

## Enameller profile - Catherine Large

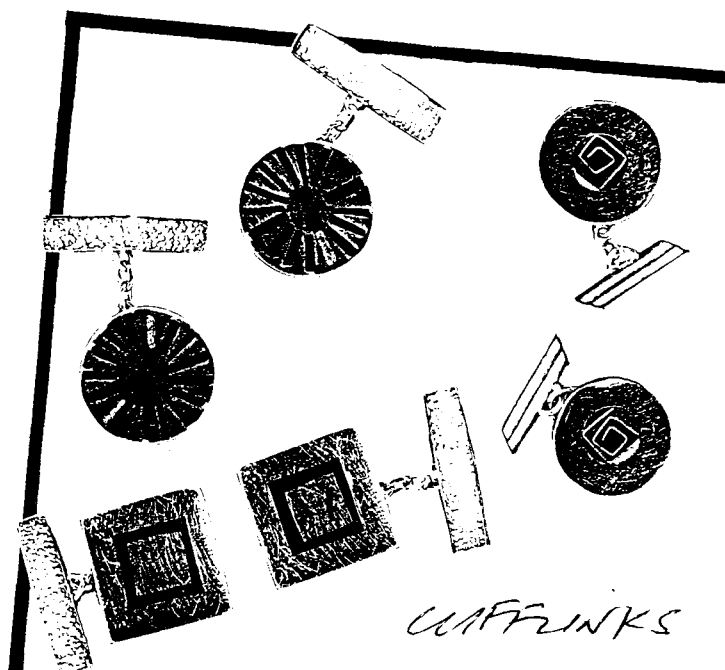
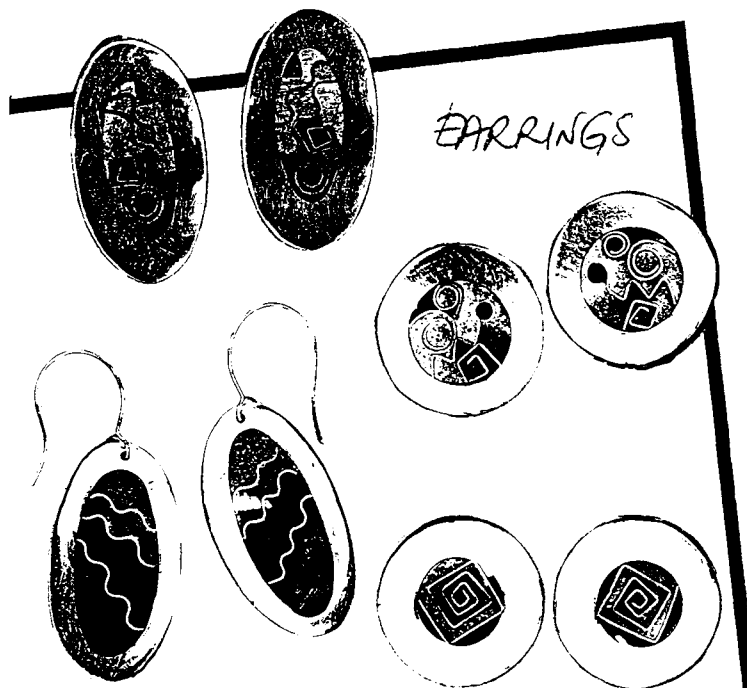
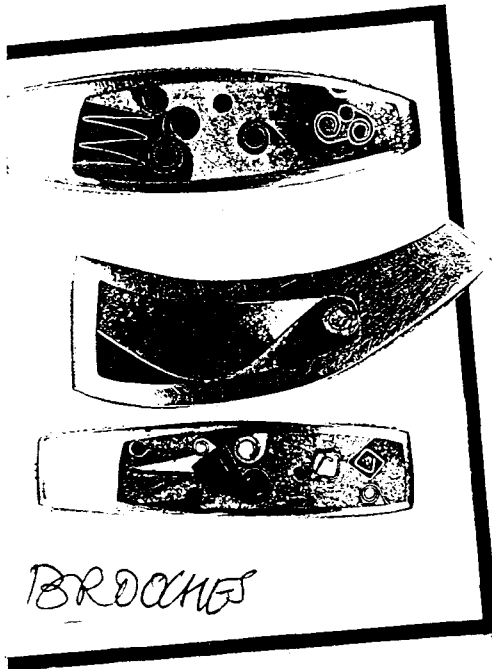
My interest in enamel began when I was studying Gold and Silversmithing at RMIT in 1983. Until that time I had no special interest in enamelling, nor had I seen very many examples, except for one or two pieces that were owned by my family.

