Brighton. He attended Brighton College of Art and was taught by Norah Braden, a graduate of the Royal College of Art Ceramics Department and a talented student of Bernard Leach's. Barron himself went on to study pottery at the RCA, where Helen Pincombe was one of his teachers. Afterwards he worked for a time at Wrecclesham Pottery, a workshop making functional wares using traditional techniques. He also studied ash glazes with Katharine Pleydell-Bouverie. This education inspired a belief in the significance of the chemistry and physics of clays and glazes. Barron became a strong ally of Hammond's in building a rigorous technical course at the West Surrey College of Art and Design. He was a keen gardener and local historian (interests he shared with Hammond), and a talented amateur actor. In his own practice Barron made mainly individual items in stoneware; some of his tableware was exhibited in Prague. He shared a studio with Henry Hammond in Bentley from 1954.

Craft

The style of Henry Hammond's pottery remained very consistent over his lifetime. He potted in stoneware or porcelain (requiring a high-temperature firing) making wheel-thrown bowls, vases, or bottles with elegant balanced outlines. Muriel Rose, in her survey *Artist Potters in England*, observed that immediately after the War Henry Hammond and Paul Barron both worked in earthenware because of the difficulty of sourcing materials under rationing.¹³ However Hammond did not find this softer medium inspiring and returned to the tougher fabric and sharper lines of high-fired bodies as soon as possible. Hammond decorated these vessels with sensitive brushwork designs of grasses, fish, and other natural motifs. His glazes were muted creams, browns, and grey-greens derived from natural wood-ash glazes. Many of Hammond's ceramic methods and media have ancient precedents in historical Far Eastern pottery traditions – from the stoneware and porcelain fabrics to his classic oriental glazes and brush decoration. He was a connoisseur and a practitioner of the pale avocado-green glazes of East Asia known as celadons (achieved by firing an iron-rich glaze in an oxygen-starved atmosphere). The vessels of China and Japan were a wellspring of inspiration for both William Staite Murray and Bernard Leach. Their Anglo-oriental ceramic aesthetic

idealised unprocessed materials and robust pots as evidence of a wholesome, vital motivation. Hammond's potting responded to this aspiration with its tough, vitrified medium. His earthy and traditional materials contain natural irregularities which generate the variegated texture of his surfaces and colours.



Fig.9: Bottle with encircling design of stems and umbels (cow parsley) painted in dark pigment on grey-to-buff ground. Stoneware, thrown, with brush decoration in oxides on an ash glaze, c. 1970. 35.0 x 14.0 cm (h x diam). Bought from the Oxford Gallery in 1983. Private collection



Fig.10: Bowl with fish painted in red-browns on buff ground. Stoneware, thrown, with brush decoration in iron-oxide, pre-1985. 8.0 x 14.0 cm (h x diam). Bought from Beaux Arts, Bath c. 1985. Private collection



Fig.11: 'Grasses by moonlight', bowl with encircling design of grasses and clouds in dark pigment on buff ground. Porcelain, thrown, with brush decoration in oxides (cobalt, iron), clear matt glaze, 1960s. 8.25 x 13.0 cm (h x diam). Crafts Study Centre, P.74.3

Within this restrained repertoire of substances and techniques Hammond achieved a body of work full of lively variations on constant themes. There are many recurring elements in the silhouettes of pots, also their textures, hues, and brush motifs; yet these familiar attributes are uniquely orchestrated in each work. In this, Hammond follows William Staite Murray's declared philosophy of restricting the range of his techniques in order to know a small number of things deeply.¹⁴ This principle values craft skill over conceptual innovation: the discipline of a rehearsed approach enables a more sophisticated delivery. Also, where a series of vessels share a common style and technical foundation, the subtle differences of chance occurrences become more apparent. The respect for Japanese ceramics in 20th century English craft pottery circles encouraged the appreciation of serendipitous effects. David Hamilton, reviewing an exhibition of Hammond's pottery, responded to its 'Zen aesthetics'.¹⁵ He contrasts the irregularities in these pots, marked by the facts and accidents of process, with the polished consistency of the ceramics of co-exhibitor David Leach.

