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**HENRY ROTHSCHILD AND
PRIMAVERA:
THE RETAIL, EXHIBITION AND
COLLECTION OF CRAFT IN POST-
WAR BRITAIN, 1945 - 1980**

JANINE BARKER

PhD

2015

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COLLECTION OF CRAFT IN POST-
WAR BRITAIN, 1945 – 1980**

JANINE BARKER

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Northumbria at Newcastle for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Research undertaken in the Faculty of Arts, Design & Social Sciences and in collaboration with the Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead

December 2015

Abstract

An AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award has made collaboration possible between Northumbria University and the Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead in providing the opportunity to highlight a significant narrative in craft history. Henry Rothschild, a German émigré, ran the iconic craft outlet Primavera from 1946 to 1980. During this time, he built up an internationally significant collection of ceramics, now housed at the Shipley Art Gallery, along with a personal and business archive. By bringing this inaccessible and underused material to the fore and complementing it with interviews with Rothschild's contemporaries, connections have emerged that were previously undiscovered. This thesis demonstrated how Rothschild's position as a retailer, exhibitor and collector marked him as a unique character within the crafts as well as demonstrated the ways in which he utilised his position as an émigré to act outside of the confines of the traditional British standpoint. The narrative of Rothschild has been interwoven into the existing literature on craft in Britain, creating a previously unheard of account of post-war craft.

Although Rothschild's role in the post-war craft world has been remarked upon in a number of texts (Cooper, 2012; Harrod, 1995; Harrod, 1999; Buckley and Hochsherf, 2012) his wide reaching impact and contribution has never been explored in detail. This thesis considered the contradictory nature of Rothschild's multiple roles and the resulting implications: as a retailer he was motivated to choose pieces that would sell, as an exhibitor he could allow for more creativity and daring in his curatorial choices, and as private collector he enjoyed established relationships with craftspeople. The aim of this thesis was to position Rothschild as collector, exhibitor and retailer not only within the context of British craft, but also to consider how Primavera operated within what David Kynaston calls the 'justly iconic' time period from 1945 to 1980 (Kynaston, 2007). Through both his retail and exhibition activity at Primavera and beyond, craft was given a platform, made accessible to the wider public and influenced taste and fashion. His background as a German Jewish émigré emerged as key to understanding how he negotiated his position within this world.

The resulting thesis confirmed and elucidated the significance of Rothschild and Primavera and called for further research into those individuals who are very much of the craft world but not always as producers or educators. As demonstrated here, such examinations have the potential to offer a narrative which is both complementary and challenging to those which dominate, and thereby contribute to the discourse on the nature of narrative based research and craft history.

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who never fails to make me laugh and refuses to let me quit at anything, and his equally supportive family; my closest friends, Amy, Jennie, Josie, Sandie and Toni, who I plan to see more of post-PhD; Rachel who is just there whether it be work talk, baby talk or cake talk; all my fellow PhD inmates, with a special shout out to Tom whose banter is endless; to the international online community of fellow PhD parents; to everyone who at some point has held, fed, and entertained my children while I've been working, particularly Pamela who has made so many things so much easier; and finally my children, Tess and Nathan, who have shown me how deep my reserves of love, energy and determination actually go.

I would like to dedicate this work to my Great-Uncle Rowden, who to me is ever-present, and to my Uncle Kevin, who deserved more time.

Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others. The research was done in collaboration with the Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted by the Faculty Ethics Committee on 19th January, 2012.

I declare that the word count of this thesis is 86,336 words

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Chapter One: Introduction

After all these years [...] would I do it again? And the answer is yes. I may deviate on certain details but I think on the whole I've done what I wanted to do, and I've succeeded in a hostile climate.¹

Through his craft shop Primavera, situated in both London and Cambridge, Henry Rothschild (1913 - 2009) sought to raise the status of the crafts in Britain, both as a practice and as a product. He was a German émigré who had a clear vision of what was meant by good design; an individual who met the challenges of negotiating the economics and bureaucracy of the immediate post war. It is not the intention of this thesis to give a comprehensive biography of Henry Rothschild, nor will it seek to provide a full historiography of the crafts in twentieth-century Britain. This thesis will demonstrate how Rothschild's position as a retailer, exhibitor and collector marked him as a unique character within the crafts. Furthermore, it will consider the ways in which his émigré background allowed him to act outside the confines of the traditional British standpoint. These objectives will be achieved by bringing inaccessible and previously underused material to the fore and complementing it with interviews with Rothschild's contemporaries. Although Rothschild's role in the post-war craft world has been remarked upon in a number of texts, his wide reaching impact and contribution as a non-maker has never been explored in detail.² Alongside the research into Rothschild's own personal narrative, this research will contextualise that narrative with a close examination of craft in post-war Britain. The narrative of Rothschild has been interwoven into the existing literature on craft in Britain, creating a previously unheard of account of post-war craft.

Background on Henry Rothschild

As already stated, this thesis is not intended as biography. That said, a basic linear narrative of Rothschild's life is necessary in order to give the reader a timeline to

¹ Henry Rothschild, interviewed by Tanya Harrod for NLSC: Craft Lives (9-10 December 2003). F14338-F14342. Sound Archive, The British Library, London.

² See: Emmanuel Cooper, *Lucie Rie: Modernist Potter* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 2012) ; Tanya Harrod, 'Primavera: A History, 1945 – 1980', in *Primavera: Pioneering Craft and Design, 1945 - 1995*, ed. by Andrew Greg (Gateshead: Tyne and Wear Museums, 1995), pp.1-28; Tanya Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century* (London: Yale University Press, 1999); 'Introduction: From German 'Invasion' to Transnationalism: Continental European Émigrés and Visual Culture in Britain, 1933-1956', *Visual Culture in Britain*, Vol.13, No.2 (2012), pp.157-168.

which to refer.³ Henry Rothschild was born in 1913 to Albert and Lisbeth, the youngest of four children (figure 1). His father was the face of the family business, J. Adler Ltd, which dealt mainly in scrap metals. It had earned him a privileged position in the wider society and as such he was relatively absent from the family home in Offenbach, just outside Frankfurt. Rothschild had a great deal of affection for his mother and his earliest exhibitions were for her benefit, made of small items bought from the local market and displayed in an old kitchen cupboard in the attic space.



Figure 1: The Rothschild Family, c.1920s (Hermann, Lisbeth, Henry, Margaret and Karin)

With the ascent of the National Socialists in 1933, Rothschild left Germany under the advisement of a lecturer at Frankfurt University, who told him, as a Jew, there would be nothing for him in a Germany under the control of the National Socialist Party. His older siblings had already left, his brother Hermann to England and his two sisters, Margaret and Karin, to America. Rothschild arrived in England in 1933, continuing and completing a degree in Chemistry at Cambridge University. He became a British citizen in 1938. His father had passed away in Germany earlier in the year and it was then that his mother finally came to England. He became an Ordnance Officer for the British Army, and although he never saw active duty, he travelled the UK and was stationed in Italy for a time.

When Rothschild returned to Britain in 1945 he decided to set up his own business which would be committed to promoting the ‘best things whether handmade

³ The following account of Rothschild has drawn on a number of sources including: Henry Rothschild, *Orange Journal: Notes and Stories on the Family* (no date) and *Biographical Notes* (2005), both private papers, Liz Rothschild; Liz Rothschild, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (17 April 2012), uncatalogued; Tanya Harrod, ‘Primavera: A History, 1945 – 1980’, in *Primavera: Pioneering Craft and Design, 1945 - 1995*, ed. by Andrew Greg (Gateshead: Tyne and Wear Museums, 1995), pp.1-28.

or machine made' for the home; such items included textiles, ceramics, furnishings, domestic ware and toys.⁴ Primavera opened its doors in February, 1946 at 149 Sloane Street, London (figure 2). The business extended from a retail space to an exhibition space in 1952 - this duality of purpose continued throughout Rothschild's ownership of Primavera.



Figure 2: Preparing to open, Primavera, Sloane Street, London, c.1946

In 1959 a second branch of Primavera opened at 10 Kings Parade, Cambridge. Although Rothschild expressed some exasperation at the difference between Cambridge and London this branch of Primavera is still in operation.⁵ In 1967 Rothschild gave up the Sloane Street lease and moved briefly to nearby 17 Walton Street, which operated until 1970, leaving him with the one outlet in Cambridge. In 1980 he handed control of Primavera over to his assistant Ronald Pile.

Alongside the business of Primavera Rothschild arranged major craft exhibitions at galleries across the UK and Europe and he had long running associations with the major art schools such as the Central School of Art, Goldsmiths

⁴ Harrod, 1995, p.1.

⁵ 'I've never quite forgiven Cambridge for being so stodgy. You couldn't do in Cambridge what you could do in London.' – Henry Rothschild, interview, 2003.

College and Camberwell College of Arts. He ran Primavera Contracts Ltd, beginning around 1960, which was best known for providing furnishing to the new halls of residences at universities such as York and Newcastle. Rothschild was also involved to varying degrees with the Crafts Council, the Design Council (formerly the Council of Industrial Design), and the Rural Industries Bureau and he acted as advisor to a number of Local Education Authorities as part of their initiative to build up public collections in schools. Some of these activities continued after he left Primavera in 1980 up until his death in 2009.

Framing the Research

Prior to this research, there have been two texts primarily concerned with Henry Rothschild and Primavera. Firstly, a brief profile of Rothschild by Allen Freer features in *Crafts* magazine in 1983.⁶ This profile was written to coincide with a ceramic exhibition at Kettle's Yard, Cambridge.⁷ Although it contains some interesting insights that will be highlighted throughout this research— Freer was also a collector of art and craft – the article is brief, focusing on Rothschild's background and interactions with makers through his retail and exhibition activities. The second text is the catalogue for the 1995 exhibition *Primavera: Pioneering Craft and Design, 1945 - 1995* edited by Andrew Greg with a supporting essay by craft historian Tanya Harrod.⁸ The purpose of the 1995 exhibition was to celebrate the achievements of Primavera, initially under its founder, Henry Rothschild but also under its successor Ronald Pile; Harrod's remit for this catalogue essay is limited to Rothschild. Moving in a largely chronological order, Harrod provides an overview of Rothschild's childhood and upbringing. Emphasis is placed on his time in Italy during the Second World War, marked as an influential period with regard to Rothschild's developing tastes and aesthetics. Harrod then goes on to discuss the opening of Primavera and Rothschild's retail and exhibition practices. Harrod comments on Rothschild's activities outside of Primavera, including the setting up of Primavera Contracts Ltd in the late 1950s/ early 1960s, and his exhibitions abroad. I would argue that, while providing a strong foundation, Harrod's essay lacks the depth and scope that is required to fully understand Rothschild's narrative and significance to post-war British craft more

⁶ Allen Freer, 'A Dedicated Connoisseur', *Crafts*, No.62, 1983, p.48.

⁷ "37 Potters Return and Strange Delights", Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, 8 – 22 May, 1983.

⁸ This exhibition was held at the Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead (16 September – 12 November 1995), the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (23 January – 2 June 1996), and the Paisley Museum and Art Gallery (18 July – 14 September 1996).

widely. This is partly due to the purpose of a catalogue essay, which is to promote and justify the exhibition it supports within a restrictive word count. However, due to it being the most recent contribution to knowledge on Rothschild and despite these limitations, it is often used as a reference to any subsequent mention of him in craft texts, for example in Emmanuel Cooper's biography of Lucie Rie.