I have always been interested in colour, its play and combinations, so incorporating enamel into my work as a jeweller seemed an obvious step. However, enamel and I seem to have a rocky relationship; a lot of the time it tries me to the limits of my patience, but the rewards, I'm thankful to say, seem to me to be worth it.

Three years spent overseas in Europe and Asia saw me step aside from enamelling altogether, keeping only the most tenuous of links with jewellery-making itself. It was a break I felt I needed to clarify my directions, and I returned to jewellery-making in 1992 refreshed and with a clear idea that I wanted to pursue enamelling.

Up until early this year, my work has been mostly small scale wearable pieces, ranging from rings and earrings, to buttons, brooches and neckpieces. Having recently purchased a kiln, I'm looking forward to creating larger objects such as tableware, incorporating enamel.

My palette usually veers from green and blue tones, to purple and blue. Although I enjoy using 'hotter' tones such as red and yellow, I find them alot more challenging and trickier to perfect. Most of my work utilises transparent enamels to allow for the play of light on the metal beneath, and thus to create that wonderful glow that enamel is capable of.



# News

It's end of financial year and the dreaded tax time. Now I have to sort through that box of crumpled receipts and invoices. I'd rather be enamelling.

AEN has just managed to scrape by, paying its way more or less. I'm reluctant to increase subscription fees however. Many craftspeople are doing it tough right now, and although a \$4 increase wouldn't seem a lot, I'd prefer not to. AEN is a self-supporting information network and should remain within everyone's financial means. So, \$16 it will remain for as long as possible. I would like to suggest however, that enamellers who are able may want to pay the higher fee of \$20 when resubscribing to help subsidise increased expenses over the coming year. This would of course be voluntary.

Australian enamellers are fortunate that there are so many opportunities to exhibit our work. It's hard to keep up with them all. In addition there is news of three International exhibitions as well. The exhibition in Coburg Germany is especially recommended. They put out a lovely catalogue too.

Winter means we love our warm kilns. The best place to be.

Best wishes

*Candyn DeFrappe*  
Editor

The deadline for material for the next issue will be September 23. Submissions are very welcome and AEN is always pleased to be informed of any enamel news and activities.

Please keep us informed.

Material can be faxed to 066 841 772, or mailed to PO Box 418, Mullumbimby NSW.

Congratulations to Victorian enameller Debbie Sheezel who has received a commission for a large enamel mural to be located in the new Brisbane International Airport.



Bowl by Debbie Sheezel  
20" diameter

German enameller and friend to many Australian enamellers, Hiltrud Blaich is again visiting Australia. She will be in Perth from 19 September until early December, and will be conducting several workshops using small plates, beakers and beads. Enamellers interested in these workshops should contact Jacquie Sprogoe in Perth. Hiltrud will also visit Sydney briefly before going to New Zealand and then home for Christmas.

The exhibition committee of the 4th National Exhibition of Enamels has announced the third juror for the 1995 exhibition. Stained glass artist Jeffrey Hamilton will complete the selection panel with Ken Lockwood and Robyn Tudor. Issue No 30 of Craft Arts International featured an article on Jeffrey's glass panels.

Enamellers are reminded that slides for jurying are due by November 1. See previous issue of AEN for entry details or contact Mary Raymond on 02 416 6472 to be put on the mailing list for entry forms if you haven't participated before.

The UK Guild of Craft Enamellers has requested to reprint Karin Luz' technical article on Drop Enamel in their quarterly journal. Drop Enamel was printed in the June issue of AEN.

AEN has received a note from Margaret Warwick-Clarke to say that she is no longer enamelling. Best wishes to Margaret for whatever she intends to do next. We will miss her participation in enamel events.

## Subscriptions

Subscriptions - 6 issues per year

Regular - \$16.00

Student - \$8.00

New Zealand Air Mail - \$20.00

Overseas Economy Airmail - \$20.00

Australian Enamel Newsletter

PO Box 418, Mullumbimby NSW 2482, Australia.

## Supplies

Floral gems, cattails and enamelling threads, custom made hand tools for enamelling, made to order.  
Seaire  
PO Box 1344, Ojai Ca 93024, US.  
Phone 805 646 0223

Huge range of findings, prepared settings and bezels, gemstones and gemstone beads. This catalogue has everything. Glossy 500 page colour catalogue \$US10.  
River Gems and Findings  
6901 Washington St NE, Albuquerque NM 87109 US

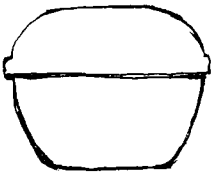
## For sale

### Silver Gold and Tools

A retiring jeweller has items for sale: casting equipment, rolling mills, and gold and silver which he will roll to any special requirement width or thickness. Will sell cheaper than any other outlets. Contact by phone on 02 399 5838.

