

Australian Enamel Newsletter

Issue 21

August 1993

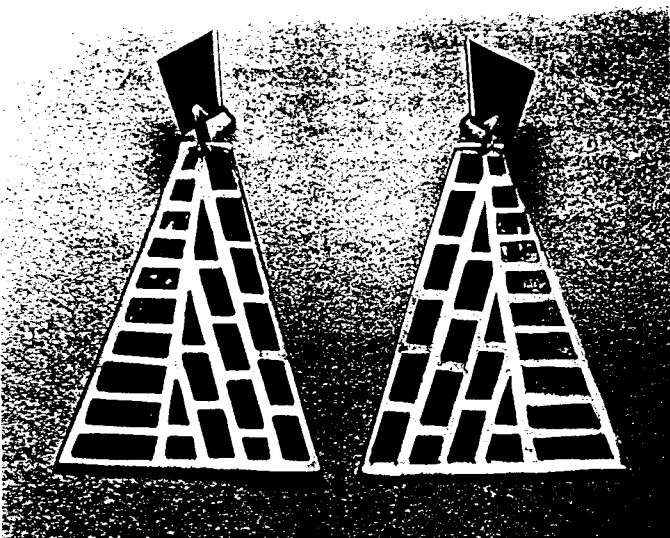
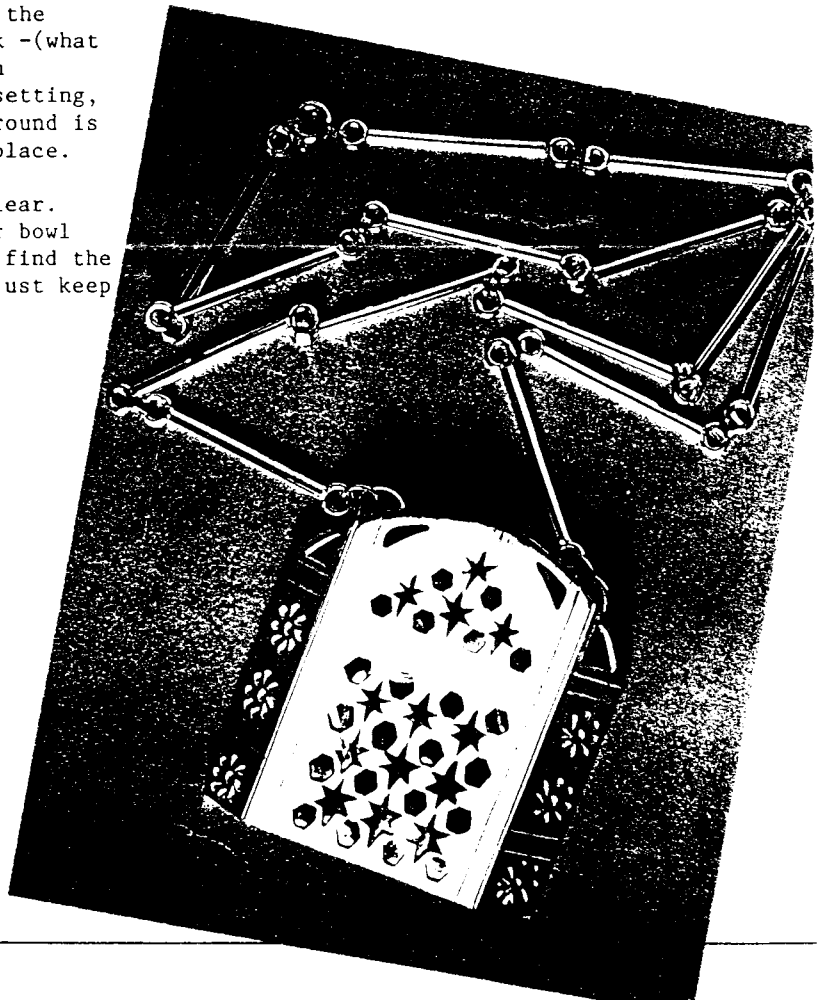
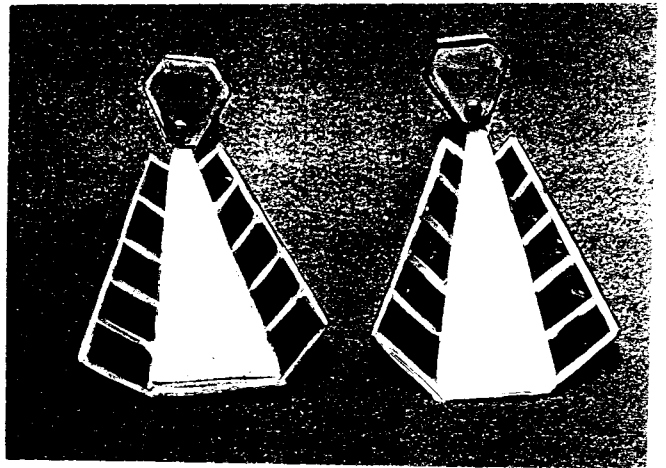
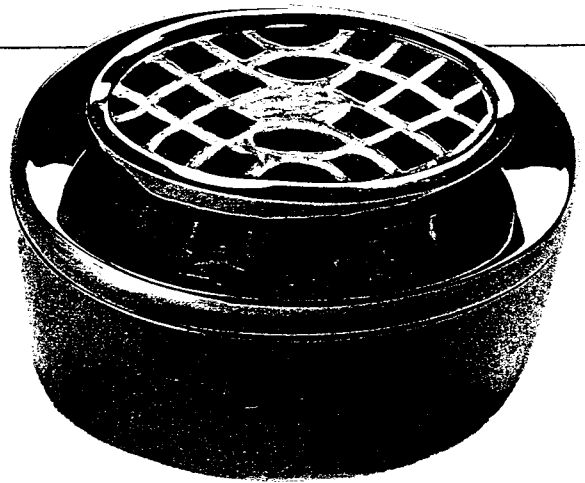
Enameller profile - Val Aked