The brushwork on Henry Hammond's pots is integral to their effect. It is amongst the most distinctive and successful applications of an East Asian method of brush painting on British craft pottery (this was a near compulsory affectation into the 1970s). The famous Japanese potter Shoji Hamada described Hammond as the most skilled person with a brush that he knew of outside Japan.¹⁶ There is a happy mixture of realistic observation and stylisation in the fluidly-drawn designs which especially feature fish, grasses and reeds, dragonflies, and birds. While these subjects are reminiscent of Far Eastern pottery decoration, critics have noted that they also evoke the English countryside.¹⁷ Hammond's strong training in drawing, encompassing figurative illustration and pattern design, enabled him to adapt his chosen natural subjects as decorative motifs. His design sense is also demonstrated in the successful marriage of the applied motif with the three-dimensional pot. This perennial challenge is solved imaginatively and coherently in many of his works.



Fig.12: Sketch of plants; a loose sheet found inside a Lion brand sketching pad. Pen and ink on paper, 1960s–1980s. 13.5 x 17.5 cm (h x w).
Crafts Study Centre, HAM/876.1

Henry Hammond crafted one-off items rather than repeat production wares. Although he always made vessels in recognisable shapes with a potential function, such as tea bowls or vases, they were not primarily intended for practical use. This was out-of-step with the country workshop ideal promoted by Bernard Leach. His manifesto, *A potter's book* (1940), inspired many potters to set up a rural pottery serving the community with useful items and bringing together humble subsistence with art. However, Hammond's teacher William Staite Murray was unapologetic about making unique pots as an artist – intended for contemplation. This example perhaps provided ballast for Hammond's introspective vocation, though he didn't pursue the reputation of genius. Hammond describes his own philosophy of craft as a practical methodology for bringing us closer to the nature of things:

Potting has always been for me a satisfactory if demanding activity, a struggle through which one may become aware of the perfectly manifested world in which we live ... As drawing helps me to see more deeply into the world about me, so making, decorating, glazing and firing pottery develops and matures understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the infinite variations of form and colour to be found among rocks and stones, plants and animals and all living things.¹⁸

Hammond maintained a lifelong practice of sketching. Pottery, he asserts, is an extension of this – by tackling the hands-on task of transforming raw materials we understand more of the world around us. The pots themselves are the distillation of this ‘close encounter’ with the physical universe which affects and initiates us. The evidence of the craftsman’s hand in Henry Hammond’s pots, together with their modest scale and comprehensible subjects, make them very human.

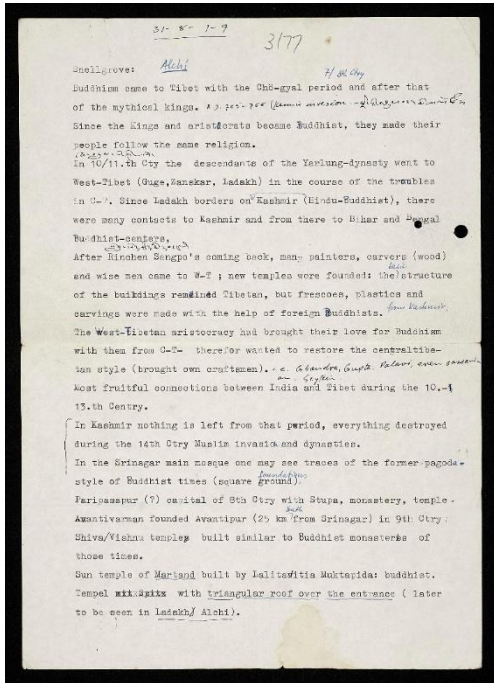


Fig.13: One of three pages of typewritten notes on Buddhism in India with handwritten additions. Ink on paper with notes in black and blue biro, 1970s. 29.5 x 21.0 cm (h x w).
Crafts Study Centre, HAM/3177.1