This thesis will build and expand on Harrod's existing research. It will explore in greater detail the events and themes that Harrod rightly recognises as significant, such as Rothschild's time in Italy,⁹ his views on handmade and machine-made goods,¹⁰ and the highly significant basket exhibition.¹¹ By taking a narrative-based approach and with a greater level of critical engagement with the collection and archive, this research will provide a more in-depth examination of the social and economic context of the post-war period in which Rothschild was operating.

The timeframe covered by this thesis is 1945 to 1980, the years Rothschild ran Primavera.¹² Through Primavera, Rothschild sold and exhibited a wide range of crafts including textiles, ceramics, folk art, furniture and toys. Rothschild's activities outside of Primavera during this period will also be explored as they demonstrate the various facets of his involvement in the craft community. A conscious decision has been made not to explore in depth Rothschild's activities after 1980. Although Rothschild remained active, organising exhibitions (of particular note are those he organised of German potters in England and English potters in Germany) and supporting and collecting new and established practitioners in the craft world (Gabriella Koch, Sandy Brown, John Ward), by framing the thesis within the years he was operating professionally it is possible to draw distinctions and comparisons between how Rothschild operated as a retailer, an exhibitor and as a collector, alongside the broader themes of consumption and taste during this period. By focusing on Rothschild within this period, it will be possible to see how he positioned himself in relation to the political, social and economic changes of what was a turbulent and progressive thirty-five-year period of British history. As historian David Kynaston notes, these dates also have the added fortune of marking a period of British history that are 'justly iconic':

⁹ Harrod, 1995, pp.1-2.

¹⁰ Harrod, 1995, pp.1-12.

¹¹ Harrod, 1995, pp.12-17.

¹² Primavera officially opened in February 1946, but Rothschild's initial planning for Primavera, including securing the Sloane Street lease, began in late 1945.

Within weeks of VE Day in May 1945, the general election produced a Labour landslide and then the implementation over the next three years of broadly socialist, egalitarian programme of reforms, epitomised by the National Health Service and extensive nationalisation. The building blocks of the new Britain were in place. But barely three decades later, in May 1979, Margaret Thatcher came to power with a fierce determination to apply the precepts of market-based individualism and dismantle much of the post-war settlement. In the early twenty-first century, it is clear her arrival in Downing Street marks the defining line in the sand of contemporary British history, and that therefore the years 1945 - 1979 have become a period - a story - in their own right.¹³

Being explored here are thirty-five years of history and experience that, although short, saw a dramatic shift in British society. Changes in law, government policy, the economy, and social and moral outlook affected people and places to a greater or lesser degree, but importantly Britain in 1980 was a lifetime away from Britain in 1945.

Most human beings operate like historians: they only recognize the nature of their experience in retrospect. In the course of the 1950s many people, especially in the increasingly prosperous 'developed' countries, became aware that times were indeed strikingly improved [...] Yet it was not until the great boom was over, in the disturbed seventies, waiting for the traumatic eighties, that observers [...] began to realize that the world, particularly the world of developed capitalism, had passed through an altogether exceptional phase of its history; perhaps a unique one.¹⁴

For the purpose of this thesis, it is possible to delineate four periods within the thirty-five years that cover the lifecycle of Primavera under Rothschild's management. 1945 to 1952 represents those early days on Sloane Street when Primavera was established and it operated as a retail space. In 1952 to 1963 Rothschild began to expand into other activities, notably his exhibition programme that began in 1952 and the establishment of Primavera Contracts Ltd in the late 1950s. He also opened another branch of the shop in Cambridge in 1959. 1963 to 1970 marked a transitional period for the business. The Sloane Street premises closed in 1967 and this was followed by a brief three year move to Walton Street in London. Finally, having left

¹³ David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain: 1945 – 51* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), p.1.

¹⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914 – 1991* (London: Penguin, 1994), p.257.

London altogether, the last episode 1970 to 1980 was played out in Cambridge, although Rothschild's activities continued to expand beyond the confines of the shop itself. This thesis does not always follow a linear path as the significance of certain events can only be recognised by creating a thematic narrative. However these demarcations of time help to anchor the research and orientate the reader.

As Eric Hobsbawm writes, our understanding of the past is filtered through our experiences of the present. With regard to our understanding of historical context, the 'post' of post-war is also worthy of some interrogation. In its simplest terms it is way of marking out a timeframe - after 1945 and the end of the Second World War. It is of note that this shorthand is understood, particularly in the Western world; it is not confused with other wars or other time periods. Semantically 'post' gives significance to the changes that have occurred; it emphasises that these events mattered and that they will have a lasting impact, defining the period to follow. As Eric Hobsbawm states:

When people face what nothing in their past has prepared them for they grope for words to name the unknown, even when they can neither define nor understand it. [...] The keyword was the small preposition 'after', generally used in its Latin form 'post' as a prefix to any of the numerous terms which had, for some generations, been used to mark out the mental territory of twentieth-century life.¹⁵

As well as time, a sense of place is important to this research. As historians and cultural/historical geographers have shown, there was a vast difference between how people in the North and in the South experienced the effects of social, cultural or economic developments after 1945. These differences are further complicated by the capital, a busy metropolis with its own economic and social imperatives.¹⁶ Therefore the use of 'Britain' is acknowledged as problematic. In this first instance it provides a geographic framework, but it is recognised that this discussion concentrates largely on the South of England. Although Rothschild greatly enjoyed travelling the country, and he sought to represent craftspeople irrespective of geography from across the UK and Europe, his retail and exhibitions activities were centred in the South, in particular London and then Cambridge. Due to this, there is an absence of discussion on craft practice and activity in the North. However, it is important to note that

¹⁵ Hobsbawm, 1994, pp.287- 8.

¹⁶ See: Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (London: Abacus, 2005); R. Hudson & A.M Williams, *Divided Britain*, 2nd Edition, (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1995); Irene Hardill, David T. Graham & Eleonore Kofman, *Human Geography of the UK: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2001).

Rothschild's situation in London was not equal to him being 'of London' or 'Southern'. His position as an émigré is central to that and will be commented upon throughout this research. He looked outwardly as much as he could and often directed and encouraged others to do the same. This is particularly evident in his decision to leave his collection to a Northern museum. Henry Rothschild began his association with the Shipley Art Gallery in 1990 with loans and gifts. In an interview Rothschild stated:

[The] Shipley is a very professional gallery and it happens to be in the North. It was my choice, in Mrs Thatcher's reign, that it had to be in an area where Thatcherism was not ruling.¹⁷

Although by the time Rothschild began his relationship with the Shipley Margaret Thatcher was no longer in power, the effects of her government's term in office continued to be felt, particularly in the North East region. That he looked to a gallery in the North of England when much of his professional activity had taken place in London and Cambridge can be attributed to his belief that oft-forgotten regional areas had much to offer the cultural landscape of the country provided they received the necessary support.¹⁸

Furthermore, the overall focus here is on the experiences of certain groups with whom Rothschild was associated – other émigrés, those involved in the crafts, and those from a middle-class urban background. For the purpose of this thesis these groups will dominate the discussion. It is recognised in this research that these selected experiences were complex and variable but can nevertheless be interconnected in important ways to the wider social, economic and cultural developments discussed by historians. The connection between the broader cultural narrative and the more personal narrative is central to the approach of this research.

Methodology and Approach

This research will use a narrative-based approach to the material. For their paper 'Life History and Narratives: Questions, Issue and Exemplary Works', J. Amos Hatch and Richard Wisniewski interviewed a number of academics working in life history and narrative-based research. One respondent, Andrew Sparkes, comments that:

¹⁷ Henry Rothschild, interviewed by Corinne Julius for Shipley Art Gallery (unknown date). Uncatalogued. Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead.

¹⁸ Henry Rothschild, 'Primavera', *Crafts*, No.18, 1976, p.10.

Life histories often take [stories] more at face value and work off them in terms of content to generate interpretations. Narratives focus more on how stories are formed and structured by the wider culture in terms of their telling, and during the face to face interaction that generates their telling.¹⁹

By using this definition this thesis will take the 'story' of Rothschild - his experiences and reflections - and show how that story is both a product and reaction to the time and place in which Rothschild found himself. Instantly the notion of one definitive story presents an issue; rather they are 'stories' – multiple narratives that run both independently and in parallel with each other.

Although most respondents agreed that there were nuanced differences between the terms life history and narrative, an interesting response came from Bill Ayers who commented that:

[...] both approaches to inquiry are unabashedly genre blurring. They tend to tear down walls - anthropology, sociology, history, linguistics - and why should we resurrect them?²⁰

Here, Ayers argues that the 'genre blurring' that occurs through narrative-based research should be celebrated, as it allows for connections to be made between often isolated disciplines. As will be explored in chapter two, craft tends to sit on the periphery of art history or design history and has only recently begun to be regarded as an area of research in its own right. I would argue that due to this position, craft history lends itself well to a narrative-based approach, as it is relatively untethered to any particular field or discipline.

Furthermore, the focus in craft history is often on the object, the mode of production or consumption, or on the practitioners. As a non-maker, Rothschild, and individuals like him, have been relatively absent from the broader craft narrative. Hatch and Wisniewski found that life history and narrative research gave a focus on the individual, a figure so often lost when trying to make broad sweeping statements to 'catch all'. By applying this narrative approach, it will be possible to demonstrate the relevance of these individuals. However, while the individual is central, all the respondents seemed to agree that the individual life history or narrative needs to be

¹⁹ J. Amos Hatch & Richard Wisniewski, 'Life History and Narratives: Questions, Issues, and Exemplary Works', in *Life History and Narrative*, ed. by J. Amos Hatch & Richard Wisniewski (London: Falmer Press, 1995), p.115.

²⁰ Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995, p.114.

placed within a wider social context in order to make sense of it and to avoid placing the individual on a pedestal. As Peter Munro stated:

This focus on the individual is to gain a deeper understanding of the complex relations between ideology and culture, self and society. Life history requires a historical, cultural, political and social situatedness in order to avoid the romanticization of the individual, and thus reproduction of a hero narrative which reifies humanist notions of the individual as autonomous and unitary.²¹

By continually contextualising Rothschild in relation to time, place and networks of makers, customers and collectors, it will be possible to 'avoid the romanticization' that could so easily occur in a more traditional biography.

One further point raised by Hatch and Wisniewski on the use of the individual in life history and narrative research, is the notion that this can help bridge the gap between the understanding of the macro, or theoretical framework and that of the micro, or individual. As respondent Pat Sikes stated:

Of supreme importance is the way in which life history can get at lived experience and in so doing can make the familiar strange. It can reveal what theory means in practice. [...] [Ideas] can be illustrated in a way that is especially meaningful and accessible to other people. In other words, it links the micro and macro.²²

It is the intention of the author to move 'to and fro' between Rothschild's story and the context as much as possible. For example, when discussing Rothschild's experience of setting up Primavera, the impact of the post-war on craft retail and consumption will be fully explored. Similarly when considering London in the 'Swinging Sixties' it is important to position Primavera within that both geographically and culturally. More specifically, this interplay between the macro and micro narrative can be understood in relation to Rothschild's émigré background. In their paper on the impact of emigres on visual culture in Britain, Cheryl Buckley and Tobias Hochscherf argue that the complexity of the subject is often misunderstood because the experiences of the émigré become standardised as a singular narrative, which does not allow for the multiplicity of experience.²³ However, although this should be

²¹ Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995, p. 117.

²² Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995, pp.117 – 8.