I have always enjoyed a challenge - teaching, motherhood, silversmithing and latterly an intense interest in one aspect of the ancient art of enamelling - plique-à-jour. This beautiful medium has me entranced - I consider I have only touched the fringes of what can be achieved. Dreams!

At first I experimented purely with the stained glass effect - the usual method of presenting plique-à-jour - as earrings. In 1991 in response to a Canadian Crafts Council exhibition titled 'Veneers and Facades', I played with the idea of architectural facades both ancient and modern. I made a series of 'windowscape' earrings referring to contemporary screen wall architecture in which the walls of glass reflect and reflect, keeping those inside private. This was opposed to the facades of some ancient buildings like mosques, which allow tantalizing glimpses of the interior rooms but which still maintain privacy.

This led me naturally to the theme of 'Reflections' as shown in the little 18 kt gold box. It seems simple now, but I wanted to throw the reflected light through the facade of colour. After many hours of experimenting I came up with this result. This I developed further as I continued experimenting with jewellery so that the reflected colour added to the beauty of the enamelled piece. It takes a lot of work -(what doesn't?)- to make the surface shape and then make an identical shape to bezel it into - but unlike stone setting, the bearer has to be pierced exactly. Then the background is highly polished and the set 'jewel' is screwed into place.

Future ambitions in this field are both cloudy and clear. I want desperately to be able to make a plique-à-jour bowl or goblet in the grand Russian manner, but when I'll find the necessary time is a continuing problem. I know I'll just keep on trying.



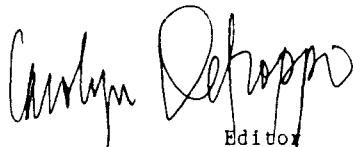
Exhibitions

The newsletter is a little early this time. It's go go go here as I try to get organised to head off to the Enamellers Conference in the US. I'll have my ears tuned for information that could be of interest to enamellers here and will write a report on the Conference for the next issue.

I've had no time to prepare the article on 'Photographing Enamels for Jury Selection' that I mentioned in the last issue. Next time (maybe).