Fig.14: Sketch of religious statue, possibly St Agnes who is symbolised by a lamb; page from a spiral-bound notebook of sketches made during Hammond’s trip to France in 1952. Pen and ink on notebook page, 1952. 18.0 x 11.0 cm (h x w).
Crafts Study Centre, HAM/874.15

Henry Hammond’s vision of his craft is closely related to his investigations into religion and mysticism. He engaged with Buddhism through workshops and a trip to its source in India. His copious private notes reveal an eclectic study of spiritual traditions and the metaphorical significance of symbol and ritual.

Ascent of the sun into the heaven of the Father; red garment, yellow belt, blue globe; Cabbala palm tree of Debora; Tree of life – [?] column ... Mithraism, the raven; Lion, Dura Europei – fiery breath, purified by fire – united with the sun, John – water, Jesus – fire; Crux ansata – systrum, cults of Mithras, cults of Isis, significance = lower moved to higher; Dunce cap, man reaches air by means of fire and water – Honey sugar of antiquity, preservative¹⁹

This is the vocabulary of alchemy where the material world is the mirror of the transcendent. These jottings, taken together with Hammond’s love of poetry and music, demonstrate a preoccupation with how the profound enlivens the everyday. A contemporary rational approach tends to be closed to such perceptions, but secularism is inappropriate to Hammond’s case. He was a deeply religious man within mainstream Christianity and an ethical one

who believed in service to a greater good. Former student and colleague Sebastian Blackie describes Henry Hammond as a maker whose craft came from the whole person.²⁰ Perhaps this holism, together with a spiritual sensibility, is why Hammond's ceramics have struck many people as contemplative although they remain light on express philosophical comment from their creator.

Connections and Networks

Henry Hammond was an energetic participant in many collectives and networks in the craft community. He was capable of acting as either a catalyst or a team-player and jokingly referred to himself as a telephone exchange.²¹ With Paul Barron he was a founding member of the Craft Potters' Association (CPA) in 1957, a strong grass-roots organisation that continues to provide a retail and exhibition centre in central London, and publishes *Ceramic Review*. Hammond was a long-time member of the Artworkers' Guild, an interdisciplinary society that has supported skilled craftspeople since 1884. He was a founding trustee of the Crafts Study Centre, alongside stalwart supporters of the handcrafts Muriel Rose and Robin Tanner. But it was Hammond's involvement with the Society for Education through Art that was his most unique intervention, and perhaps made the broadest impact. His advocacy of a general craft education through this organisation was instrumental in making handcraft skills a part of secondary schooling.



Fig.15: Bowl by Helen Pincombe with red-brown exterior, contrasting grey centre. Stoneware, thrown, reduction-firing (iron-slip?), 1980s. 7.8 x 27.0 cm (h x diam). An example of this well-respected maker's work bought by Henry Hammond for the CSC collection. Crafts Study Centre, P.83.2

Hammond's talent for connection and his heterodox attitude is very clear in his educational work. In addition to the eclectic cocktail Hammond mixed in the Farnham staffroom, he brought many potters to the College who were working far outside the orientalisng precedents established by Leach and Staite Murray. In the early 1960s he invited Alan Caiger-Smith to speak to the students about the history of tin-glazed earthenware when Caiger-Smith was one of very few potters exploring this lower-fired and brightly-coloured medium. Lucie Rie and Hans Coper both demonstrated their pared-down angular ceramics, which grew out of modern continental movements in interior design rather than historicist references to traditional craft. Some West African students joined the course through English potter Michael Cardew's African workshop venture in Nigeria.²² Cardew's local muse and colleague in the pottery at Abuja, Ladi Kwali, brought the perspective of an indigenous African woman potter to Farnham when she demonstrated there c.1960.