²³ Cheryl Buckley & Tobias Hochscherf, 'Introduction: From German 'Invasion' to Transnationalism: Continental European Émigrés and Visual Culture in Britain, 1933-1956', *Visual Culture in Britain*, Vol.13, No.2 (2012), p.159.

recognised by the researcher, there is also space in the discourse to look at the larger context and the effect the act of migration has on lives. Researchers must look at both the meta and macro narratives almost simultaneously in order to fully appreciate the narrative as a whole.

This is not to suggest that diasporic conditions and trajectories in Britain can be reduced to a unifying experience that prompted a number of monolithic responses in works of visual culture. In fact, it seems myopic to disentangle foreign, regional, local, national and other origins in émigrés work, given the way in which they were enmeshed in different networks, circles and diverse debates. Yet, the sense of the cross-cultural journeys of continental European immigrants as perhaps the most significant event in their lives can at times be lost when analysing the circumstances of their work.²⁴

A criticism of life history and narrative work, as with most qualitative based research, is that it is subjective rather than objective. The response to this is to emphasise the subjectivity and highlight it as a positive. As Bill Ayers states:

Life history and narrative approaches are person centred, unapologetically subjective. Far from a weakness, the voice of the person, the subject's own account represents a singular strength.²⁵

Subjectivity is not the only issue with life history or narrative work. Many respondents to Hatch and Wisniewski commented on the ethical dilemmas this method of research can raise. This is a complex issue; research should be about presenting information, however it is gathered, in a way which has an innate honesty and integrity to it. Life history and narrative-based research may involve more compromises with the individual subject who may want to keep aspects of his or her life private. These compromises can then have a detrimental effect on the research story as a whole. In one way Rothschild's passing in 2009 means that the more difficult aspects of his personality and life experiences can be discussed in a way that he may have restricted were he alive at the time of writing.²⁶ However his daughter's support and involvement in the project is significant and in a sense she stands in for

²⁴ Buckley & Hochscherf, 2012, p.159.

²⁵ Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995, p.118.

²⁶ It is of note that Rothschild was initially against the life history recordings carried out through the National Electronic and Video Archive of the Crafts project based at the University of the West of England. See: Cleo Saunders & Karin Walton, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (16 January 2013). Uncatalogued.

her father by proxy. As with any life history or narrative-based research, careful negotiation and sensitivity has been applied while balancing the need to keep the research valid and defensible. A prime example of this would be the discussions surrounding Rothschild's mental health, which were openly disclosed in interview but only emerges in this text in relation to the impact on the core narratives of retail, exhibition and collection. This said, elements of his personality are key to understanding his professional activity. Evident in Rothschild's own words, as well as those by his contemporaries, Rothschild was a strong, determined and often difficult character. He was also ambitious and energetic. As Adamczewski recalled:

He was quite a tricky customer Henry. I was very fond of him, don't get the wrong impression, I liked him but he was quite a volatile person and a lot of people found him difficult. He could be very offensive. He didn't mince his words. He would say just what he thought regardless of what effect it had upon the person who was hearing it and quite often I think people found him very – they thought he was very ill mannered and very rude but that was just his way. He didn't pretend to be – to think something he didn't think. He wasn't English, you know.²⁷

This is echoed with the potter Gordon Baldwin's recollections that, for a time, Rothschild refused to have anything to do with him for reasons Baldwin is still unsure of.²⁸ It is of note that Adamczewski, herself non-British, attributes Rothschild's difficult nature to his non-Britishness. With the knowledge of Rothschild's bipolar status, such revelations could be attributed to his condition.

With regard to achieving this balance of personal information in academic writing, a number of respondents to Hatch and Wisniewski's study felt that the scholarly quality of life history or narrative research could not be judged using the same criteria as used when judging other methodologies. As Yvonna Lincoln commented:

But at the very least, the silliest issues in such research would be traditional ideas of internal and external validity, replicability and objectivity. It's not that those issues don't get done well in this form of research; they are simply not in the same universe.²⁹

²⁷ Adamczewski, interview, 2013.

²⁸ Gordon Baldwin, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (6 December 2012). Uncatalogued.

²⁹ Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995, p.120.

One of the reasons that using this methodology is both challenging and useful to this research is precisely because many of the rules that apply to other methodologies do not exist here. Instead the guidelines that do exist with regard to being reflexive, can be read in a number of ways and providing that reading is evident in the text, the research can be viewed as credible. Throughout the thesis care has been taken to show where the information presented has come from as well as to what extent Rothschild's experiences could be seen as normative or unique.

Donald E. Polkinghorne argues that the interest and use of narrative inquiry in research is due to it being the most human of approaches - 'narrative descriptions exhibit human activity as purposeful engagement with the world'.³⁰ Narratives are essentially stories.

A story is a special type of discourse production. In a story, events and actions are drawn together into an organized whole by means of a plot. A plot is a type of conceptual scheme by which a contextual meaning of individual events can be displayed.³¹

Polkinghorne argues that stories, despite the negative connotations that they are somehow fictions or exaggerated half-truths, all relate to human action. In order to be understood they must meet certain criteria in terms of their plot. Firstly there must be a temporal demarcation, a beginning, middle and end. For this research this temporal demarcation has been established as 1945 to 1980, the years Rothschild ran Primavera. Secondly, the story must mark out the significant elements – there will be events included and events excluded. The story of Rothschild being presented will relate to his involvement in the craft community and so his domestic life will not be given the same weighting that it might in a conventional biography. However, nor will it be ignored especially when considering how his collection of ceramics was used in the home, or the role his wife Pauline had in the running of Primavera. Similarly his charitable work will not receive the level of coverage it undoubtedly deserves as this is not the arena in which to do that. Thirdly, Polkinghorne argues that the events must follow a linear order building to the conclusion and finally, that the events chosen will have a connection to the conclusion. Although the events chosen will have a connection to the conclusion of this research, the story will not follow the linear order that Polkinghorne argues for. Instead the focus will be on the broader themes: retail,

³⁰ Donald E. Polkinghorne, 'Narrative Configuration in Qualitative Analysis', in *Life History and Narrative*, ed. by J. Amos Hatch & Richard Wisniewski (London: Falmer Press, 1995), p.5.

³¹ Polkinghorne, 1995, p.7.

exhibition and collection. Each chapter will act as a narrative, with the conclusion allowing for a discussion on the ways in which each narrative intersects.

Polkinghorne also comments on the ways in which events are linked together after the fact; only in retrospect can we understand the significance of certain events in a story. This echoes back to Hobsbawm's understanding of the term 'post' to denote an event resulting in a fundamental break between the before and the after, thereby impacting on how we relate to our life experiences. This is interesting in terms of this type of research. As stated previously one of the major criticisms of life history or narrative research is that it is subjective - the researched subject can present their story, or data, in a number of ways and the researcher must interpret and corroborate that data, while at the same time bringing their own prejudices and opinions to the interpretation. The selection of events or themes over others is part of this subjectivity. For example there is much to discuss with regard to Rothschild's identity as an émigré, which is covered in chapter three. Although this aspect of Rothschild's experience is undoubtedly significant in how he conducted business and how he related to others in the craft world, caution must be exercised. Assumptions can be made and given more weighting than they necessarily have. For example, when asked whether her father was drawn to the work of Rie, Coper and Duckworth because of a shared identification with their émigré status, Liz Rothschild replied that she believed it to be more aesthetically driven.³²

Polkinghorne further differentiates between paradigmatic cognition and narrative cognition. The aim of paradigmatic cognition is to create categories and taxonomies into which the object, or in this case, story, can be slotted into:

By providing a familiar and decontextualized knowledge of the world, they allow us to manage the uniqueness and diversity of each experience as if it were the same as previous experiences. We are able to learn a repertoire of responses to be applied in each conceptually identified situation.³³

Narrative cognition on the other hand focuses on the difference of each experience:

The concern is not to identify the new episode as an instance of a general type but as similar to a specific remembered episode. The new episode is noted as

³² Liz Rothschild, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (17 April 2012). Uncatalogued.

³³ Polkinghorne, 1995, p.11.

similar to, but not the same as, the previously selected episode. Thus, the understanding of the new action can draw upon previous understanding while being open to the specific and unique elements that make the new episode different from all that have gone before.³⁴

By using a narrative cognitive approach it will be possible to fill gaps in the research on Rothschild. For example, there is very little evidence of his own feelings towards his émigré status; but by examining the existing research on fellow emigres, such as Lucie Rie or Ruth Duckworth, it will be possible to draw comparison between experiences. However, it is necessary to make explicit that such experiences are deeply personal and, although similar, cannot stand in for the whole. What this will demonstrate is that at the deeper levels of understanding there can never be a comprehensive study of a 'type' of experience or event as there will always be exceptions and nuanced differences depending on the uniqueness of the individual and the various experiences they have lived through.

In constructing this narrative on Rothschild, this thesis will make extensive use of archival material. The main resource will be the collections of papers left by Rothschild to the Shipley Art Gallery in 2009. This personal archive includes newspaper cuttings relating to Primavera, exhibition lists and catalogues, stock lists, photographs and slides of exhibitions and collections, and personal correspondence. This research has also accessed largely unseen papers held by Rothschild's family, which include personal journals, handwritten memoirs and photographs. Within her 1995 text, Harrod makes use of some of this archive material. Although the same material will be accessed for the purpose of this research, the remit of the project is such that it can be examined in greater detail and expand upon Harrod's research. For example, along with supporting material from other repositories, this archival research has been utilised to build up a sense of how Rothschild was situated within the wider craft community. The material also illuminates how Primavera itself stands in as an example of the way in which craft was retailed and exhibited during this period.

The issue with using archival material is that there are often gaps in information and this is the case here; Rothschild was unconcerned with keeping receipts and correspondence (if they existed in the first place) that would have illuminated the provenance of the objects in the collection about which little is known. These gaps of information will be considered within the following analysis in relation

³⁴ Polkinghorne, 1995, p.11.

to Rothschild's professional practice. With regard to archival research, Tanya Harrod comments that 'biography often tells you less about the biographical subject and more about the appetites and prejudices of the biographer'.³⁵ There is an assumption here that the source material represents a truth that is then open to interpretation; however all archives have been constructed and often by a number of individuals or organisations, each with their own agendas. It is important to consider in the first instance the motivation for leaving the archive: an individual may recognise his or her own contribution and see the value in letters, invoice books or sketchbooks; an individual may equally just keep everything regardless of its archival value. A person may also decide to have the material properly cared for or that decision may rest with family. The absence of material can be as revealing as what is present. The existing archival material relating to Rothschild and Primavera has governed the direction of this research. For example, some periods of retailing, as well as some exhibitions have been better documented than others. This research, by acknowledging the limitations of the archive, will comment and reflect upon the nature of the archive itself.

Another unique element of this research and key to the construction of the narrative has been the use of interviews. As Rothschild passed away in 2009, it has been necessary to make use of existing audio and video recordings of Rothschild. Craft historian Tanya Harrod carried out an interview with Henry Rothschild in 2003 as part of the 'Craft Lives' project held at the British Library.³⁶ This in itself has provided a wealth of material that is further corroborated by personal archive papers. As part of the donation of material to the Shipley Art Gallery, Rothschild also took part in a video interview with Andrew Greg in 2001, organised by Matthew Partington of the National Electronic and Video Archive of the Crafts (NEVAC) project based at the University of West England.³⁷ Further to this is a short interview directed by Corinne Julius, curator at the Shipley Art Gallery.³⁸

³⁵ Harrod, 2015, p.199.