The deadlines for inclusion in many 1993 juried exhibitions have now passed - please drop AEN a postcard and let us know if you've been successful.

Best wishes


Editor

Thank you to the following people for their help in compiling this issue:

Val Aked, Trisha van de Brink, Anne Bonyhady, Elizabeth Fraser-Davies, Roger Hopkins, Jorgen de Voss, 'Object' - magazine of CC of NSW, Mary Raymond, Heather Calnan, Paul Laidler.

The deadline for material for issue 22 will be September 23. Submissions are very welcome. Please fax to 066 841 772 or mail to:

Australian Enamel Newsletter
PO Box 418 Mullumbimby NSW 2482

Around the Magazines

Glass on Metal Vol 12 No 3 June 1993
Includes article on Macro-Cloisonne by Margaret Seeler, Part 11 Heraldic Enamels, review of British Society of Enamellers Exhibition, and an informative article by Woodrow Carpenter - Enamel Used for Heraldic Enamels - dealing with historical methods of making enamels and fusing them to metals.

Glass on Metal is the newsletter of the US Enamelist Society and is highly recommended. Subscriptions, 6 issues per year, are US\$40 p.a. plus US\$14 for air postage. Contact Enamelist Society PO Box 310 Newport KY 41072 USA

An exhibition of enamels by Roger Hopkins, 'Stories and Symbols in 2 1/2 D' is to be held at the Nimbin Craft Gallery, 1 Sibley St Nimbin from 25 September to 23 October, 10am-5pm daily.

The judges for the Third National Juried Exhibition of Enamels to be held in Sydney in January 1994 will again be Robyn Tudor and Ken Lockwood. The third juror has yet to be announced. Slides for jurying are due in November. Those who have not participated previously need to contact Mary Raymond to be put on the mail out list for entry forms. Contact Mary at 7 Ailsa Close East Linfield NSW 2070 Ph. 02 416 6472.

The 3rd 'Contemporary Wearables' Exhibition is a biennial event sponsored by the Toowoomba City Council, with \$2,000 dollars first prize, \$1,000 second prize. This year there is also a grant from the Gordon Darling Foundation for an acquisition... - the beginning of the Toowoomba Gallery Jewellery Collection.

This year 52 Australian and 11 New Zealand jewellers have responded and 102 pieces have been entered. At its conclusion in Toowoomba the exhibition will tour through a number of Qld Regional Galleries.

Enamellers taking part in the exhibition are:

Val Aked, Carolyn Delzoppo, Fiona Knox, Catherine Large, Glenice Matthews, Jill Parnell, Jacquie Sprogoe, Janine Tanzer, Trisha van den Brink.

Opportunities to Exhibit

Circular Head Arts Festival

August 28th - Sept 6th 1993

Up to three pieces may be entered in the Jewellery/ Metalsmith section of the competition. A prize of \$1,000 is offered. Entry fee is \$5 per item. Work and entry forms must be delivered by 15 August 1993. Contact:

The Secretary

Circular Head Arts Festival Inc

PO Box 14, Stanley, Tasmania 7331.

Entry forms and enquiries: Ph 004 581388 or 004 581 173.

Caloundra Art and Crafts Festival

31 Aug - 4 Sept

Awards totalling \$11,150 for all media including Precious Metal and Jewellery, and Crafts.

Entry forms available from Secretary PO Box 139 Moffat Beach 4551 or phone 074 925976.

The entry details for the International Exhibition of Enamelling Art in Japan finally arrived but unfortunately too late to be included here. Entry forms and works were due July 10. Apologies to any subscribers who were waiting for this information.

Suppliers

Neil Ralph in Mullumbimby offers to custom make specialist trivets and kiln equipment for enamellers. He is especially interested in trivets for 'problem' pieces of enamel.

Please send enquiries with sketches and/or descriptions to:

Neil Ralph
Cedar Road, Mullumbimby 2482
Ph 066 840027.

Decals (from 'Object', the magazine of the Craft Council of NSW).