### Copper Bowls with Lids

Margaret Siddal has spun copper containers with lids for sale. Heavy gauge (1.2mm) copper to combat warpage. Price - \$30.00 each, or \$35.00 with postal charges. Contact Margaret on 02 918 6878.



## Around the Magazines

### Glass on Metal

Volume 13 No 3 June 1994

Features cover photograph and inside story on the work of Victorian enameller Deborah Sheezel. Also a review of the 1994 Australian National Exhibition of Enamel by Mary Raymond.

Other contents:

- news about the 5th Enamelist Society International Conference to be held in Virginia August 1995.
- Technical article on Using Fused Photographs in Enamel, the Ceramic Tissue Method by James Doran.
- Article on the use of collage with cloisonne panels by Audrey Komrad.
- other short pieces of news and information.

Glass on Metal is the magazine of the US Enamelist Society, and costs \$US 54.00pa for 6 issues.  
Enquiries to PO Box 310, Newport, KY 41072 USA

## Change of address

Jan Barker 9 Franklin Street, West Hobart 7000.  
Telephone 002 314 902

## International Events

The British Society of Enamellers will be holding their 3rd International Conference in Chichester March 24-27 1995. There will be a full programme of workshops, demonstrations, presentations and discussion panels. Anyone interested in receiving details as they are released should contact BSOE at 30 Kensington Square, London W8535, UK.



### International Art Symposium, Latvia.

The Artist's Union of Latvia invites artists to participate in the 4th International Enamel Art Symposium from September 16th to October 10 1994. The fee for the symposium is \$350 which includes living, meals and exhibition expenses. Travel fees must be paid by the artist.

If you are interested in attending this symposium contact AEN for more information.



### British Society of Enamellers Exhibition. 8 December 1994 - 9 January 1995

Exhibition includes jewellery, small works and panels. Guildhall Gallery, Winchester.

## Style trends ...

From a report on style trends at a recent International jewellery Fair in Basle 1994:

"The strong presence of coloured enamel will continue to be felt this year, although the best designs will use colour more sparingly and with more subtlety than before. For example, instead of large sections of one colour on tubular bracelets and earrings, look for stripes, dots, stars, hearts, and ribbons of different colours to make the point". Among other important trends, buyers will be looking for - continued importance of ecological and nature inspired designs, pieces that can easily be transformed into other items for increased versatility, a move toward more complicated designs featuring ancient symbols, mythology and characters, fancy links and more creative use of chains, growth of non-jewellery but related categories such as belt buckles, desk and pocket accessories, gifts of precious metal and gemstones.

## Thank you

Thank you to the following contributors to this issue:

Catherine Large, Hiltrud Blaich, Jacquie Sprogoe, Skip Allison, Margaret Siddall, Annette Clarke, Heidi Wellings, Mary Raymond, Kyle Pearson, Dennis Davies.

# Opportunities to Exhibit

Here...

## Maroochy Arts Festival 1994

Total prize money in excess of \$7500. Sections of interest to enamellers include Jewellery and Sculpture. Entries close Friday 16 September. Festival dates - 11-16 October.

For further information phone or fax 074 459 494, or write to The Secretary, Maroochy Arts Festival, PO Box 5255, Sunshine Coast Mail Centre, Nambour Qld 4560.



## 2nd National Contemporary Jewellery Award

Sponsored by the Griffith Regional Art Gallery.

Artists are invited to submit works in three sections: Open - prize \$1200.00.

Jewellery - non-precious materials, prize \$650.00

Jewellery - Precious materials, prize \$650.00

Entries must have been made in the last 18 months, and must be for sale. Entry fee \$5.00 per work, limit 5 entries. Entries close 19 August, works to arrive 29 August. Entry forms available from Griffith Regional Art Gallery, PO Box 1076, Griffith 2680.

Ph 069 625991 Fax 069 626119

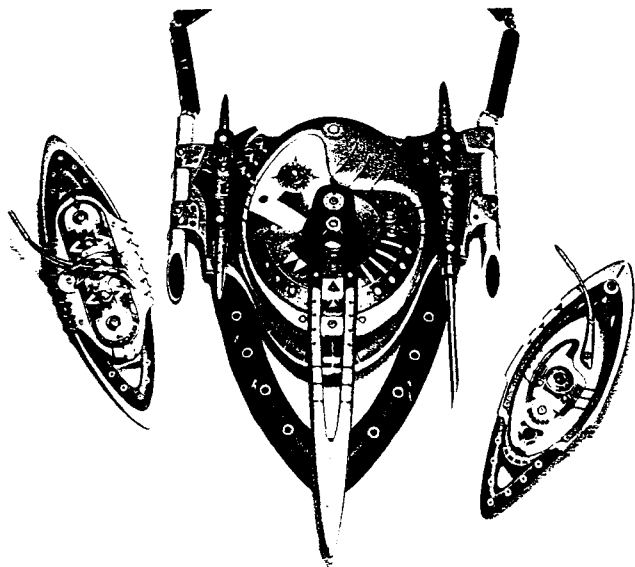


The Toowoomba Gallery society is seeking expressions of interest from jewellery artists to enter the biennial "Contemporary Wearables" award exhibition to be held in September 1995 in the Toowoomba Regional gallery.