³⁶ Henry Rothschild, interview, 2003.

³⁷ Henry Rothschild, interviewed by Andrew Greg. (7 July 2001). DVC 882-885. National Electronic and Video Archive of the Crafts, University of the West of England. An edited version of this interview is available to view at the Henry Rothschild Study Centre at the Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead.

³⁸ Henry Rothschild, interviewed by Corinne Julius for Shipley Art Gallery (unknown date). Uncatalogued. Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead.

Having had no personal connection with Rothschild, access to these interviews, both audio and visual, has provided the opportunity to connect with the interviewee in a way not possible with transcripts. As Matthew Partington puts forward:

Oral historians have fought long and hard for their field of study to be taken seriously as a valid way of gathering historical 'evidence'. The use of the interview in its transcript form in published papers has been one way of legitimizing oral history but it has also meant that the overwhelming majority of oral historians ignore the visual element of their practice.³⁹

Partington is talking here primarily about video interviews but the same can be applied to audio recordings. The act of listening to somebody's voice, how they express themselves, is lacking in a transcript.

As well as the recorded interviews with Rothschild, interviews with some of Rothschild's contemporaries were also carried out specifically for this research. Liz Rothschild was able to illuminate her father's early life and offer her opinions on how he ran Primavera and his position in the craft world. Ronald Pile and Fiona Adamczewski both worked with Rothschild at Primavera and offer personal and professional reflections on the day-to-day running of the business. The collectors Anthony Shaw and Ken Stradling, both of whom knew Rothschild, offer insights into the nature of collecting craft. The curators Cleo Saunders and Karin Walton, through their positions at Bristol City Art Gallery, interacted with Rothschild and also offer an understanding of craft in relation to museum collections. Finally the makers Jane Hamlyn, Alison Britton, Gordon Baldwin and Sandy Brown, all of whom have work that features in the Rothschild collection, were able to offer their reflections on Rothschild along with their own personal understanding of craft. By carrying out these interviews, this research can be seen to bring an original contribution to the existing knowledge around Rothschild and Primavera, and the wider context of craft making, retail, exhibition and collecting in post-war Britain.

Chapter Outlines

To better understand the significance of Rothschild's retail, exhibition and collecting activity, this thesis begins with a literature review that assesses two strands of writing.

³⁹ Matthew Partington, 'Ceramic points of view: video interviews, the internet and the interpretation of museum objects', *Journal of Design History*, Vol.19, No.4 (2006), p.336.

Firstly, this review will examine writing about craft, which will be revealed to be the lynchpin around which Rothschild's activities spun, with specific focus on the way craft has been understood as both a term and practice. By exploring this strand of literature it will be possible to assess Rothschild's own understanding of craft and consider the ways in which he was typical or atypical in his approach through his retail, exhibition and collecting practices. Furthermore, the positioning of craft within the fields of art and design history will be explored. As will be evident throughout this research, the debates on craft, art and design are fundamental to understanding how Rothschild and Primavera operated. Secondly, this review will consider the role of the biography and narrative in craft history. In assessing existing craft biographies or narratives the struggle in balancing an individual experience and wider societal developments becomes apparent, which is a central concern of this research. This research is not a biography but rather the study of an individual life from which various narratives can be drawn. That said, there are biographical elements to the work and consideration will be made as to how it is situated alongside other more traditional linear models.

To better elucidate Rothschild's stance as a non-maker in the retailing, exhibiting, and collecting of craft, chapter three will consider to what extent Rothschild was able to negotiate his identity as a German born British national. It will address the circumstances that led to Rothschild leaving Germany for Britain in 1933 and draw comparisons with other individuals who were also uprooted from their countries of origin in search of a safer life, with particular reference to those individuals who would then contribute to the visual culture of Britain. This chapter will explore how his background as an émigré impacted on his view and experience of craft. It will explore issues of identity and displacement as these émigrés negotiated a home in the UK and consider how this émigré generation impacted our understanding of craft in Britain. In particular, it will make reference to how the aesthetical values of German Modernism were carried over into Britain at this time.

Chapters four, five and six will explore the key roles Rothschild adopted in his professional and personal interactions with craft once he established himself in Britain. By approaching each activity – retailing, exhibiting and collecting – the significance of Rothschild as a non-maker in craft history, central to the key contribution of this thesis, will become apparent. Reference will be made throughout to how Rothschild's strong personality drove the success of Primavera, alongside the confidence he had in his own aesthetic taste. It will emerge that, due to his personal convictions, Rothschild became a respected figure in the craft world, an individual

who could use his position to elevate the status of makers he believed in. Through his retail and exhibition activity he also played an important role in directing public taste; his impact demonstrates the importance of this research in its contribution to knowledge of post-war British craft.

Chapter four will examine Rothschild as a retailer of craft through his outlet, Primavera. Given that he was active in this role from 1946 until 1980, this chapter will allow for an overview of the social, economic and political structure of Britain during this time in relation to craft production and consumption. This chapter will follow a chronological approach to the material, allowing for a sense of time and place to emerge. A chronological approach will also allow for Rothschild's progression during this period to be fully articulated. Furthermore this strong narrative will inform the subsequent chapters, which have been approached more thematically. Chapter five will examine the exhibitions hosted by Rothschild within the timeframe 1952 to 1980. Specific reference will be made to: how these exhibitions reflected upon and informed the debate on craft and art; how traditional craft and folk art was presented during this period; and the significance and influence of European makers on post-war British craft. Chapter six will focus on the Henry Rothschild Collection itself. Key to this chapter will be an understanding of what it means to be a collector and to what extent Rothschild fulfils that role. The collection will be contextualised within the framework of post-war British craft. Comparisons will be made to how Rothschild displayed and used his collection at home and how it is presented in a gallery context. This chapter will expand on the narratives that emerge as key to the understanding of Rothschild as a collector: the significance of the workshop traditions and network of makers, the debates between craft and art, and the influence of émigré makers.

Summary

Henry Rothschild, through his roles as a retailer, exhibitor and collector of craft in post-war Britain, is a significant figure in craft history. His role, like that of other non-makers, has been overshadowed in most historic accounts of craft. This thesis will therefore confirm and elucidate the significance of Rothschild and Primavera and call for further research into those individuals who are very much of the craft world but not always as producers or educators. By adopting a narrative-based approach, and combining that approach with extensive archival research and interviews, the following thesis will reveal a narrative that is both complementary and challenging to

those that dominate. Thereby this work will prove an original contribution to the discourse on the nature of narrative based research and craft history.

Chapter Two: Approaches to Craft – Debates and Narratives

Literature relating to the subject of craft is diverse and wide-ranging. It includes technical instruction, philosophical treatises, and academic critiques. For the purpose of this research two main strands of writing on craft have been identified as particularly pertinent to this thesis and will be discussed within this chapter. Firstly, beginning in the late nineteenth-century with William Morris' writings on the nature of craft, there has been a constant discourse throughout the twentieth-century on craft as a practice, a manufacturing process, and as a lifestyle. These writings come from practitioners, critics, and academics, who question the definition and push its parameters. By assessing this body of work, it will be possible to locate areas where the role of the non-maker - Rothschild - could enhance and transform existing ideas of craft. Secondly, given that this thesis centres on a personal narrative within craft, it seems pertinent to explore existing craft narratives. Understanding these narratives will help inform my own approach to Rothschild's narrative. Furthermore, for those makers working in the post-war period, these narratives will help to inform the context of Rothschild's own experiences as a retailer, exhibitor and collector of craft. The narratives explored here often take the form of traditional biographies of craft practitioners, but also incorporate shorter biographical essays that accompany exhibition catalogues. In examining historical and contemporary writing on craft and the significance of the individual craft narrative, the aim of this chapter is to position the discussion in relation to the existing literature, and reflect upon how this research contributes to, and furthers, existing knowledge.

Writing about Craft

Throughout this thesis, Rothschild's role in post-war craft will be explored. It will also explore Rothschild's approach to, and understanding of, craft. In order to achieve these objectives, it is important to consider the ways craft was being discussed prior to and during this era. Literature on craft and its history is concerned with two main questions. Firstly, there is the issue of defining craft. This debate goes on to inform the second, which is how does craft situate itself within visual culture, particularly in relation to art and industrial design. These debates should be easily resolved, for example, craft is making an object by hand, which removes it from industrial production, and craft is making an object that is useful, which removes it from the sphere of fine art. However, this seemingly fixed and simple definition quickly unravels when we ask, what about the use of a potter's wheel or hand tools, or what about

objects without function that are made with 'craft' materials, such as clay or glass? The result is writing about craft that constantly reframes the question and unsettles the arguments.

Modern debates on craft are largely informed by William Morris' position that craft is the antidote to industrial production. Indeed, Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement have been so influential that many of the texts discussed here reference him, whether or not they go on to expound upon or support his position.⁴⁰ As the most current and prolific craft historian Glenn Adamson writes: 'If William Morris had not existed it would have been necessary to invent him, so completely does he embody the idealism of modern craft'.⁴¹ An assessment of writing on craft therefore commences with Morris. Originally published in 1888, his essay 'The Revival of Handicraft' begins with the assertion that there exists a growing demand and desire for the 'handmade', which he contributes to the dominance of impersonal mass-produced goods.

People interested [...] in the details of the arts of life feel a desire to revert to methods of handicraft for production in general; and it may therefore be worth considering how far this is a mere reactionary sentiment incapable of realization, and how far it may foreshadow a real coming change in our habits of life as irresistible as the former which has produced the system of machine-production, the system against which revolt is now attempted.⁴²

The question posed by Morris – is a revival of handicraft in the machine-age possible – becomes his main point of contemplation. Morris considers the barriers to such a revival to be numerous. He posits that because of the machine, the manufacture of 'almost all goods are made apart from the life of those who use them'.⁴³ He also argues that the move from handicraft to machine-made has been an evolution, aided by the slow introduction of labour-saving devices and the move from the individual to the collective within which there is a division of labour; as technology

⁴⁰ Morris was by no means the first craftsman, and there are histories of craft that begin well before him, for example Paul Greenhalgh's 'The History of Craft' and Edward Lucie-Smith's *The Story of Craft*.

⁴¹ Glenn Adamson, 'Introduction: The Revival of Handicraft', in *The Craft Reader*, ed. by Glenn Adamson (New York: Berg, 2010), p.146.

⁴² William Morris, 'The Revival of Handicraft', in *The Craft Reader*, ed. by Glenn Adamson (New York: Berg, 2010; orig.1888), p.147.

⁴³ Morris, 2010 (1888), p.148.

advanced the machine began to replace the human element.⁴⁴ To Morris, the only way to reverse this trend would be for the next step of the evolution to be a rejection of the machine:

As a condition of life, production by machinery is altogether an evil; as an instrument for forcing on us better conditions of life it has been, and for some time yet will be, indispensable.⁴⁵

This stark determination of the machine as 'evil' is largely due to Morris's belief that the machine can only produce goods, which are aesthetically 'ugly'. He further argues that the consumers of the day who allow themselves to purchase such pieces have been 'degraded' by this ugliness, and are unable to see past it and look towards the beauty of the handmade. Here Morris is asserting his position as an authority on taste: 'I cannot argue with these persons, because they neither know, nor care for, the difference between beauty and ugliness'.⁴⁶ Morris concludes with the probability that machinery will never wholly disappear but that people will become 'masters of its machinery and not the servant, as our age is' and that the promotion of handicraft as a means of production will be part of the protest that leads to that state.⁴⁷ All the concerns that Morris outlined in 1888 have been continually reframed and addressed throughout the twentieth-century. Machinery and mass-production remain dominant in object production and craft has moved in and out of the periphery, subject to changing definitions and re-imaginings.