A Sydney firm has adapted the four-colour offset printing process for the production of decals suitable for businesses producing limited edition ceramics and glassware. Short runs with a full tonal range of colours are now available at price levels that have previously only been available to mass producers. It is possible to get faithful full colour reproductions of photographs or quality artwork. The decals are printed on 45cm x 45cm sheets - just one image or a number of separate images. The decals can cost as little as \$2.40 each with a minimum print run of 150 sheets and six images to a sheet, producing 900 decals.

Contact: Permanent Print Ceramics
Riverstone, NSW.

Good quality glass brushes for cleaning stoned enamel surfaces and metal. Price \$16.80 each inc. sales tax. Stock number: 2273A.

Contact G E Gennsen
2nd Floor 93 York St Sydney 2000
Ph 02 247 2981 Fax 02 247 2921.

Soyer (Christallerie de St Paul) enamels can be ordered directly from the manufacturer in France.

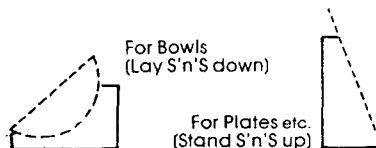
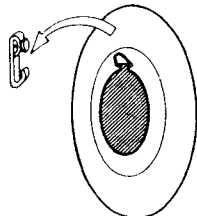
Address: Moulin de St Paul de Ribes B.P.4
87920 Condat Sur Vienne
France
Tel 55.39.01.17 Fax 55.39.01.79.

As an indication of prices, a subscriber's recent order cost nearly A\$300 for 4kg of enamel plus postage approx A\$100 airmail.

Plate Stands and Display Systems

Dual purpose 'Safe n Sure' display stands made from BHP steel wire. Stands come in various sizes and can be bent in any direction to 'fine tune' the best display position without fear of breakage. 'Invisible' Plate Hanger disc sticks to the back of the plate and holds the plate flat to the wall. Tested and proven throughout Europe for more than 25 years. Available in 5 sizes, the largest will hang up to 3kg in weight.

For further information:
Safe n Sure
TM & MF Cox
PO Box 221
Ivanhoe VIC 3079
Ph 03 497 4187 Fax 03 497 4898



Postcards

From the Object Newsletter Update Flyer
"We have discovered the best postcard print deal so far...2,500 glossy cards for just \$245.00"
Contact Helen Zilko at the Craft Council NSW for further details.

Milltons in Queensland now stock the full range of English Blythe leaded enamels in addition to Thompson lead free enamels.

(Editor's note - I have been testing and using these enamels lately and have found them very good. The flux for silver has good clarity and the range of transparent greens, purples and violets is very promising.)

Contact Milltons (Anna Margot Originals)
49 Stevenson St Ascot 4007 Qld
Ph 07 268 5998 Fax 07 268 5047.

Wanted to buy

Anne Bonyhady would like to know if anyone can sell her some small copper dishes, No30A formerly supplied by Handcraft Metals in Sydney. The dish is 75mm in diameter and is shallow. Please contact Anne at Unit 3 Angas Court, 18 Angas St, Ainslie ACT 2602 or phone 06 247 0385 if able to help.

Carolyn Delzoppo collects books on enamelling and would like to buy rare or unusual titles. She is especially interested in old trade texts and books dealing with enamel on precious metal.

If you have books you no longer want, please contact Carolyn C/- AEN

Slide request

Sandra Kerr is compiling a record of slides and short resumés/artists' statements of enamellers to be used to illustrate articles on enamelling. Oz Arts has expressed some interest and it should be possible to have Glass on Metal accept something also. To be used for Oz Arts the slides will be needed as soon as possible and must be of very high quality. However, to guard against non-return or loss of slides by the magazines please be sure to have some copies. Return of slides can also take some time, especially with magazines which only publish quarterly.

Send to: Sandra Kerr
PO Box 405
Collaroy Beach NSW 2097



Now why do you think that happened?

Problems Problems

Everyone has problems with enamel!

It comes with the territory.