This resolutely inclusive approach can be linked to Hammond's belief in tradition as the foundation of craft. His convictions are set out in an article entitled 'Tradition' published in the journal of the Society for Education through Art, *Athene* (1955):

When making anything we must consider its use and the material from which it is made. We can, by looking at the traditional forms in the same medium, and by understanding their structure, see how to treat the material and what kinds of forms are most suitable to develop... The craftsman thinks of tradition as knowledge and custom inherited from the past which, if understood, will help him to work intelligently at his craft.²³

In addition to the expertise embodied in the products of a craft discipline Hammond goes on to argue that a community of makers accumulates a 'guild' knowledge greater than that of any one person. This illuminates his purpose on the ceramics course at Farnham and his wider networking activities. For Hammond all contemporary craft potters, however diverse in method and intention, contributed to the momentum of the discipline. In the same article he is critical of novelty for its own sake and an over-emphasis on personal inclinations. Thus he differentiates the communal strength of craft from the lone trajectories of art and makes the test of craft practice its lasting relevance.

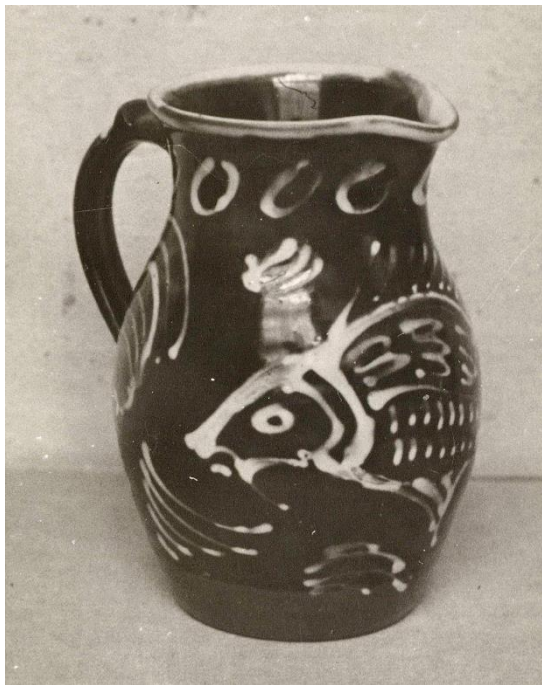


Fig.16: Photograph of a slipware jug with a fish design possibly made by Henry Hammond. Black and white photograph, 1950s. 13.0 x 8.0 cm (h x w). This is one of four prints sent to Hammond in a greetings card by Japanese thinker Soetsu Yanagi who was interested in the vitality of English medieval traditions including slipware; Hammond used a highly-decorated English medieval jug to illustrate his article on tradition in 'Athene'.
Crafts Study Centre, HAM/2397



Fig.17: Photograph of (from left to right) potter Shoji Hamada, writer Soetsu Yanagi, and Henry Hammond in front of a ruined cathedral. Black and white photograph, 1952. 8.0 x 13.0 cm (h x w). This print, along with Fig.16, was one of four sent to Henry Hammond by Yanagi; it was taken on their trip to Durham in 1952.
Crafts Study Centre, HAM/2395

Over Hammond's career he united the divergent schools of Bernard Leach and William Staite Murray through his personal friendships and broad professional enthusiasms. Initially Leach and Staite Murray were friendly and compared notes but they were both interviewed for the position at the RCA, and when Staite Murray was appointed a distance resulted. Although Hammond's admiration for his teacher never waned, he developed a long sympathetic