As will be discussed in the following chapters, Rothschild found the strict divisions between hand-made and machine-made to be unnecessary, choosing to sell a range of goods that were produced by both methods. I will argue that this perspective was largely informed by his cultural background in Germany, in particular the ethos of the *Werkbund* in the 1910s and of the Bauhaus in the 1920s. Although the *Werkbund* argued the importance of quality and style over the temporary and fashionable in the same way Morris did, they did not dismiss the advantages of industry.

[...] the core of the Arts and Crafts position – the radical reform of machine production, if not its complete elimination – was rejected as outdated romanticism in

⁴⁴ Morris, 2010 (1888), p.150.

⁴⁵ Morris, 2010 (1888), p.151.

⁴⁶ Morris, 2010 (1888), p.151.

⁴⁷ Morris, 2010 (1888), p.155.

the Werkbund, which was firmly, if critically, committed to modernity.⁴⁸

It is of note that the idealised image of Morris as a pure craftsman has been questioned and refuted: as Tanya Harrod writes, not only is Morris' popular image as a master craftsman of sorts actually wholly inaccurate, but that the Arts and Crafts Movement itself was not devoid of industrial processes. Rather the spiritual and intellectual aspects of making and creating were married (to an extent) with the economic advantages of industrial production: 'He believed that the making of things by hand using simple tools was a pleasurable and worthwhile activity, but in practice he never made a shibboleth of handwork'.⁴⁹ There is no hint to this in 'The Revival of Handicraft'; it is through his writings that Morris effectively created this persona for himself, despite it being at odds with his own creative practice. This persona, along with the Arts and Crafts Movement, was revived and popularised among the craftsmen of the 1920s and 1930s, who felt a similar crisis emerging following the Great War. In effect, our ideas and preconceptions of the Arts and Crafts Movement come from the re-appropriation of its ideologies; this has happened at various points in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries but most notably during the 'craft revivals' of the inter-war years and in the 1970s. As Glenn Adamson writes, the accepted story of the Arts and Crafts Movement has all the necessary components: the ordinary craftsman is the victim, industry is the villain, and William Morris is the hero.⁵⁰ The simplicity of the story has ensured its retelling and enduring legacy. Following the path laid out by Morris, the potter Bernard Leach also sought to position the crafts – with a bias for pottery – as an intellectual and spiritual endeavour. I would argue that, as happened with Morris, a similar idealisation took place with the persona of Bernard Leach, whose own practice was greatly supported by the apprentices in his pottery, but, through his own writing and proclamations would become regarded as the 'grandfather' of studio pottery and a leading authority on craft.

Although much of Leach's *The Potter's Book*, first published in 1940, reads as a manual for the aspiring potter with chapters on clays, shapes, decoration, pigments and glazes and kilns, it is the introductory chapter 'Towards a Standard' that outlines

⁴⁸ Frederic J. Schwartz, *The Werkbund: Design Theory & Mass Culture before the First World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), p.48.

⁴⁹ Tanya Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century* (London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp.16-17.

⁵⁰ Glenn Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), p.xv.

Leach's philosophy of craft and therefore is most pertinent to this discussion. In the opening page to *The Potter's Book* reference is made to the days of William Morris:

Factories have practically driven folk-art out of England; it survives only in out of the way corners even in Europe, and the artist-craftsman, since the day of William Morris, has been the chief means of defence against the materialism of industry and its insensibility to beauty.⁵¹

The significance of craft production is never far from Leach's mind, but, unlike Morris, he allows for the possibility that industrial pottery can be well made and of good design: 'The products of the latter [industrial] can never possess the intimate qualities as the former [hand-made], but to deny them the possibility of excellence of design [...] is both blind and obstinate'.⁵² However, this praise is then withdrawn with Leach's assertion that 'about nine-tenths' of industrial pottery is 'hopelessly bad in both form and decoration'.⁵³ Leach argues the reasons for the production of poorly designed ceramics lies with both the manufacturer's disinterest in aesthetics and the consumer's detachment from the maker. In a statement that echoes Morris, Leach writes:

The public is ever increasingly out of touch with the making of articles of everyday use, and although its entrepreneurs, the buyers and salesmen of trade, are continually caught out in their under-estimation of what people like they cannot be entirely blamed for catering to safe markets.⁵⁴

He returns to Morris, stating that 'the reaction started by William Morris has been taking place mainly outside industry and has culminated in what I have called the individual, or artist, craftsmen'.⁵⁵ The use of the term 'artist-craftsmen' is credited to Leach. Whether it was his intent or not, its usage creates a small division between those craftsmen producing objects that are beyond pure function, such as pottery, glassware or textiles, and those working in what could be termed the more rural crafts such as leatherwork or iron mongering. This separation within the crafts themselves further complicates our understanding of craft. However, Leach's reluctance to

⁵¹ Bernard Leach, *A Potters Book*, 3rd Edition (London: Faber, 1976), p.1.

⁵² Leach, 1976, p.2.

⁵³ Leach, 1976, p.2.

⁵⁴ Leach, 1976, p.4.

⁵⁵ Leach, 1976, p.14.

abandon the term 'craftsman' speaks of his attitude towards fine artists and, in particular, he references those coming to the crafts through the art schools:

They come to me year after year from the Royal College, or the Central School, or Camberwell, for longer or shorter, usually shorter, periods of apprenticeship. As soon as they have picked up enough knowledge, or what they think is enough, off they go to start putting on a studio scale for themselves. Very few have proven themselves to be artists. And what of the others, whose thousands who pass through these schools and then either disappear from sight or continue to produce bad work. Again, in the past tradition would have developed and used their more moderate talents; in our own one cannot escape the sense of great wastage.⁵⁶

Whereas Morris had been focused on the tensions between craft and industry, the focus for Leach shifts to the tension between craft and art. The relationship between artist and craftsmen as articulated here comes to dominate post-war discussion on how to define craft. The emergence of what I refer to as the 'art school potter' in contrast with the 'workshop' or 'studio' potter, is key in the broader craft narrative, as well as in the narrative of Rothschild and Primavera. Leach is disparaging of the 'art school potters' (although he made use of their labour), but, as with his views on industrial design, Rothschild saw no need to create barriers between one type of practice and another, as long as the products were of 'good design'. This area of debate is central to this research and Leach is often viewed as being diametrically opposed to the art school practice of the 1950s and 1960s. What will emerge is that practitioners from either grouping began to feel less confined by these early definitions.

In *A Potter's Book*, Leach goes on to claim that there is no strong English tradition for studio pottery, thereby justifying his turn towards Japanese and Eastern traditions. However, Leach is not talking just of shapes, glazes and techniques, but about a broader intellectual and spiritual way of making:

We live in dire need of a unifying culture out of which fresh tradition can grow. The potter's problem is at root the universal problem and it is difficult to see how any solution aiming at less than the full interplay of East and West can provide either humanity, or the individual potter, with a sound foundation for a world—wide culture [...] The necessity for a psychological and

⁵⁶ Leach, 1976, p.11.

aesthetic common foundation in any workshop groups of craftsmen cannot be exaggerated, if the resulting crafts are to have any vitality. That vitality is the expression of the spirit and culture of the workers.⁵⁷

This notion of an English tradition is also addressed in John Gloag's text *The English Tradition in Design*, first published in 1947. Along with Gordon Russell, Jack Pritchard and Nikolaus Pevsner, Gloag was a dominant figure in early twentieth-century design, and a proponent of design reform.⁵⁸ Whereas Leach comments on the separation between craft and fine art, Gloag is primarily concerned with design, with which he incorporates the crafts, albeit on the periphery. As will be discussed throughout this research, this positioning of craft in relation to design or to art is commonplace during the post-war period, and impacts on Rothschild's activities at Primavera. Like Morris and Leach, Gloag considers the technological advancements of the Industrial Revolution to have impacted negatively upon English production stating:

The industrial revolution accelerated the debasement of design; the eyes of the English died some time between 1830 and 1880, and people soon sank to the level when they 'mistook comfort for civilisation'. Only slowly and painfully did the nation recover its sight, and it is still more than half blind.⁵⁹

However, unlike Morris's assertion that the machine was 'evil', Gloag argues that the failures of machine production lay in attempting to re-create what had previously been made by hand, rather than creating designs made specifically for the machine: 'they were produced badly [...] because it was thought necessary to make them 'look rich', which gave machine-made things a vulgar reputation'.⁶⁰ To 'look rich' usually meant to apply a lot of decoration that added nothing to the function of the object. For critics such as Gloag, writing in the 1940s within the context of modernism, this Victorian obsession with decoration was held in great contempt and it is reflected in post-war design, particularly in the government driven Utility scheme. This is particularly relevant to the discussion on Primavera and Rothschild. The move from overt decoration to a 'cleanness' of design could be attributed to the simple matter of changing tastes. However, it is also important to recognise the role of the government,

⁵⁷ Leach, 1976, pp.10-11.

⁵⁸ Glenn Hooper, 'English Modern: John Gloag and the Challenge of Design', *Journal of Design History*, Vol.28, No.4 (2015), p.368.

⁵⁹ John Gloag, *The English Tradition in Design* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1947), p.22.

⁶⁰ Gloag, 1947, p.23.

through the Council of Industrial Design, who sought to formalise ideas of 'good taste' and 'good design' through the Utility scheme.

In his history of English design, Gloag gives due credit to the role of William Morris in his attempts to revive interest in craft in the face of badly produced industrial design. However, he argues that Morris, along with his contemporary John Ruskin, 'did much to confuse and muddle the whole subject of industrial design'; rather than working with industry to make its output better, his rejection of it delayed its creative progress.⁶¹

The insistence of Morris and the craft revivalists upon the basic importance of making things by hand deflected attention from the possibility of designing things properly for production by machinery.⁶²

In his assessment of Morris and by extension the role of crafts, Gloag offers a less romanticised view of the past, preferring to accept the inevitability of technology and therefore look to a way in which such technology can be used to continue an English tradition. Such thinking reveals an 'openness' to modernity, but just as Leach sits firmly in the hand-made camp, Gloag sits firmly in the machine-made camp. As will be discussed, Rothschild had little interest in taking sides and maintained that Primavera would show only 'good design' regardless of its provenance.

In 1950 John Farleigh published *The Creative Craftsman*. Farleigh himself worked as a wood-engraver and had become the director of the Crafts Centre of Great Britain at its inception in 1946.⁶³ Given his background and career it is of little surprise that *The Creative Craftsman* is wholly supportive of the crafts as a practice and the opening chapter in particular is romantic and nostalgic:

We remember finding our way through the gloom between great furnaces and ovens while men juggled with hollow pipes and small wooden sticks, fashioning glass [...] we remember wandering, on another occasion, along the banks of a stream in Sussex, past a windmill, to find a pottery [...] We remember a few days in the Cotswolds visiting craftsmen [...] We remember a delightful tea with a weaver in that lovely village of Painswick [...]⁶⁴

⁶¹ Gloag, 1947, p.28.

⁶² Gloag, 1947, p.29.

⁶³ The Crafts Centre of Great Britain was formed in 1946 and was funded by the Council of Industrial Design and the Board of Trade. The Centre is discussed further in chapter four.