I used to call these problems the "inexplicables of enamelling" but as I become more experienced I find that there's usually a good reason for most of the puzzling, weird and downright irritating things that happen to enamel.

I can't say however that I can yet explain all the problems. I'm still finding new ones. Why for instance, as happened to me recently, did the second layer of a pastel opaque fire darker than the first layer, so that when I stoned the surface back and exposed some of the first layer I ended up with pale blotches in my surface. Answers anyone?

Here however are some of the most common problems that can arise. If you have a mystery occurrence why not write and ask AEN subscribers. Somewhere someone before you will have dealt with the same problem. They may even have answers.

Problem:

Enamel pulls away from the edge of the metal.

Probable cause:

Metal not properly degreased or enamel applied too thickly.

Solution:

Stone down and re-sift or wet-pack edges. Always make sure metal is properly degreased before adding enamel. Layer of enamel should be no thicker than depth of the metal used, 2-3 thin layers of enamel, alternated with 2-3 thin layers of counter enamel are preferable to one thick coat.

Problem:

Greenish areas showing through fired white enamel on copper.

Probable cause:

Overfiring; firescale showing through thin coat of white enamel.

Solution:

If using white on one side of a piece, make sure it is on the first side fired, so that there is no underlying firescale which might show through. Fire only to the 'orange peel' stage at first, then fire through on subsequent layers.

Problem:

'Pitting', pin-point indentations and craterous bubbles on surface of fired enamel.

Probable cause:

Poor preparation of metal - acid, pumice or oil remains on surface, or deterioration of enamel.

Solution:

Clean the piece thoroughly (in pickle if copper), neutralise and flush thoroughly with running water. With a sharp tool, prick any bubbles that haven't yet broken. Place dry enamel into the craters and holes without using any binder. Refire. Could also be old or contaminated enamel. Discard.

Problem:

Bare patches or separation of enamel into spots or patches.

Probable cause:

Insufficient layer of enamel on base metal.

Solution:

Use a heavier layer of enamel in first firing. To repair, pickle metal if copper, neutralise and clean thoroughly with glass brush under running water. Apply another coat of enamel and refire.

Problem:

Black specks in enamel surface after firing.

Probable cause:

Fire scale from uncovered areas of copper, scale spitting from stainless steel trivets as they cool, or in case of some opaque reds, overfiring.

Solution:

Remove the specks from fired enamel with alundum stones, diamond files or diamond burr on flexible shaft. Clean thoroughly with glass brush and running water. Re-fill any depressions with enamel, dry and re-fire. Bare areas of copper can be covered with Scalex or other firescale retardant before firing. To avoid specks of black spitting from mesh trivets, remove work from trivet as soon as possible. Keep cooling trivets in 'dirty' area away from open jars of enamel or enamels waiting to be fired. A sheet of mica can be used between the mesh and enamel to prevent specks flying up on to work. Keep kiln inside and surrounds well swabbed down to remove black specks that accumulate.

Problems

Problems

by Carolyn Delzoppo

The following section about cracking is reprinted from Vitreous Voice, June 1991, the newsletter of the Enamel Guild West in the US. The answer to the question is given by Marion Brown, a jeweller and enameller with 20 years experience.

What do I do if my enamel cracks, if it needs to be repaired? "Whenever you repair an enamel, clean it in the ultrasonic, and use a heat lamp to dry it for a long, long time. This reduces some of the stress the enamel will be put under during the refiring.

Your opalescents don't heal if they crack. Opals are higher firing enamel. Suppose you have fused everything nice and smooth and you need to refire a crack in the opal. That opal takes a whole lot more heat to fuse than the surrounding enamel colours. So the more heat you get on that enamel the better the chance the enamel colours can go bad and the opals can change their translucency.