Prize money First \$3000.00, Second \$1500.00

Gallery Acquisition \$5000.00

Enquiries by Dec 31st to Toowoomba regional Art Gallery, 531 Ruthven St, Toowoomba 4350.



Award winner  
6th Cloisonne Jewellery Contest

and there.

## 20th Annual International Miniature Art Show 1995

The Miniature Art Society of Florida invites entries for their annual exhibition. There are 50 awards worth approximately \$US10,000.00, in 13 categories including Human Figure, Birds and Animals, Portrait, Landscape, Floral, Religious, Six Square Inches or Less, Marine, etc. Enamel is one of the Media invited, though jewellery may not be entered. The following standards for miniature art are applied:

- 1/ The 1/6th rule. Representational subjects may not exceed 1/6th of their actual size. For example a flower 3 inches in diameter may not exceed 1/2 inch.
- 2/ Small subjects not lending themselves to portrayal in 1/6th scale may be accepted if the work embodies the spirit of miniaturism.
- 3/ Art work may not exceed 8x10 inches including the frame, with a maximum of 25 sq inches painting area.
- 4/ Sculpture may not exceed 8x8x8 inches when mounted.

Other entry details are quite complicated but AEN cannot send photocopies of entry forms as each form is numbered and named. Entry details and forms are available from The President, Denver Boyers, 534 Baywood Drive, S Dunedin, Florida 34689-2011 US. Phone 813 733 1375.

Works and entry forms to arrive in Florida between 12 September and 14 October



## 3rd International Enamel Art Exhibition

17 June - 20 August 1995, Kunstverein Coburg, Germany

After the success of the International Exhibitions organised by the Kunstverein Coburg in 1981 and 1987, another exhibition will be held in the summer of 1995. Again artists are invited from all over the world are invited to participate. All types of enamel are acceptable - jewellery, miniatures, vessels, sculptures and paintings up to large sized works for architectural use. Work must have been completed in the last seven years.

A comprehensive catalogue will be published and work will be selected from colour slides in order to save transportation costs. Each artist may submit up to three works for selection. The jurors are: Maureen Carwell (UK), Curt Heigl (Germany), Kurt Nein (Germany), JoAnn Tanzer (US), and Andreu Vilasis (Spain). Slides must arrive in Coburg by December 6 1994.

AEN can Photocopy entry details, send stamped addressed envelope.



## 8th Cloisonne Jewellery Contest, Japan Shippo Conference, Tokyo.

Enamel artists are invited to submit cloisonne jewellery to this annual exhibition. Maximum of five entries. Several awards are made. Works and entry forms must be received by November 15 1994.

Exhibition dates are January 24-28 1995.

Copies of the entry form can be obtained from AEN by sending a stamped addressed envelope.

# EXPERIMENTAL ENAMELLING

## Free use of materials —

By A Alan Perkins  
Canadian Enamelling Association

More tears of frustration have been shed over enamelling than any other medium I know. It is probably because it is the most demanding and unpredictable.

However, the rewards for perseverance are great since nothing can match the special luminosity and brilliance not found in any other materials.

For those who desire an alternative to the traditional techniques, I have through experimentation devised a technique that I have used to some success. I refer to it as "free use of materials" for want of a better title.

To successfully accomplish the technique and not have the work contrived, one must have basic knowledge of the effect of heat on metal and the nature and behaviour of the enamel itself.

Using only flux and white enamels, the procedure is as follows:

1/ Thoroughly clean the metal before application of enamel. This may be done in any one of several ways. I use soap impregnated steel wool, followed by a water rinse, pickling and final water rinse. Dry article thoroughly.