⁶⁴ John Farleigh, *The Creative Craftsman* (London: G Bell, 1950), p.3.

Such remembrances relate to the main purpose of the text in which Farleigh has gone out visiting various craftsmen, asking questions on their practice and lifestyle. Farleigh's approach to this task, as detailed in his introduction, can be likened to that of an anthropologist embarking on a visit to some remote tribe:

[...] we must have our questions ready if we wish these craftsmen to talk of how and why they came to be so expert at their work, and why they do this instead of that. If we can get them to talk and if we are able to record something of what they say, and if too we can convey something of the atmosphere of their surroundings, we may perhaps discover a world of activity that, even if we have not time to ask all that we wish to know, reveals infinite possibilities for further enjoyment.⁶⁵

Altogether Farleigh visited a range of craftsmen for his survey: goldsmiths, bookbinders, woodworkers, calligraphers, textile designers, instrument makers, embroiders, and printers. His choice of potters is of interest to this review. Firstly, he talks with Bernard Leach. As has been discussed, Leach was considered the grandfather of studio pottery and his inclusion is unsurprising. Secondly, he talks with Dora Billington, Head of Pottery at the Central School. Billington came from a family of potters and, as she states, 'because I grew up with the industry, I have the feeling that pottery, whether mass-produced or studio pottery, is one thing. I cannot recognise any very clear distinction'.⁶⁶ Under Billington's leadership, the Central School would produce a number of makers, including James Tower, Gordon Baldwin, and Derek Davis, whose approach to pottery was more Picasso than Leach. Farleigh's decision to include Billington demonstrates an attempt to look beyond the Leach traditions and show another side of ceramic craft. However, evident in the text, there is still an emphasis on the nostalgic side of craft, placing an emphasis on the lifestyle of the maker.

As will be examined in this thesis, the 1950s saw new developments in craft, attributed in part to the teaching of craft in art schools. The 'creative craftsman' espoused in Farleigh's work did not disappear, but these new makers led to debates about how craft could be taught and how skill and ability manifest themselves. The woodworker David Pye stands out for his discussions on the nature of craft and 'workmanship'. In *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*, first published in 1968, Pye argues that there is a fundamental difference between a design and workmanship,

⁶⁵ Farleigh, 1950, p.2.

⁶⁶ Farleigh, 1950, p.189.

claiming that the designer is essentially in the hand of the workman: 'In practice the designer hopes the workmanship will be good, but the workman decides whether it shall be good or not'.⁶⁷ Pye uses the term 'workmanship' rather than 'craftsmanship' deliberately, stating that 'workmanship' is applicable to a larger body of production:

Workmanship of the better sort is called, in an honorific way, craftsmanship. Nobody, however, is prepared to say where craftsmanship ends and ordinary manufacture begins. It is impossible to find a generally satisfactory definition for it in face of the all the strange shibboleths and prejudices about it which are acrimoniously maintained. It is a word to start an argument with.⁶⁸

By using the term 'workmanship', Pye is able to incorporate both craft, as made by hand, as well as industrial production. He makes a strong distinction between the two, referring to the crafts as 'workmanship of risk' and industrial manufacturing as 'workmanship of certainty', but crucially, to Pye, they both demonstrate workmanship and are valid means of production.

If I must ascribe a meaning to the word craftsmanship [...] it means simply workmanship using any kind of technique or apparatus, in which the quality of the result is not pre-determined, but depends on the judgement, dexterity and care which the maker exercises as he works [...] With the workmanship of risk we may contrast workmanship of certainty, always to be found in quantity production, and found in its pure state in full automaton. In workmanship of this sort the quality of the result is exactly predetermined before a single saleable thing is made.⁶⁹

Pye also recognises that defining craft as 'hand-made' is inadequate, arguing that such an exclusive definition would limit the output to 'baskets and coiled pottery'.⁷⁰ By allowing the inclusion of tools and machinery – hand-loom, jigs, saws, potter's wheels, drills and lathes – the term hand-made loses meaning, for which Pye feels no sense of loss:

Is it not time to give up and admit that we trying to define in the language of technology a term which is not

⁶⁷ David Pye, *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*, 2nd Edition (London: The Herbert Press, 1995), p.17.

⁶⁸ Pye, 1995, p.20.

⁶⁹ Pye, 1995, p.20.

⁷⁰ Pye, 1995, p.26.

technical? *'Handicraft' and 'Hand-made' are historical or social terms, not technical ones.* Their ordinary usage nowadays seems to refer to workmanship *of any kind* which could have been found before the Industrial Revolution.⁷¹

Considering William Morris' proclamations over the 'evil' of machinery (whilst ignoring the role of some machinery or hand-guided tools in craft practice), it is of note that Pye, eighty years later, is having to debate the term 'handicraft' even when it has been acknowledged as a redundant expression. This can be attributed to the popular and enduring legacy of Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement.

There is a parallel between Pye and Morris in one respect: Morris was calling for a revival of handicraft in 1888, which was taken up by the likes of Leach, Ethel Mairet and Eric Gill; Pye, unknowingly, published his work on craftsmanship, on the cusp of another craft revival in the 1970s. In conclusion to the original text, Pye writes: 'If the crafts survive, their work will be done for love more than money, by men with more leisure to cultivate the arts than we have'.⁷² As John Kelsey notes in his foreword for this 1995 edition of *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*, the crafts revival of the 1970s led to Pye becoming more optimistic about the future of craft, commenting that he was 'encouraged by the new and broad interest in craftsmanship and workmanship'.⁷³

Central to all the texts discussed thus far are debates on the meaning of craft, meaning that can only be sought by comparing it to fine art or industrial design practice. The ideal seems to be somewhere in between the two, as a bridge between pure beauty and pure function. Despite Pye's call to end the debate on how best to define craft and the handmade, such issues remained a point of interest. Edward Lucie-Smith's 1981 text *The Story of Craft: The Craftsman Role in Society*, begins with a chapter asking 'What is Craft?'. Lucie-Smith grounds craft as an historical term, claiming that it has gone through three stages of development: firstly, every object made prior to the fourteenth-century can be viewed as craft as it was the only mode of production; secondly, from the Renaissance, there was 'an intellectual separation between the idea of craft and that of fine art'; and thirdly, with the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth-century, there was a separation between the craft object and the

⁷¹ Pye, 1995, p.26. Italics from original text.

⁷² Pye, 1995, p.138.

⁷³ Pye, 1995, p.15.

object made by machine.⁷⁴ It is these three phases of development that Lucie-Smith charts in his text. Given the twentieth-century timeframe of this research, it is the latter sections that prove most useful in placing Rothschild within his historical and social context, but, again, we can see a pre-occupation with defining craft in relation to art and to industrial practice.

Lucie-Smith concludes *The Story of Craft* with a chapter titled 'Craft Today', which details the craft revival of the 1970s and looks forward to the 1980s. This is particularly relevant here as it marks the end of this research's timeframe. He writes:

[The craftsman] takes his place in industrial society as a necessary antonym, a visible reminder of where industry has come from [...] Craft seems once again to be taking over a role which not the development of industry but the intellectual categorizations of the Renaissance forced it to abdicate.⁷⁵

With regard to Rothschild's activities, as a retailer, exhibitor and collector, this development is evident. I would argue from the 1960s onwards the debates around craft as art seem to supersede the earlier debates between craft and industry. Looking back at the 1980s as the 'design decade', Lucie-Smith is perhaps sitting right on the cusp of that discussion turning back around as new and unimaginable technology begins to be developed.

This shift can be seen in Peter Dormer's 1997 text 'The Salon de Refuse'. As a design historian, the intersection between design and craft is a main concern for Dormer. In 'The Salon de Refuse' he claims the issues of definition for craft and design are largely due to the fact they are in a constant state of evolution. With regard to craft, Dormer argues that the two most common definitions of craft are both 'sloppy':

Either craft means 'studio crafts' covering everyone working with a craft medium. This includes producers of functional ware as well as abstractionist sculptors working in textiles, clay or glass. Or craft means a process over which a person has detailed control, control that is the consequence of craft knowledge.⁷⁶

⁷⁴Edward Lucie-Smith, *The Story of Craft: The Craftsman's Role in Society* (Oxford: Phiadon, 1981), p.11.

⁷⁵ Lucie-Smith, 1981, p.281.

⁷⁶ Peter Dormer, 'The *Salon de Refuse*', in *The Culture of Craft*, ed. By Peter Dormer (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p.7.

Despite Dormer's assertion that these contradictory definitions are both 'sloppy' they illustrate the problematic nature of craft, which are picked up by Grace Lees-Maffei and Linda Sandino in their article on the relationship between design, craft and art entitled 'Dangerous Liaisons'.⁷⁷ Both design historians, Lees-Maffei's work focuses on the production and consumption of design, while Sandino's research centres on narrative and oral history. Together in 'Dangerous Liaisons' they argue design, craft and art 'can be seen to occupy an unstable territory of permanently shifting allegiances, and this is true of both the histories of these three sets of practices and the three families of discourses surrounding them'.⁷⁸ Lees-Maffei and Sandino assert that the debates around the three sets of practices have been predominantly centred on where they fall in the hierarchy. This can be seen in the texts by Dormer, Gloag and Farleigh, each staking a claim for one practice over the others. However, Lees-Maffei and Sandino question the validity of such a structure in the first instance.

More recently, however, questions of status have no longer been seen as relevant, and understanding of the development of these cultural strains has been seen in terms of parallel development, or convergence, rather than hierarchy.⁷⁹

With reference to craft, the struggles it has had defining itself against, or aligned with, art or design can be contributed to the enduring idea that craft is anti-industrial. This image of craft has meant that when it has tried to push beyond its enforced boundaries it has been re-defined as design or as art, rather than being recognised as progression within craft itself.

Arguably the tensions between art, craft and design have always existed in some form or another. This thesis demonstrates the ways in which these tensions became more articulated in the post-war era. This can be attributed to previously discrete areas beginning to overlap and jostle for physical and intellectual space

⁷⁷ This essay serves as the Introduction to a special themed issue, 'Dangerous Liaisons: Relationships between Design, Craft and Art', of *Journal of Design History*, 2004. The aim of this special issue is to explore the unstable relationships between discourses on art, design and craft. Other articles include: Martina Droth's 'The Ethics of Making: Craft and English Sculptural Aesthetics, c.1851-1900', pp.221-235; and Jo Turney's 'Here's One I Made Earlier: Making and Living with Home Craft in Contemporary Britain', pp.267-281.

⁷⁸ Grace Lees-Maffei & Linda Sandino, 'Dangerous Liaisons: Relationships between Design, Craft and Art', *Journal of Design History*, Vol.17, No.3 (2004), p.207.

⁷⁹ Lees-Maffei & Sandino, 2004, p.207.

within the art schools, various government and independent organisations, and, more specifically, in Primavera.

Although 'The *Salon de Refuse*', acts primarily as introductory chapter to Dormer's edited collection *The Culture of Craft*, Dormer outlines the significance of *writing* about craft in order to ensure craft as a practice can find and maintain its position in relation to art, design and technology. He claims that writing about craft is vital as 'the written text has itself a high cultural status'; with regard to writing about craft this is normally a catalogue essay or artist statement.⁸⁰ In chapter five of this thesis, which focuses on Rothschild's exhibition programme, this importance of this type of writing becomes evident. As will be noted, moving into the 1970s the 'artist statement' begins to feature in the exhibition catalogues of craftwork, demonstrating that craft is using the tools of the artist in order to self-promote.