A few key things to remember - don't break your enamels and don't let anyone else heal any of your work. Sometimes you get these wonderful things. You are standing there with a customer and 'ping', you can hear it. Stresses in the enamel have made a crack and you say, 'Oh my goodness, it's got a crack in it!' You think you have to hide it. Enamels can crack the moment after you do it, the day you do it, 20 weeks later, a year later. You never know. If you sell your enamel and it breaks, make sure you get it back because you are the only one who knows what went in it; what enamels were used, which enamels were compatible, and what temperature to use for fusing. Also, in case you need to refire it, always make sure you can get the enamel easily out of the bezel or prongs.

Remember that enamel is glass and therefore it should be treated like glass. It is not horrendously breakable. Actually, because it has a backing on it it isn't going to break like other glass if you drop it. Enamels can be dropped on their faces on the ground, sometimes cracking, sometimes not. You never know. It depends on how it hits. If it hits on the cloisonné wire it may not crack; it buffers it. If it hits on an end, it may.

Whether you try to rescue a cracked enamel by refiring depends upon a lot of factors: how long, how much time, how you feel about the enamel, and is it real successful. If it develops a crack and you know if you refire it you're going to mess it up and the crack is unobtrusive - leave it. Oh, it's a hard thing to say, to do, to deal with, but you have to make that judgement on your own. If you can't live with the crack - do something. If you can live with it - do. It may keep cracking over and over. The only things you can do to minimize the risks of cracking each time you enamel are to make sure that the metal base is domed prior to enamelling, that the coats of enamel are even, and that the enamels themselves are compatible."

Problem:
Opagues fire transparent.

Probable cause:
Overfiring.

Solution:
Refire the enamel at lower temperature and enamel should return to its opaque state.

Problem:
Peeling or rolling back.

Probable cause:
Surface greasy, enamel layer too thick, enamel damp when fired, enamel fired too long at too low temperature.

Solution:
Grind thick enamel thinner, clean patch and refire.

Problem:
Cracking.

Probable cause:
Lack of counter enamel, counter enamel too thin, piece cooled too quickly, enamel uneven in thickness, enamel with incompatible expansion rates fired next to each other.

Solution:
As a general rule of thumb, enamel thickness on both sides of metal should be same to minimize chances of cracking.

If enamel has cracked, either reduce thickness on front by grinding surface or add extra counter enamel to back and refire.

Enamel is more stable if even and no thicker than metal gauge.

Enamel should be cooled slowly on top of kiln. Enamel expansion rates are difficult to learn - experience tells which colours are troublesome and should be avoided.

The following books have helpful sections on problem solving:
Enamels Enameling Enamelists by Glenice Lesley Matthews
The Art of Enamelling by Margaret Seeler

A Tale —

Economic survival is a re-occurring problem for enamellists. Few are lucky enough to live well solely on the returns of their craft. Some manage with spouse support, others are fortunate in obtaining grants and prize awards, but for the great majority it is often a case of finding other suitable part-time employment, be it teaching, nursing, waitressing or whatever. However, I have recently discovered a new source of funding; The Corporate Boardroom. I am still somewhat bemused by the whole business, so make yourselves comfortable while I tell you a tale.....

In January of this year I was elected onto the Board of Directors of Tower Corporation (NZ). This is a sizable Insurance company in NZ (which has recently started operating in Australia as Tower Life Australia Limited - Head Office at 607 Bourke Street, GPO Box 4737 Melbourne) and has eight wholly owned subsidiary companies. The reason it came about was as follows: I have a very small term life insurance policy with what used to be Government Life, (an insurance company set up by the NZ Government in the 1860's) which, with the present governmental urge to privatize everything in sight, became Tower Corporation about three years ago. This meant (as Tower is nothing if not democratic) I was able to vote in the election of the Board of Directors as a policyholder/shareholder.

The first year I was miffed to see the candidates were all men. I wrote in and complained and trotted along to the AGM (in Wellington) to raise the matter again when they failed to respond to my letter. There was a "there, there" response and "we'll try and do better next time." And of course they didn't.

