

Studio Pottery

13 October 1987



On 13 October four stamps are being issued for Studio Pottery marking the centenary of the birth of Bernard Howell Leach (1887 – 1979), regarded as the father-figure of the studio pottery movement in Britain. The designs are by Tony Evans, his first for The Post Office, and feature pots by Leach and three other potters.

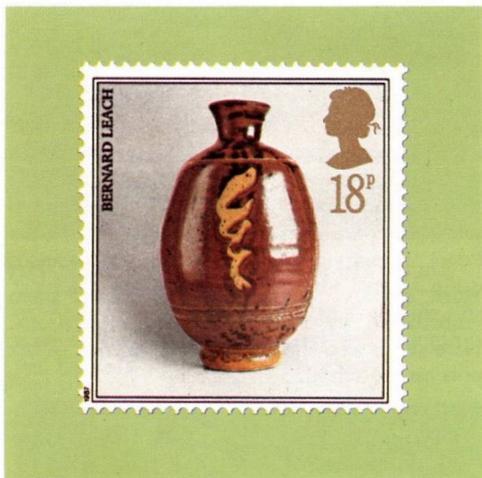


Bernard Leach sketching

1920. He also visited potters in Korea and China. On his return to Britain in 1920 he founded the Leach Pottery at St Ives with Shoji Hamada, a great Japanese potter who had accompanied Leach back to England. He was very critical of the pottery then in common use and said in his book *A Potter's Book* "about nine-tenths of the industrial pottery produced in England ... is hopeless bad both in form and decoration".

Primarily concerned with making well-designed functional pots which everyone could afford, Leach's ideal was to re-establish a standard of quality. His was a blend of classical oriental pottery and traditional English pre-industrial slipware. He liked to relate how the technique of 17th century English slip decoration was revived at St Ives by Hamada and himself after observing the patterns made by blackberry jam and Cornish clotted cream spread on a slice of bread.

A pot by Leach, now in The Holburne Museum and Crafts Study Centre, Bath, is featured on the 18p stamp.



In the latter part of the 19th century and the beginning of this there was a reaction against impersonal materialism and handmade pots began to be made by such as the Martin brothers in the Fulham Pottery in London. Pots as works of art were made and exhibited from 1912 by William Staite Murray, later to become head of the Ceramics Department of the Royal College of Art.

Bernard Leach learnt the craft of pottery in Japan where he stayed for 11 years from 1909 till



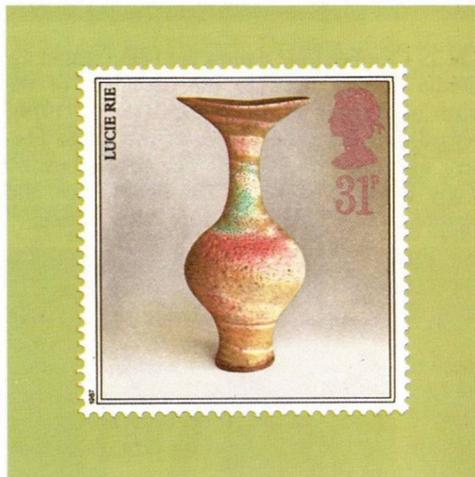
Thanks to Leach studio pottery in Britain blossomed and many fine potters have followed him. Lucie Rie was born in Vienna in 1902 and came to Britain in 1938. In 1946 she was joined by Hans Coper and they worked together for many years influencing many younger potters.

Elizabeth was born in Wales in 1940. After education at the Royal College of Art, London, she established her own workshop at Welwyn Garden City. Among various exhibitions she had a one-woman show at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1979.

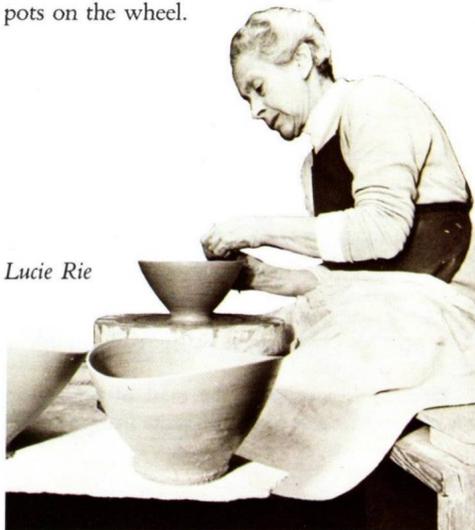


Elizabeth Fritsch

One of these was Elizabeth Fritsch, a student in a period of bold experiment in the 1960s and early 1970s. An example of her work is on the **26p** value. She coils and builds her pots rather than throwing them on a wheel, and then decorates the irregular shapes with geometric colour patterns either complementing or altering the form of each pot.