The debates over how best to define craft, as outlined by Dormer and Pye, have proved so contentious that the commentary on the role of craft, as a economic and cultural practice, have been overshadowed. Pye asserted that its complexity rendered it 'useless' but that was largely due to becoming exclusive rather than inclusive. The craft historian and curator Paul Greenhalgh, who has ruminated on the nature of craft since the 1980s, echoes Dormer in his introductory essay 'Craft in a Changing World', by stating that 'craft has always been a supremely messy word'.⁸¹ However, he begins with the statement that 'after decades of deliberation it has become obvious what the crafts are'.⁸² In considering the ways in which the term has been debated, this is a very bold statement to make. As Greenhalgh goes on to state, the crafts become easier to define when the term becomes more inclusive:

For while the crafts have certainly been corralled into a particular enclosure during the 20th century, and have developed some problems because of this, there is no doubt the confinement has resulted in the growth of ties and the recognition of correspondences. Alliances have been formed, affecting the way things have been made and consumed [...] And while it is important not to fantasise or fetishise craft as *a thing in itself*, ultimately, it really doesn't matter how it all came together; the point is, it is together. What really matters at this juncture is

⁸⁰ Dormer, 1997, p15.

⁸¹ Paul Greenhalgh, 'Introduction: Craft in a Changing World', in *The Persistence of Craft*, ed. by Paul Greenhalgh (London: A&C Black, 2002), p.1.

⁸² Greenhalgh, 2002, p.1.

where all these genres are going and how they are going to develop in the next period of years.⁸³

By resolving this issue of definition in his opening statements, Greenhalgh goes on to state that the real problem for craft has not been in defining its attributes but in finding its place in the economy. This understanding of craft in terms of its economic status is much more practical than the more theoretical debates surrounding the aesthetics of craft or the philosophical lifestyle of craft. With regard to Rothschild understanding the wider economic concerns are fundamental in appreciating how Primavera became established in 1946 and survived the decades that followed.

Greenhalgh goes on to argue that art has an understandably high value as it considered to be labour intensive and original; similarly objects that are mass-produced have a low value as they are produced in volume with low labour cost.

Straddled between an art and a design economy, craft often gets the worst of both worlds. It occupies an economic space where objects, though individually handmade, sell at mass-production prices. Lacking the prestige of high art or the reproductibility of product design – both characteristics economically viable – the craftsperson frequently is obliged to sell unique works at mass prices.⁸⁴

Lees-Maffei and Sandino also consider this, remarking that the relationship between design, craft and art can be viewed in terms of the 'reception of those artefacts'.⁸⁵ Whereas production of objects is often the focus in this debate on craft, the consumption is just as relevant. With this in mind, the role of Rothschild within the craft world becomes increasingly significant: he was not a producer but a mediator and a consumer who facilitated the consumption of craft through his retail and exhibition practices.

In any evaluation of writing about craft the significance of Tanya Harrod's 1999 publication *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century* cannot be ignored. A prolific writer and independent craft historian, Harrod approaches this expansive topic chronologically, breaking the century down into three historical periods - 1916 to 1944, 1945 to 1969, and 1970 to 1990. Within these she explores the progression of individual crafts such as textile production and stained glass; organisations and

⁸³ Greenhalgh, 2002, p.1.

⁸⁴ Greenhalgh, 2002, p.6.

⁸⁵ Lees-Maffei & Sandino, 2004, p.209.

institutions, such as art schools, craft societies, and groups of craftspeople; and the wider historical contexts, such as the influence of war and the shifts in the political scene.

Although Harrod's text begins in 1916, she joins Leach, Gloag and Farleigh in first assessing the legacy of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement, in order to gain perspective on the subsequent progression of craft. This inclusion is deliberate and Harrod, in reflecting on this decision, recognises the totemic qualities of Morris: 'And worryingly my book begins with an ending. William Morris and the Arts & Crafts movement tower over any discussion of modern handwork'.⁸⁶ As previously discussed, Harrod alludes to the problematic nature of Morris' legacy regarding the handmade and the industrial.⁸⁷ However, his inclusion further cements the idea that discussions on craft in Britain are incomplete without him. The persona and subsequent influence of Leach also features heavily throughout the text.

His sweeping rejection of industrialisation, his promise of a spiritual enlightenment and his confidence about aesthetic standards went far beyond the step-by-step didacticism of a how-to-do-it book. Instead Leach offered the promise of a spiritually fulfilling way of life. For those in search of certainties *A Potter's Book* became a bible for a war-torn generation and after the Second World War, Leach began to seem like the founder of the studio pottery movement.⁸⁸

However, in setting the scene for craft in the twentieth-century, Harrod highlights those potters working outside the Leach network from the offset. Alfred and Louise Powell worked with industrial potteries such as Wedgwood, training workers in their designs and continuing in their own way the Arts and Crafts ethos of beauty in work. According to Harrod, the Powells would have been 'irritated' by the 'mythical musings' of Leach. Dora Billington, with her own industrial links, was in turn inspired by the Powells rather than Leach.

She had little time for Orientally inspired stoneware [...]
She designed for industry as well as working in her own studio, arguing for the unity of ceramic practice. Her real influence was felt as teacher at the Central School [...]
They celebrated the ceramic arts of Southern Europe

⁸⁶ Tanya Harrod, 'Writing *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century*', in *The Real Thing: Essays on Making in the Modern World*, ed. by Tanya Harrod (London: Hyphen Press, 2015, orig.2000), p.149.

⁸⁷ Harrod, 1999, pp.16-17.

⁸⁸ Harrod, 1999, p.38.

and Picasso's wartime experiments with clay and combined throwing and hand-building to create light-hearted figurines more suitable for the coffee bar than the museum of the collector's cabinet.⁸⁹

Harrod makes a strong attempt to highlight the oft-neglected crafts including silversmithing, carving, stained glass, bookbinding, calligraphy and lettering. However, studio pottery, textiles, and furniture-making still dominate. I would argue that these three areas of craft are more widely-practised and more widely-consumed, which in turn allows for more detailed research to emerge. More significantly, Harrod does not focus solely on the production of craft but also considers how craft was consumed during this period. A refocusing on consumption rather than production is also part of a larger trend in the latter years of the twentieth-century.⁹⁰ This is particularly relevant to this thesis; as a non-maker, Rothschild could be side-lined in craft history, but his role in the retail, exhibition and collection of craft highlight the importance of understanding how craft was consumed. In considering the landscape of craft retail in the inter-war period, Harrod argues that the primary consumers of craft were the middle and upper-classes:

The consumption of craft between the wars took place against a backdrop of economic depression [...] But artist crafts were largely made and consumed by the middle and upper-middle-classes who in the 1920s and 1930s were enjoying a rise in their standard of living. If makers struggled it was because of the rarefied nature of their work and, by the 1930s, because of a changed sensibility which responded to aspects of modernity like speed and technological advance. The heterodox outlets for the crafts reflect their uncertain identity.⁹¹

Harrod's examination of where these consumers were buying from shows a diverse range of outlets: department stores that were large enough to incorporate a small exhibition section for craft, most notably the Mansard Gallery at Heal's Ltd in London; independent craft outlets such as the New Handworker's Gallery, owned by

⁸⁹ Harrod, 1999, p.40.

⁹⁰ For further reading see: David Bell & Joanne Hollows, 'Towards a history of lifestyle', in *Historicizing Lifestyle: Mediating Taste, Consumption and Identity from the 1900s to the 1970s*, ed. by David Bell & Joanne Hollows (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), pp.1 – 20; Colin Campbell, 'Consumption and the Rhetorics of Need and Want', *Journal of Design History*, Vol.11, No.3 (1998), pp.235 – 246; Gloria Hickey, 'Craft within a consuming culture', in *The Culture of Craft*, ed. by Peter Dormer (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp.83 - 100.

⁹¹ Harrod, 1999, pp.126-7.

Ethel Mairet and The Little Gallery owned by Muriel Rose, both established in 1928; or exhibition events organised by the various craft guilds. As Harrod makes clear, the diversity of venues for exhibiting the crafts between the wars was bewildering.

A single maker might exhibit or sell work in a New Bond Street gallery, at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, with the British Institute of Industrial Art or at humble agricultural shows. Nothing illustrates more vividly the cultural ambivalence of the handwork project and the problematic nature of its significance to both makers and consumers.⁹²

As will be examined in chapter four, a number of these exhibition events and small retailers did not survive the Second World War, allowing Rothschild the opportunity to establish Primavera in what was a significantly less crowded market. The way in which Primavera not only began but flourished during the austere post-war years will also be examined at length. Although Harrod does comment on Primavera, this achievement is underplayed in the text as a whole.

Secondly, moving into the post-war era, Harrod examines the role of art education on the crafts. Contrary to Dormer's claims that art education had, by the end of the 1960s, resulted in the loss of craftsmanship, Harrod is more optimistic about the influence of art education on crafts, particularly in the immediate post-war.

After the war the art schools of Britain were transformed. [...] The artistic scene was full of energy as this new intake flooded in, anxious to make up for lost time, mature and determined, some with wartime experiences which has inspired serious ambitions of a life in art. Those who eventually developed into craftsmen or women were unlike many of the inter-war makers. They were less privileged, more commercially minded and often unaware of inter-war 'traditions' [...] The fact that art schools were producing a new kind of maker, ready to respond to and to initiate a contemporary fifties style, was not greeted with enthusiasm by the established figures in the craft world whose reputations had been formed before the war.⁹³

As has already been stated, Leach was one of those less than enthusiastic. Leach's central argument was that a workshop tradition in which an apprentice worked under a master led to a skilled maker, and art schools could not replicate this. However, Harrod's comment that the type of person going to art school was 'less privileged' and 'more commercially minded' is interesting. This was a new generation,

⁹² Harrod, 1999, p.134.

⁹³ Harrod, 1999, p.220.

not only looking to learn but also to make a living, something which the likes of Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie and Michael Cardew, with their relatively well-off background, were not overly concerned with. In a sense Rothschild was like this new generation, untethered to what was 'right' or 'wrong' about either approach to craft education, with no loyalty to either side. As we will see in chapter three, this can be partially attributed to his position as an émigré. Furthermore, as an émigré, he was also positioned outside of the British class system; although he had the personal funds to support his vision for Primavera, this is not the same as understanding the mindset of the British upper-class. This will be explored in more detail in chapter four.

The scope of Harrod's text is both a blessing and a curse; each section of her tome has the potential to become a point of focus for a more in-depth text. Henry Rothschild is an example of that: he is referred to in the text a number of times but not in great depth. His first appearance is in relation to the importance of Eleanore Gallo's *Arte Rustica Italiana*, which Rothschild claimed influenced him greatly during his time in Italy during the War.

Henry Rothschild has been destined for a career in the family metal business but instead he went in the footsteps of Muriel Rose and in 1946 opened his shop Primavera in Sloane Street, London, mixing vernacular basketry, high-quality mass-produced textiles, studio ceramics and folk art from remote corners of Europe.⁹⁴

Harrod then refers to Rothschild in relation to his retail of both handmade and industrial goods in her section on the 'Design Vacuum of the 1950s'.⁹⁵ The other two references to Rothschild are brief, informing the reader that Primavera was still active in the 1970s,⁹⁶ and that the revival of interest in basketry during the 1980s could be traced to Rothschild's own interest in the 1940s and 1950s.⁹⁷ All of Harrod's references to Rothschild and Primavera are drawn from her past research for the 1995 catalogue essay and from the interview she carried out with Rothschild for the Craft Lives project.⁹⁸ It is understandable that in a text such as *The Crafts in Britain* more cannot be made of the significance of an individual. However, as is revealed in

⁹⁴ Harrod, 1999, p.201.