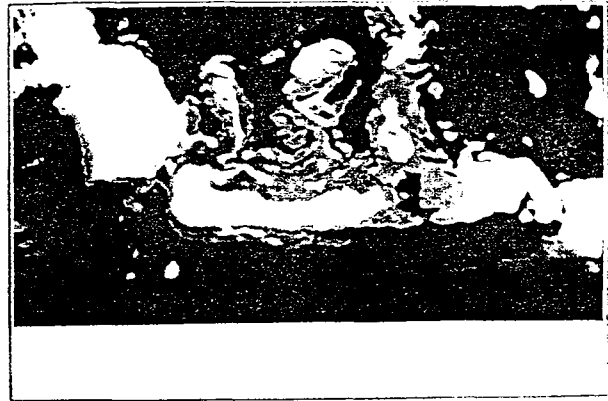
2/ After drying, sift medium fusing white opaque (Thompson LB 118) over the entire surface of the metal. Now, holding the work in a horizontal position, give it a sharp upward jerk so as to distribute the enamel, creating a free pattern on the metal, and at the same time leaving a portion of the metal exposed. This bare metal will on firing produce oxidation or what is commonly known as firescale.

3/ The firing period must be long enough to be assured that the oxidation is firmly in place and will not pop off during cooling. If the latter happens, then you must continue to fire until all is secure.

4/ In the process of firing you will notice that the opaque white enamel is changing colour. In areas where it has been applied thinly, it will turn from a blue cast to a green and gold. Where it has been applied thickly it will to some degree retain its original white.

The purpose of the exercise is to obtain an interesting pattern of both shades of white and oxidation on the metal. When you are satisfied with the degree of colourisation then you may proceed to the next stage.

5/ Dust the entire surface with a very thin and evenly distributed coat of clear flux, either medium fusing or soft fusing. Fire hot and fast. This should produce a glazed surface, bearing white, blues, green, gold and red. The oxidised areas will be in shades of red, usually a mahogany shade if fired hot. If you re-fire the piece at say a lower temperature, the oxidised areas will turn orange or terracotta shade.



A ALAN PERKINS Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
COASTAL IMPRESSION #2  
Wall piece, enamel on copper  
24.0 x 18.0 in

6/ What has been produced thus far is what I like to think of as earth colours. However one may use this base for further colour development simply by firing a transparent colour of your choice over the entire piece. This will, because of the field pattern, produce shades of the transparents you have just applied.

If you were to choose Thompson LB Raspberry 676, you will get very dark reds over the oxidised areas and varying shades of red over the thick and thin areas of white, at the same time getting the desired effect of using transparents over flux areas.

Finally.

As you know all your enamels are really coloured glass. Always think of them in this way when you use them. They are composed of silicates. The formulation being silica sand, oxide of lead, borax, potash and soda. These combined make the basic frit that we have come to know as clear flux. In order to get colours (even white), metal oxides are added in the manufacturing process.

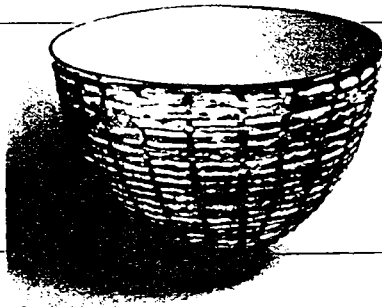
In the technique explained here it is important to recognise what actually happens when white is repeatedly fired and/or fired at a high temperature (overfired). The first element to disappear is the metal oxide or colourant. In the process white first turns to a shade of yellow, then shades of blue, green, red, and finally gold (gold being full flux). The addition of a fired coat of flux over this entire surface produces a blend of earth colours.

It will take considerable trial and error to master this process in spite of its relatively simple approach, so as not to have the piece end up being contrived.

As I said at the beginning, perseverance is the key to all enamelling.

This article is reprinted from the Canadian Enamelling Association Newsletter of Spring 1988.

Letter...



The Diagnosis of Incipient Illnesses Peculiar to Enamellers

Letter from a visitor to Australia....Anita Allison

As always, I enjoyed my latest copy of AEN. To be invited to contribute to it is an honour I appreciate.

My teacher of enamelling in the US was Glenice Matthews, and she has been my friend since 1981 when she lived here in Wichita, Kansas. Well, last January I visited her for a month in Perth. I had a wonderful time seeing her there in her new home, visiting and seeing the city of Perth and the countryside.

Glenice and I also spent a week in Albany. We saw the Kerri forest, a gorgeous sunset at Cape Leeuwin, kangaroos, emus and many birds. While Glenice was teaching an enamel class for a week, I went on several tours, visited galleries, the art centre, met the mayor and I loved every minute of it. I just didn't plan to stay long enough.

I visited Jenny Gore in Adelaide for two days and we had a wonderful time. She showed me the things I wanted to see - the landscape, the coast and the countryside, all truly beautiful. I also enjoyed seeing her work and studio and talking enamel for a while.