I wrote an even more acerbic letter the next year, which elicited the response that no women had put themselves forward as candidates....The following October, presumably to forestall yet another of my famous letters, they sent me some nomination papers. I thought, what the hell, and filled them in. They asked for a 150 word blurb about myself to include in the information sent to voters. So I wrote the following: "It has worried me that, until now, no women have put themselves forward for election onto the Board. Women too, are part of the human race and have much to offer! So what qualifications have I, a woman who has spent her working life as a self-employed creative artist (winning international recognition in her field) for The Board of Directors? I am articulate, responsible and generously endowed with common sense. I have some computer skills with a distaste for gobbledegook. I am honest and have integrity. I have know poverty and happiness; surviving life with humour and intelligence. I have successfully raised three children into caring adults. I am happily married with a deep aversion to housework. If elected I would do my best to sensibly represent the interests of the policyholders, especially women, to the board."

Obviously it struck a chord and I was elected with a thumping majority!!! (42,735 votes! and some 11,000 above the next male candidate) -the other two candidates elected were two sitting members, the chairman Colin Beyer and Orm Hutchinson.



I've had to buy some respectable clothes. Colin, my gorgeous nutty husband, (not the chairman above!) being a mere male said I had to wop'em with a new bra so I've bought a real Boudicca one.....lots of uplift!! I earn \$18,000pa to attend monthly Board Meetings....It's obviously a different world. A little bit frightening too as I find myself one of a team of six Directors along with the executive director to manage the direction of some \$2.96 Billion (!!) in order to pay out on the policies of ordinary folk up and down the country who have insurance and retirement funds with the company. Colin goes round the house referring to himself as 'The Consort'.

At the AGM in January while we stood around drinking tea and coffee before the meeting began, one of the senior executives introduced me to another. "I'm sorry" said the second man, obviously high on the Corporate ladder, "I'm afraid I didn't quite catch your name". "She's your new boss" said the other laconically, "Elizabeth Fraser-Davies....."

Naughtily I tested my power after the meeting. The Managing Director said, "we must lunch sometime". "Oh good", I replied, blandly misinterpreting his cue, "can we go now? I'm awfully hungry." The poor man looked so shattered.... we walked into the city and he took me into a delightful restaurant in one of the old wooden wharf buildings. "I think you're going to give the Board quite a shake-up" he reflected as we sat and enjoyed our salmon steaks..

There is of course a flip side to all this. I have to read (and try to make sense of) the most boring load of Board papers and financial figures, which, given my numeric dyslexia, is not particularly easy. But, like many women (and artists in particular) I have a gift for lateral thinking which is very necessary in the Board Room. The only thing that saddens me is the disquieting thought of how few women put themselves forward for such positions. Think of all the women in New Zealand far more able than me for such a position, yet I was the only one with the brass neck to put herself forward. It's a crying shame! But it's lovely to have some regular money coming into my account every fortnight. Although I went into the Corporate world tongue-in-cheek, I realise now that I have a serious responsibility to do my utmost to serve the shareholders as well as I can. The challenge is quite stimulating even if I do look upon my remuneration as a splendid and original form of an art and literary grant!

Elizabeth Fraser-Davies

Enamelling at Qld College of Art

The recently amalgamated Queensland College of Art/Griffith University has a philosophy of encouraging and promoting community involvement in the campus, in the use of the facilities, and in exchange of information.

To this end, Jewellers and Metalsmiths Group, Qld, through Jorgen de Voss, has instigated a series of weekend workshops at the Qld College of Art for students, professionals, industry practitioners, and anyone interested in jewellery and metal-smithing.

The first of these bi-monthly workshops, on Cloisonne Enamelling, was held in June. The college hopes to become a specialist centre for enamelling, and weekend workshops on other techniques of enamelling are planned for 1994. An extra one day workshop may be held later this year if there is interest. In October a workshop will be taught by glass maker Ray Gannon and participants will learn glass fusing and slumping and how to make glass and enamels. Other possible workshops in 1993/94 are Gemsetting, Stone Carving, Spoon Making, Knife Making and Mokume-Gane.

It is also planned to open the College workshops for one day each alternate month so that jewellers can share their interests and knowledge and explore new techniques. A fee of \$15 is payable for the day.