friendship with Leach. Their first encounter was at Hammond's diploma show at the RCA when Leach stopped (unrecognised) to compliment and critique his work.²⁴ After the long hiatus of his war duty Hammond greatly appreciated the chance to spend time at Leach's pottery at St Ives, immersing himself in the routines of craft. His recognition of Leach's vision and achievement is apparent in the article he contributed on Leach's career to *Techniques of the World's great masters of pottery and ceramics* (1984). Hammond was introduced directly to the conviction and fascination of Leach's Orientalism in 1952 when he escorted two of Leach's closest Japanese associates to Durham to see the cathedral. Potter Shoji Hamada and writer and aesthete Soetsu Yanagi admired the collective achievement of the medieval guild construction and then, while walking along the river, paused to appreciate the chance pattern formed by willow leaves falling on the path.²⁵ Later Hammond introduced Shoji Hamada's meditative sensibility to another generation when he brought him to Farnham.

Another link to Leach's ideal of wholesome handmade pottery was Hammond's strong collegiate friendships with Leach's influential pupils Michael Cardew and Katharine Pleydell-Bouverie. Both were pioneering experimentalists though in quite different ways. Pleydell-Bouverie pursued an unassuming small-scale practice exploring Anglo-oriental aesthetics, especially the subtle effects of ash glazes derived from different plant species. Cardew drove himself to deliver Herculean schemes producing inexpensive, functional pots in potteries established from Gloucestershire to West Africa. Hammond also maintained a long friendship with Bernard Leach's eldest son David, who ran the St Ives Pottery with his father. David Leach was an accomplished ceramicist, trained in the potteries in Stoke-on-Trent, who made precisely-finished functional wares drawing on Far Eastern models. Through these amicable associations Hammond was able to bring the great technical knowledge and dedication of both David Leach and Michael Cardew into the orbit of the students on his course at Farnham.



Fig.18: Bowl by David Leach with willow motif in brown, blue, and red in the centre. Porcelain, thrown, with brush decoration in oxides (cobalt, iron), 1980s. 6.6 x 21.0 cm (h x diam). An example of David Leach's work made at his own pottery at Bovey Tracey in Devon, and bought by Henry Hammond for the CSC collection. *Crafts Study Centre, P.84.12*

Henry Hammond also transmitted the legacy of William Staite Murray to a post-war generation. Unlike Bernard Leach, who was a celebrity writer and lecturer into the 1970s, Staite Murray's direct influence ceased in 1939. He was stranded in Africa (where some of his wife's relatives lived) by the outbreak of World War II and they stayed on there

in the uncertain atmosphere after the War. Staite Murray made his last pot in 1939; in Africa he wrote poetry. He visited England once in 1957 to organise a selling exhibition of his final pre-War firing. Few of Staite Murray's prominent pupils achieved sustained influence as makers.²⁶ The energetic and anarchic potter and painter Sam Haile was tragically killed in a car accident in the late 1940s. Robert Washington worked as an art inspector of schools, taking up ceramics again late in life. Heber Mathews made some pots during a busy teaching career. In 1975 Hammond contributed the essay 'A magnetic teacher' to *Crafts* which conjures something of Staite Murray's charisma and his impact on his students. The self-reliance and adventurousness Staite Murray demanded emerges in anecdotes such as when Sam Haile, keen to get an opinion on his pots, finally provoked Staite Murray to agree to point to those he thought should be thrown into the slurry bin to disintegrate! Grandstanding aside, Staite Murray imbued his students with an appreciation of Far Eastern ceramic traditions, a bold graphic sensibility, and a resourceful spirit with materials. All of these qualities are transmitted in Henry Hammond's pots.



Fig.19: Vase with a pattern of horizontal bands in a dark pigment on buff ground. Stoneware, thrown, brush decoration in iron and cobalt-oxide, matt glaze, c. late 1970s. 29.0 x 15.0 cm (h x diam). This graphic design is reminiscent of a series of pots made by William Staite Murray in the 1930s with bold stripes such as 'The Bather'. Hammond's pot bought from the Oxford Gallery c.1983.
Private collection

Teaching

Henry Hammond taught straight out of his degree, initially working as a part-time tutor at Richmond and Farnham Schools of Art before accepting a permanent post at Farnham. Tanya Harrod observes that, unlike many of his contemporaries in craft, he was without the capital to establish his own business. Teaching provided a very necessary living.²⁷ Yet, Hammond's thorough involvement in his art school duties, together with the esteem of his colleagues, demonstrates that he found a calling in this educationalist role.