Now I'm back from holiday. You asked about my enamels and the work I'm doing. Well, here goes: Since I am a tapestry weaver as well as an enamelist, I had for some time wanted to put the two together in some way. There are remarkable common denominators in colour and the reflection and refraction of light. It was simple to cut strips of metal and weave them, and since I prefer 3-D for metal work and enamels I wove the strips over a form to develop a third dimension. Then I inlaid the woven copper form over a similar solid enamelled metal form. Concurrently with this activity, enamellers everywhere were introduced to lead-free enamel by the Thompson company. I found this product to be very strong and resistant to breakage and held up with thin metal. I began to use foils from 36 to 40 gauge B&S. I also wove a vase form like a goose egg, with cloisonne wire. These forms are then enamelled with transparents. Sometimes I fill the interstices like a kind of plique-a-jour covering metal and spaces alike. In other pieces I leave the interstices free of enamel.

Many enamellers who are traditionalists may see this effort as crude and unseemly, but I find the results lead to possibilities for development and the more I try, the more promising it becomes. With different weaves and applications of colour I am now reforming spun vessels and weaving them in different ways. Sometimes I leave a space to insert a three-dimensional folded form such as a flower or leaf.

I am Basically an experimentalist, however, in design I seem to always come up with landscapes regardless of what I do. The woven forms also reflect landscape. My work gives me great pleasure and I'm happy to be able to make it pay too. I hope to have some pieces in the Enamel Society Convention in 1995. I hope to see you there too.

Sincerely

Skip Allison  
Wichita, Kansas.

This short article is devoted to the early detection of the common ailments experienced by enamellers.

The generic term for this group of maladies and fevers is known in the profession as 'enamellers wilt'. Frequently, the individual can exhibit two or more symptoms simultaneously, a condition known as 'enameller's multi-wilt' and which comes in varying degrees from a 'touch of the wilts' to 'I'm right wilted' - a serious condition.

Fortunately, all conditions and degrees of enameller's wilt can be speedily and effectively cured. Please refer to the footnotes for details of appropriate medication after studying the symptoms below.

A common form of the wilt is enameller's elbow, usually brought about by the over-enthusiastic grinding of enamels.

Treatment consists of a draught of AB (see footnote) and a drop or two rubbed on the affected area. Avoid those ABs containing fruit as there is nothing worse than having a piece of pineapple falling from the elbow into the mortar during subsequent grinding. This could cause a touch of the 'staggers', but see below for details.

Often to be found among enamellers is a form of wilt known as 'red-eye', sufferers of which will be aware of this condition when their red enamels, after firing, are not. Again AB will get you through until the next time. Beware of undesirable side effects, - excessive dosages of AB may spread 'red-eye' to the nose!

Yet another form of wilt is known as the 'staggers'. Occuring in two forms, 'up-beat' staggers and 'down beat' staggers. The former manifests itself in the enameller saying things like 'I was staggered when that red didn't burn out', and in the latter case the enameller is staggered when that red burnt out! As the nervous system can be strained by either form of enameller's stagger, AB draught is beneficial.

Finally, a brief note on the ultimate form of the wilt - 'enameller's twitch'.

This condition can be brought on merely by reading or hearing words such as 'plique-a-jour' or 'glass on metal'.

The patient then immediately shows a feverish haste to learn more and reads on frantically or listens with ears flapping and fevered brain storing every word. Remedies there are not. There is no cure. This is 'enamellitis'. All sufferers are delightful people, lovely to know, and all willing to help other sufferers.

Enough! Writing this has brought on a touch of the wilts. I prescribe AB. Cheers!

Footnote: AB is a scientific acronym generated by the power of six computers. It stands for Alcoholic Beverage.

by Dennis Davies  
Guild of Craft Enamellers

This article is reprinted from the Summer 1994 Issue of The Guild of Craft Enamellers Journal.

# Kenneth F Bates 1904-1994

by Carolyn Delzoppo

The name of Kenneth Bates is familiar to Australian enamellers principally as the author of two enduring books about enamel, 'Enamelling Principles and Practice' and 'The Enamelist'. However in the US Kenneth Bates was loved and revered for his lifetime devotion to teaching enamel and to the development of the medium. Many well known US enamellers have been students of his.

Kenneth Bates died on May 25th in Cleveland Ohio aged 90 years.

He exhibited in more than 100 museums and galleries worldwide and taught enamelling at the Cleveland Institute of Art from 1927 to 1968. He also taught design to freshman students for 43 years.

He once wrote,

"I have been an enamelist for over 50 years and am still challenged by its intricacies and infinite possibilities. Concentrating on one medium for a lifetime would seem to have given me confidence, but on the other hand, the more I explore and the longer I work, the greater are my frustrations".