The long-term goal of the College and JMGA is to make the College a centre for the sharing and furthering of jewellery and metalsmithing skills.

Anyone interested in participating in any of these activities should contact Jorgen de Voss, Lecturer Gold and Silversmithing Dept, Queensland College of Art on Ph 07 395 9139, Fax 07 395 6739.

Workshop report

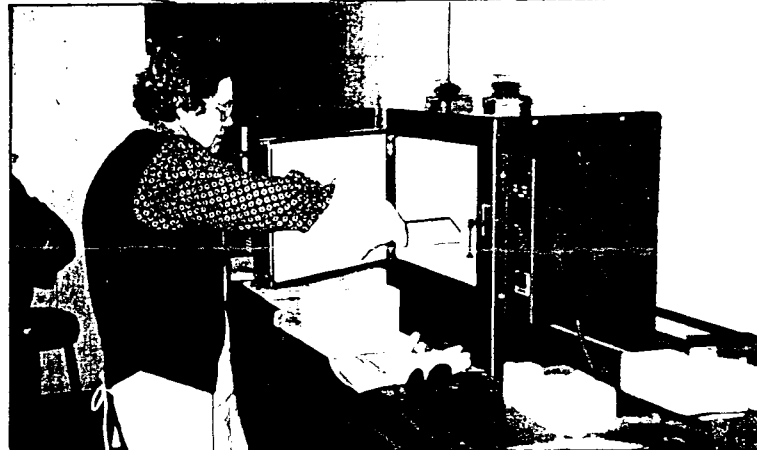
One of the first events organised since the recent Association between JMGA Qld. and Griffiths University / Queensland College of Art, was a workshop on cloisonne enamelling given by Carolyn Delzoppo, and organised by Jorgen de Voss, JMGA Qld. committee member and lecturer at the Qld. College of Art.

Once the date was announced the workshop filled very quickly and on Saturday 15th June, fifteen enthusiastic participants arrived in anticipation for the the two days of 'hands on' experience.

Carolyn Delzoppo took us through all facets of the technique of cloisonne enamel on precious metals. Her tuition included all stages in the preparation of enamelling and finishing of a piece of fine cloisonne enamel on silver, including designing for cloisonne with colour and dynamic line in mind.

Most of those participating were beginners to the techniques of enamelling although one or two had previous experience, however everyone found the workshop absorbing, challenging and most enjoyable - it opened up another facet of knowledge to us all. Carolyn's help and guidance on cloisonne enamelling on beads was great for me and has opened my mind to a myriad of ideas.

The students in particular found the workshop relaxing and freeing - they could do their own thing



without the constraints of set guidelines usually associated with college assignments.

Students who have been unable to participate in the workshops came to observe and have a look at the finished pieces and were made very welcome.

Carolyn's expert tuition so freely given, her time, energy and kind humour, all made for a most rewarding, enjoyable and informative weekend.

Trisha van den Brink

Kiln report

The new enamelling kiln at the Queensland College of Art is one of the best I have ever used. Made by Bob and Nola Davidson at SEI Kilns in Brisbane, the kiln was a pleasure to use during the recent Cloisonne Enamelling workshop there.

The kiln, with quite a large internal capacity, has a separate digital read-out controller on the side and a side hinged door for ease of use. With 15 people making constant demands, it was never more than 30 seconds away from firing temperature. The controller has a push-button control so the temperature can be set and at any time the digital readout lets you know the exact temperature to the degree. Watch those numbers climb as the kiln responds quick-smart and reheats the kiln after a firing. No guess work as with gauge settings that are so slow to respond to change.

Earlier this year I had my Neycraft kilns adapted to one of Bob's controllers. The thermocouple can be attached from the outside through a small hole in the wall of my kilns so that I can swap the controller on to any of my kilns. The control unit is quite separate.

In years of enamelling I've never had such a responsive and reliable kiln. It's heaven.

SEI Kilns can be contacted at:
113 Brodie St
Holland Park Qld 4121
Ph 07 349 3558.

Carolyn Delzoppo