Henry Hammond always sought to give students a strong technical grounding in their craft, a preoccupation that he shared with Paul Barron. He supported the establishment of the Dartington Pottery training scheme in the 1970s which set out to educate potters through an apprenticeship programme in a practical workshop and business



Fig.20: Photograph of Henry Hammond demonstrating throwing to a group of Japanese students. Colour photograph, 1980s. 10.2 x 15.0 cm (h x w). This print is one of series of 22 following Hammond showing a variety of techniques.
Crafts Study Centre, HAM/2535

context. For Hammond craft training crucially included drawing skills which he believed to be a vital foundation for artistic work:

Measured and mechanical drawing could perhaps better be taught in terms 1-4 alongside objective drawing but during an evening period. Both these basic essentials to lead on to specialised aspects which must be taught in a manner integrated into Workshop and Drawing-board practice, for Drawing is an essential tool for visualisation/reflection when designing – almost its greatest use.²⁸

This extract, from notes dated 1979, typically brings the pragmatic to bear on the ideal – how and when will students draw, and with what purpose? It is relevant that Hammond’s own practical education was broad and, to a great extent, self-directed. During his London degree, in the absence of technical instruction at the RCA, he attended lectures on glazing and firing at the Central School of Art and Design. The emphasis Hammond placed on applied skills in the ceramics course at the West Surrey College of Art and Design was not at the forefront of fashion in creative education in the 1960s and 70s. This was an era when personal expression and the provocative was pursued in art of many kinds. Craft disciplines resisted individualistic trends to an extent through their close links with material and function. Yet these were the decades that the ‘new ceramics’ emerged: crafted clay objects that were brightly coloured, conspicuously un-useful, and often ironic. This important development in 20th century handmade pottery, in which women makers were prominent, consciously departed from oriental and traditionalist themes, and sought conceptual punch and visual glamour over artisanal skill. However, Sebastian Blackie has pointed out that Hammond’s open-mindedness and efforts to expose his students to as many perspectives as possible was very much in tune with the educational idealism of the 1960s.²⁹

Henry Hammond’s work with the Society for Education through Art (SEA) also focussed on promoting physical craft skills. He was one of a like-minded group of craftspeople within the SEA that lobbied for the importance of craft and design in a well-rounded education for young people. Hammond’s fellow advocates included Ella Macleod, who taught weaving at Farnham, and respected potter Helen Pincombe. The group had a clearly articulated vision of the benefits gained through the practical challenges of applied art – resourcefulness, planning, self-confidence.

The discipline of the craft, being completely impersonal, is far more acceptable than that which is teacher-imposed. Responsibility for one’s own work ... should help to develop in the child independence of thought and action, and an ability to use his own judgement and to make his own decisions ... the

planning and carrying through of a whole job is a satisfying experience, bringing happiness and confidence.³⁰

This reads as a very contemporary statement of 'life skills'. Hammond certainly believed craft could reach students less-disposed to an academic approach, as well as contributing generally to a balanced education.³¹ The natural progression of such egalitarian access to craft education would be the nourishment of Hammond's craft 'tradition' or community, drawing on a wider, and possibly more meritocratic, intake. Through the SEA Hammond and his colleagues succeeded in making craft a core part of the curriculum at secondary school. Hammond worked hard to make this directive achievable by equipping teachers with basic craft skills and principles. To this end he organised a series of conferences and hands-on workshops so that teachers could incorporate pottery, and other media, into their lessons with confidence and good results.³²