I was fortunate to hear Kenneth Bates give the keynote address at the Enamelist Society Conference in Ohio in 1987. He was then 83 years old and a lively and amusing man with his characteristic scratchy voice and droll delivery. He was making a plea for the dignity of our medium and for good design and technique. These excerpts from that address compiled by Kyle Pearson are reprinted from the Vitreous Voice enamel Newsletter.

"Grandfather wants to have a word with you... I often ask myself when giving a speech like this: what on earth am I doing here? I don't belong here and neither do most of you. You belong in your studios, doing what you like to do best. As for me, I've always had a battle with myself, whether gardening or enamelling was what I liked best. I like them both but enamelling is what I have chosen as my career, and gardening as my hobby. Gardening for me is not a career as I have not marketed the results. I have, however, marketed my enamels, and I am only too familiar with all the pitfalls of a career in enamelling.

Recently I had a hospital stay, which gives one time to contemplate.... There are times such as these when one's whole life is revealed. Dreams, fantasies plans are all unified. One is able to see the whole picture clearly, from beginning to end - a kind of review of successes, as well as failures.

Much was said in the 60's about young people finding themselves. Many left home and fled west to discover who they were. Who I was; I could never understand this problem. I think I always knew who I was...and possibly what I could and could not do. I believe that the sooner one finds what his limitations are, the better. Accepting limitations is the first step in obtaining peace of mind. If I am asked to paint a portrait, I refer the commission to a portrait painter. When I built my house, I had an architect design it. I am not a portrait painter or an architect, but if you would like a piece of cloisonne, I would be happy to make it for you - for a fee.

Why then, do we find ourselves here in Cincinnati,

blowing our own trumpets amongst our fellow craftsmen instead of trying to make the uninitiated appreciate more of the joy we experience. It may be that the reason artists do not share more is that that which they have to give is not always sought by the layman, who rather envies the look of satisfaction he sees in the artist. If you have decided to make a career of enamelling, rather than accepting it as a mere hobby, you must be willing to share your knowledge with others.

Career enamellers are constantly furnishing ideas for exhibitions and sales, but how is that connective process called 'getting an idea' best realised? Of course, if I as a producing artist, knew the answer to that question, I would have no trouble turning on that which is called 'the creative urge.' Unhappily, how and when a good idea comes to an artist is highly unpredictable....

I once saw a gold enamel shell-shaped cup, which is in the Metropolitan Museum. A statement under it said, 'Genius is an infinite capacity for taking pain. The admission of genius is an idea.' An idea is what everybody in this audience is concerned with. It's what every creative artist seeks and prays for - an idea which will bring fame, or an idea which will make one feel satisfied inside....

The word is glory. It is a vulgar word, but it lives in the artists subconscious mind. Artists thrive on exhibition, and if fate allows, also... glory.

I believe that one of the major differences between a career enameller and a hobby enameller is a matter of time spent on each piece - time for concentration and serious expression. Time is the factor... of everything we hope to accomplish. I challenge any of you to take some time out of every day to be at respite without any ulterior motive whatsoever. Forget that you are craftsmen, designers. Look and listen as you did when you were five years old. Then everything seemed interesting. You accepted nature without constant pressure, ambition, competition or exhibition.

If asked my advice for young people wanting to take up a career of enamelling, I would say:

1. Take advantage of every opportunity. Don't shy away from exhibition, lectures and demonstration, whether you like to do them or not.
2. Satisfy your own sense of taste. Never let a piece stray from material which meets your standards.
3. Keep a photographic record of everything you do. Who knows? You may be famous one day.

Life is a journey.

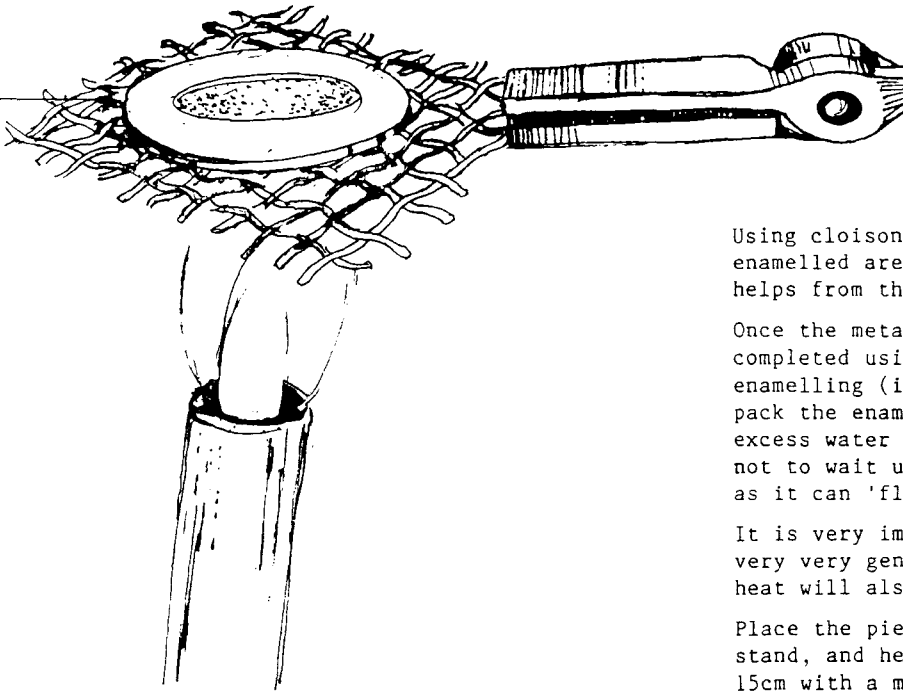
Let us remember the everlasting journey - your life, is happier than the arrival could ever be.