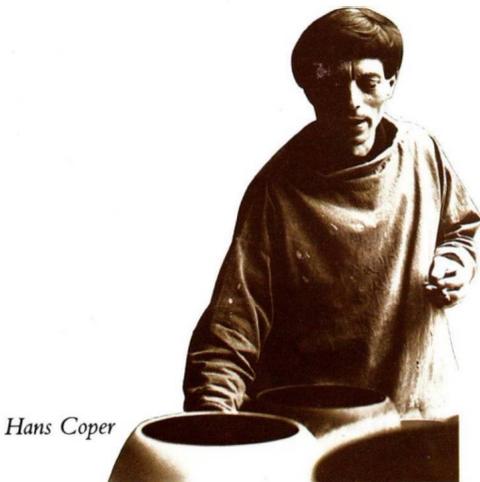
On the **31p** stamp is a pot by Lucie Rie. Her work employs rich and daring glazes, often embellished by finely scratched decorations. Here she is also shown working on one of her pots on the wheel.



Lucie Rie

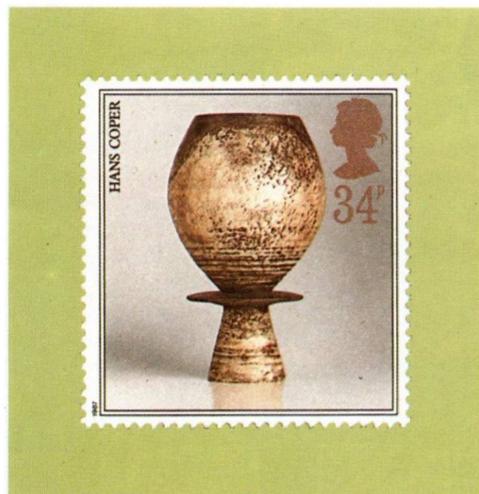


Lucie Rie CBE has been a studio potter since 1927. She has had many exhibitions, often with Hans Coper. These have included the Victoria and Albert Museum and several on the continent including in museums in Hamburg and Düsseldorf.



Hans Coper

Hans Coper, whose work is shown on the 34p stamp, was born in 1920, and as a young German engineer came to work with Lucie Rie in 1946. They remained close friends until his death in 1981. His matt stoneware pieces in black, cream or white possess great purity, their shapes often evoking a feeling of early Greek Cycladic figures. He taught at the Royal College of Art and Elizabeth Fritsch said of him "his teaching had the same integrity and strength as had his pots".



From this issue the 26p value replaces the 22p. This follows the reduction of the European postage rate from 22p to 18p and the decision to introduce the overseas postcard rate (26p) rather than retaining a value of use only for non-EEC European countries.

Technical Details

Designed by Tony Evans, the stamps have been printed in photogravure by Harrison & Sons Limited. In format they are almost square, 35mm x 37mm, perf. 14 x 14½, printed on unwatermarked phosphor-coated paper in sheets of 100 on PVA Dextrin gum.

PHQ Cards

PHQ cards (Nos. 105 A-D) featuring each of the four stamps will be available from 29 September, price 15p each.

Presentation Pack

The presentation pack will cost £1.31 and was designed by John Gorham with text by Edwin Mullins. Featured are several other pots and potters. On the reverse of the pack appears in black one of the 1982 British Textiles stamps as a related thematic issue.

First Day Cover

The first day cover was designed by John Gorham and costs 16p each. Two pictorial postmarks will be used for the Bureau first day cover service, one from the British Philatelic Bureau featuring clay being moulded on a potter's wheel; the other is from St Ives, and shows the figure of a potter with a wheel.

A first day cover service will be provided by the Bureau with the official Royal Mail cover addressed to the destination required with the four stamps cancelled with either postmark. The charges will be £1.56 (inland) and £1.36 (overseas). Application forms, available from the Bureau and at Head Post Offices, should be returned not later than 13 October.

Customers requiring only the special pictorial postmarks may obtain them under the reposting facility by sending on the first day of issue a stamped addressed envelope under an outer cover endorsed 'Special First Day of Issue Handstamp' to:

'British Philatelic Bureau' 20 Brandon Street,
EDINBURGH EH3 5TT

'St Ives' Special Postmark Duty,
Circuit House,
St Clement Street,
TRURO,
Cornwall,
TR1 1AB



Mrs J Robinson
 200 Manorbier Road
 ILKESTON
 Derbyshire
 DE7 4AB

POTTERS' TOOLS



'It is time for potters to claim their proper field. Pottery in its pure form relies neither on sculptural additions nor on pictorial decorations, but on the counterpoint of form, design, colour, texture and the quality of the material, all directed to a function. This function is the uses of the home. Compared with most of the other arts it is a private and domestic art.'

MICHAEL CARDEN 1969