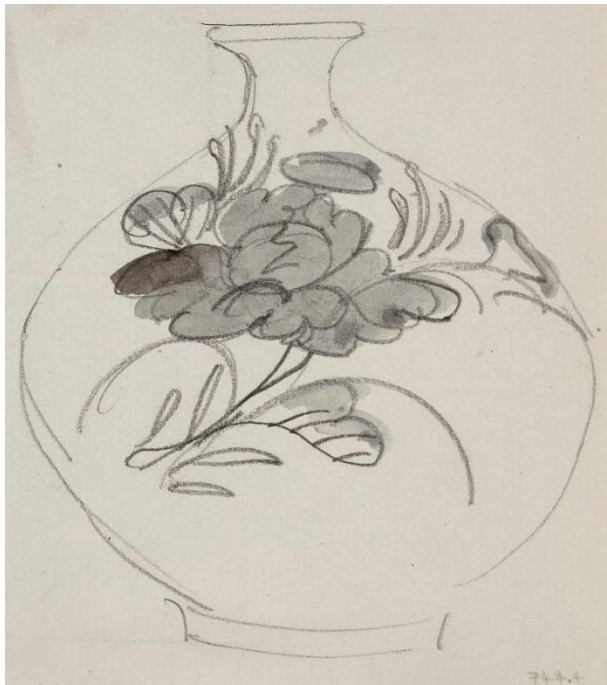


Fig.21: Sketch of vase with peony design. Pencil and ink wash on paper, 1930s. 15.0 x 10.2 cm (h x w). One of three sketches mounted on a page in a portfolio of drawings.

Crafts Study Centre, HAM/744.4

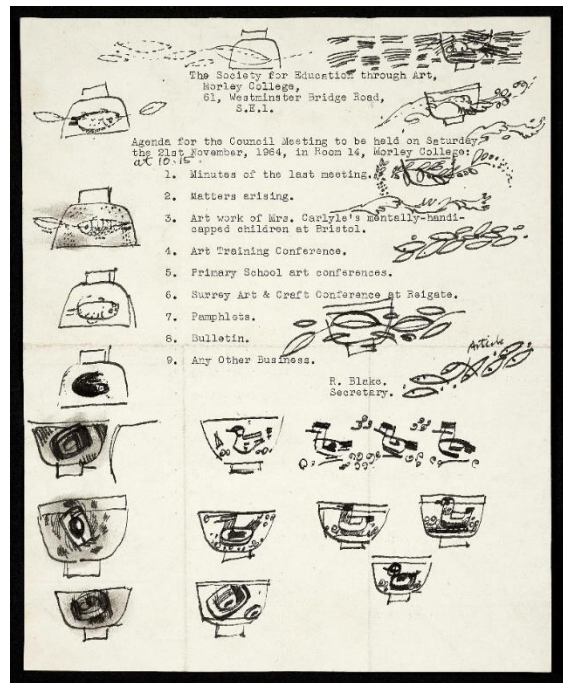


Fig.22: Sheet with typewritten agenda for a meeting of the Society for Education through Art (SEA) held on the 21st November 1964 with added sketches by Henry Hammond of pots and decorative motifs. Ink on paper, 1964. 25.1 x 20.4 cm (h x w)

Crafts Study Centre, HAM/876.2

Hammond also initiated learning opportunities for mature craft professionals. He was instrumental in encouraging Michael Cardew to run a masterclass for potters in the fundamental physics and chemistry of glazes and clay bodies.³³ Through Cardew's adventures formulating workable clays and glazes from local materials in rural England and West Africa he had amassed a great store of technical knowledge. Hammond pressed him to disseminate this understanding to others. The workshop of 1959 was attended by many prominent and experienced potters, including Marianne de Trey and Alan Caiger-Smith, who both ran successful production potteries. Cardew's later book *Pioneer pottery* (1969) recognisably covers the same ground as the course. Hammond himself had a personal commitment to lifelong learning. His never-ending researches into the spiritual resonances of craft and art were one aspect of this. But Hammond's account of a visit to Katharine Pleydell-Bouverie (Beano) describes the creative sustenance he gained through collegiate feedback:

After breakfast, if by chance I have brought a pot from a recent firing, Beano looks it over and comments; almost at once out comes her recipe book, advice is sought and given and recipes for glazes and bodies produced.³⁴

This essay is dated 1980 when Hammond was 66.