I leave you with this comment: Happiness is a state of mind in which one is not actually aware of being miserable.

God bless you all. peace."

Kenneth Bates will be mourned in the US where he was deeply admired, and here in Australia we continue to have the benefit of his knowledge through his books which remain standard texts today.

His name will always be synonymous with enamel.



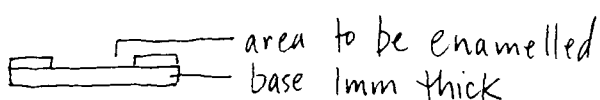
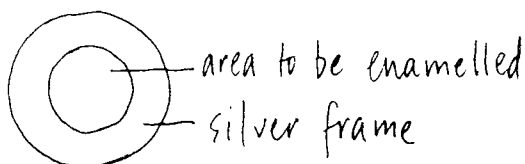
## TORCH FIRED ENAMELLING

Torch-fired enamelling is a technique that I began to explore from curiosity and necessity. I had no kiln but wanted to continue enamelling as I had done during my studies.

The basis of the technique is consistent with using a kiln, with the exception of counter-enamel, which I find virtually impossible to achieve effectively. (Perhaps someone has a few tips!)

I have mostly enamelled on sterling silver; though experiments with copper proved successful but more difficult. My torch couldn't produce enough heat to enamel really evenly.

I've found that the best way to prevent cracking and to provide a stable ground in the absence of counter-enamel, is to enamel on a base of sterling silver at least 1mm thick. Pure silver would be similarly effective. I enamel mostly within the frame, so the area is more stable. The frame metal should be less than half the thickness of base plate metal.



Using cloisonne wires also helps to strengthen the enamelled area. Enamelling larger areas certainly helps from the use of cloisons.

Once the metal is prepared and all the soldering completed using very hard solder especially for enamelling (including any findings), I then wet pack the enamel into cells as usual, absorb any excess water and then begin firing. It is easier not to wait until the enamel is completely dry, as it can 'fly' off the object too easily.

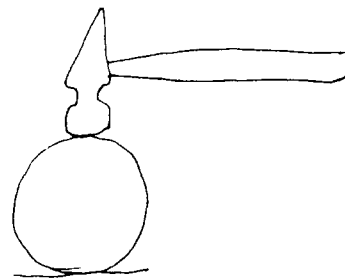
It is very important to begin heating the piece very very gently, as sudden fierce application of heat will also cause the drying enamel to 'fly' off.

Place the piece to be fired on mesh sheet, on a stand, and heat from below from a distance of about 15cm with a medium flame. If the flame touches the enamel it will burn and discolour it, so it is important to keep the flame underneath the piece.

Continue to heat the piece until the enamel is glassy and smooth, as in a kiln firing. To avoid overheating the piece it is a good idea to use enamels of similar firing temperatures together.

Once the enamel is filled level with the metal, stone the surface smooth, refire as before and finish as usual.

It is also possible to torch fire in a much grittier, grainier manner, on thinner metal, from 0.3 - 0.5mm thick. Hammering the edge of the metal before firing will create a lip to help hold the enamel.



The enamel may be sprinkled on dry, through fine mesh, or spread thinly with a brush.

When firing, heat until the enamel melts but doesn't necessarily become glassy and smooth. It isn't necessary to have an even covering of enamel over the metal; metal can be left exposed.

The metal may also be worked to a certain extent after firing - cut, hammered, etc.

A few final tips:

- always keep clean mesh for use in enamelling.
- keep soldering fluxes well away from the enamelling area.
- keep the enamelling area as dust free as possible.
- and, never ever expect every piece to turn out perfectly and exactly as you imagined it!