Privately Henry Hammond reached for the mysteries of existence in his pottery. However the esoteric lore recorded in his notebooks is interspersed with the pedestrian minutiae of shopping lists, notes for meetings, and draft assessment criteria for his students. Certainly the rigorous discharge of his departmental responsibilities at Farnham testifies to a man thoroughly grounded in the everyday world. Moreover, his activism within community craft bodies and education was driven by an acute perception of the actual material and social conditions of handwork. Yet it is equally apparent that Hammond's concrete and pragmatic contributions to craft (as well as his own practice) drew strength from his sense of the subtle and intuitive dimensions of making.



Fig.23: 'Circles and HH', page 131 from the textile sample book of craft weaver Susan Bosence with a sample of the design she named after her friend Henry Hammond. Corded velvet mounted on paper, Soledon dye and hand block printed, 1970s–1980s. 29.0 x 49.5 cm (h x w).

Crafts Study Centre, 2001.3.131

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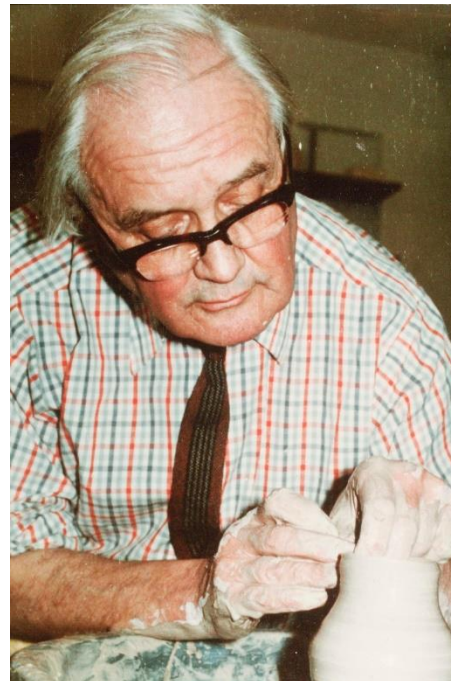


Fig.24: Photograph of Henry Hammond at the wheel. Colour photograph, 1980s. 15.2 x 10 cm (h x w). This print is one of series of 22 following Hammond showing a variety of techniques.

Crafts Study Centre, HAM/2535.1

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³ Hammond, H. 1975, 'A magnetic teacher', *Crafts*, no.14, May/June, pp.33–34.

⁴ Hammond, H. 1975, 'A magnetic teacher', *Crafts*, no.14, May/June, p.34.

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⁶ Crafts Study Centre, HAM/873.

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²² See photograph from 1952 in Houston (1992) p.28; also a mention of Ghanaian students at Farnham in Hockey 'Insights of a gifted potter' *The Guardian – obituaries* (1989) Monday 28th August

²³ convictions are set out in an article entitled 'Tradition' published in the journal of the Society for Education through Art, *Athene* (1955).

²⁴ Hammond, H. 1987, 'Bernard Leach – a living tradition', *Ceramic Review*, no.108, November/December, p.38.

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²⁶ Houston (1992), p.20; see also Harrod *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th century* (1999) pp.34–35 who also notes their contemporary Margaret Rey who has made sculpture in several media over her career but whose later work has not been much discussed in craft surveys; see B. Wakefield 'A link through time' *Ceramic Review* (2003) no.203 September/October, pp.46–47 for a recent interview with Rey.

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