⁹⁵ Harrod, 1999, pp.251-2.

⁹⁶ Harrod, 1999, p.375.

⁹⁷ Harrod, 1999, p.460.

⁹⁸ For a summary of Harrod's 1995 Primavera essay see introduction.

this research, the examination of individual narratives can further enhance our understanding of the topic. Considering Rothschild was active in the craft world from 1945 until his death in 2009, and that during this time he sold, exhibited and collected craft, this is narrative worthy of exploration.

Since Harrod's historic overview of craft in the twentieth-century, there has been resurgence of interest in craft as a practice and as a lifestyle.⁹⁹ The curator and writer Glenn Adamson has responded to this twenty-first century resurgence by revisiting craft as an ideal.¹⁰⁰ In his 2007 text, *Thinking Through Crafts*, Adamson considers craft as a process. He states that 'craft only exists in motion. It is a way of doing things, not a classification of objects, institutions, or people'.¹⁰¹ Central to his text is the reading of craft as a part of art history, in its broadest sense (i.e. not limited to fine art practice but inclusive of performance art, 'found' art, etc.). He goes on to identify five principles that interrelate to create 'craft'. Firstly he argues that craft is supplemental. In explanation of this, he uses Derrida's example of a frame for a painting. An 'uncrafted' mass-produced frame would negate the aestheticism of a painting whereas a 'crafted' frame enhances the painting and in this way is supplemental to the painting. Interestingly the supplemental becomes unnoticed:

To say that craft is supplemental, then, is to say that it is always essential to the end in view, but in the process of achieving that, it disappears. And indeed this accords well with standard notions of craft. Whether it functions in relation to a modern artwork, or some other everyday need, proper craftsmanship draws not attention to itself; it lies beneath notice, allowing other qualities to assert themselves in their fullness.¹⁰²

This notion that craft is supplemental and that well-crafted objects become 'unnoticed' does not allow for the moment that craft becomes the collected object. As will be explored in chapter six, the collection of objects, particularly objects that are functional, can have a transformative impact on their meaning.

⁹⁹ For a comparative explanation of this modern craft revival see: Andrea Peach, 'What goes around comes around? Craft revival, the 1970s and today', *Craft Research*, Vol.4, No.4 (2013), pp.161 – 179.

¹⁰⁰ Although not discussed in this review, see also: Glenn Adamson, *The Invention of Craft* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

¹⁰¹ Adamson, 2007, p.4.

¹⁰² Adamson, 2007, p.13.

Secondly, Adamson identifies material as one of the principles of craft. Whereas an encounter with art is optical, encounters with craft centre on the physical material, i.e. wood, glass, clay. Although this research considers a range of craft objects, ceramics dominate, with attention given to the blurring of boundaries between ceramics and sculpture. As Adamson states, the idea of art being optical is instantly challenged by sculpture, which is both optical and material.¹⁰³ Approaching this from the position of craft, this principle is challenged by non-functional ceramics that are grounded in the traditions of craft but are fundamentally optical. Underlying this principle are the continuing questions of ‘what is craft? What is art?’ These questions are central to this research and Adamson’s principle of material offers another way to approach them, even if it is problematic.

Thirdly, Adamson discusses the principle of skill. He acknowledges that the previous principles – supplemental and material – consider craft ‘as a problem case within modern art history’.¹⁰⁴ Whereas the idea of skill can be viewed as being a basic requirement for any type of production, including craft and art, Adamson argues that this is complicated by how it is understood by the makers themselves:

Skill is a precondition for all art making – one might say its craft foundation – but at best, it seems to be taken for granted. At worst it is an outright embarrassment. Why is this? How has this apparently hypocritical position become the norm in modern art production?¹⁰⁵

Adamson goes on to state that one reason skill is often regarded as problematic is due to the presence of a ‘mysterious something’ that somehow elevates an object. He illustrates this with an anecdote, in which the Leach Pottery worker William Marshall reportedly said, “Bernard [Leach] can’t throw worth a damn, but he makes better pots than any of us”.¹⁰⁶

Nothing could be more familiar, or less intellectually satisfying, than the idea that the truly skilled practitioner (whether artist or craftsman, musician or athlete) has an ineffable, special quality. Whether conceived as beauty, talent, magic, or genius, this is the commonplace notion of what is to be skilled. The implication is that proper response is not theoretical discussion, but shoulder-

¹⁰³ Adamson, 2007, p.40.

¹⁰⁴ Adamson, 2007, p.69.

¹⁰⁵ Adamson, 2007, p.69.

¹⁰⁶ Warren MacKenzie, interview, 2002, as cited by Adamson, 2007, p.70.

shrugging amazement. When somebody's got "it", that certain something, we are usually context to admire, rather than analyze, that person's achievements.¹⁰⁷

As with Adamson's discussion on the supplemental nature of craft, when a functional object is made 'well', with a high degree of skill, that skill is somehow supplemental. The satisfaction of the user lies in the object performing its function well and they do not necessarily note the degree of skill that has gone into it. With regard to the retail of craft, this can be problematic: crafted objects, although rarely achieving the high prices of fine art, are often viewed as expensive compared to mass-produced goods as the skilled aspect is not recognised. It is important to note that part of Rothschild's success lay in his ability to judge how to price the work that came into Primavera as well as how to market the unique quality of craft. Conversely, when an object possesses the 'ineffable' quality Adamson discusses above, it elevates the object's status. This can be seen when we consider the high monetary value given to Bernard Leach's work, despite his perceived 'lack' of skill. The measuring of monetary and aesthetic value will be discussed in more detail in chapter six.

The fourth principle of craft according to Adamson is that of the pastoral. This grounds the practice of craft, regardless of the skill employed or the quality of the end product, as a nostalgic, spiritual act. By locating this sense of nostalgia in the pastoral – a rural rather than urban setting – craft becomes an allegory for a simpler way of life.¹⁰⁸ This can be traced back to the writing of William Morris and certainly it is an image that becomes more sought-after during the industry and technology driven twentieth-century. This is relevant to Rothschild's broader engagement with the problematic 'folk-art' and will be discussed at length in chapter five.

Finally, Adamson refers to the 'amateur' as a principle of craft. Again, this is situated in opposition to the 'professionalism' of modern art: 'If modern art [...] is grounded in searching self-awareness, then amateurism is a form of creativity that can never be integrated into this model'.¹⁰⁹ This idea of craft practice being a leisure pursuit undermines the skilled worker. It also undermines those who seek to make a living out of craft. Adamson argues that after 1945, amateurism became a serious

¹⁰⁷ Adamson, 2007, p.71.

¹⁰⁸ Adamson, 2007, pp.104-5.

¹⁰⁹ Adamson, 2007, p.139.

problem for craft and 'professionals sought to distance themselves from association with hobbyism whenever possible'.¹¹⁰ It is interesting to think of the studio potters discussed in this research as 'amateurs'. For example potters such as Michael Cardew, Bernard Leach, Michael Casson, Ray Finch and Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, once established, generated some income from their work. However, they also relied on income generated from teaching and writing. In the case of Pleydell-Bouverie, given her aristocratic background, the money she made from potting was secondary to her family money and she famously under-priced her work.¹¹¹

As if in response to this renewed examination of craft as a field of study in its own right, and not as an offshoot of art or design history, *The Journal of Modern Craft* was launched in 2008. In the introductory article the editors, including Adamson and Harrod, argue that rather than continuing previous attempts to define and pigeonhole craft, the aim of the journal will be to reposition craft history as a distinct area of study. This objective can be achieved by considering craft as a 'variable and problematic dynamic that is loose in the cultural landscape'.¹¹² By opening up the study of craft, the primary aim of the journal was to explore previously overlooked areas of craft.

This journal, then will not stick to the expected formats and personalities that stand at the centre of a certain received craft history. It will explore the role of craft in factories, in the creation of buildings and in the production of contemporary art.¹¹³

The journal has fulfilled its objectives by publishing articles such as Lily Crowther's examination of craft in the London suburbs¹¹⁴ and Rowan Bailey's discussion on using archives as a way of facilitating responses to craft.¹¹⁵ This research on Henry Rothschild effectively taps into this new approach. As a non-maker, his role in craft history has been relatively overlooked, at best a footnote in

¹¹⁰ Adamson, 2007, p.141.

¹¹¹ Moira Vincentelli, Moira, *Women and Ceramics: Gendered Vessels* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.146.

¹¹² Adamson et al, 2008, p.5.

¹¹³ Adamson et al, 2008, p.6.

¹¹⁴ Lily Crowther, 'Et in Suburbia Ego: A Cultural Geography of Craft in the London Suburbs', *The Journal of Modern Craft*, Vol.1, No.2 (2008), pp.143-159.

¹¹⁵ Rowan Bailey, 'Crafting Stories in the Domestic Archive', *The Journal of Modern Craft*, Vol.8, No.1 (2015), pp.29-46.

the more typical histories or biographies of his contemporaries. This will be examined more closely in the following section.

Writing Craft Narratives

In 2003 Tanya Harrod wrote a short article for *Crafts* asking 'Why Biography?' She begins by arguing against biography when examining a creative life, stating that 'the work should always take precedence over the life'.¹¹⁶ At the time of writing this article, Harrod was working on a biography of Michael Cardew, which will be discussed presently. With Cardew, Harrod acknowledges the wealth of material he accumulated throughout his life and, more importantly, that the material was kept and deposited as an archive, make a biography possible. In answer to her opening argument against biography, Harrod states:

But, on the other hand, if there is an extensive archive, stuffed with letters and regularly kept diaries, an individual comes alive and so does his or her period.¹¹⁷

On reflection, Harrod comments that the amount of material, along with the context of Cardew's life, threatened to overshadow Cardew's pots. Therefore, according to Harrod, the biographer of a creative person must work hard to present a balance between the personal life and creative output. As already stated in the introduction to this research, this thesis is not intended to be a comprehensive biography of Henry Rothschild. It does not detail his early life or his activities outside of the craft world, which were many. In this way, it fulfils Harrod's requirements: although not a maker, Rothschild creativity can be seen in his retail, exhibition and collection practices and these roles are the main areas of research. However, I would argue that in writing a personal narrative, even when focused on professional output, an understanding of both the broader historical context and the more subtle nuances of individual experiences must be present. For example, chapter three of this research considers in detail Rothschild's experience as an émigré. In terms of biography, this can be regarded as a key feature of his life; in this research it is viewed as pivotal in understanding Rothschild's professional (and personal) relationship with craft. Furthermore, as a narrative it does not stand alone but is placed in the context of other émigré narratives.

¹¹⁶ Tanya Harrod, 'Why Biography?', in *The Real Thing: Essays on Making in the Modern World*, ed. by Tanya Harrod (London: Hyphen Press, 2015, orig.2003), p.199.

¹¹⁷ Harrod, 2015, orig.2003, p.199

An absence of source material can lead to some individuals being cast to the margins of craft history. Harrod cites the examples of Phyllis Barron, Enid Marx, and Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, arguing that the lack of biography is attributable to their gender and by extension their 'single' status:

All these upper-middle-class women would today be described as 'gay'. They made their lives with other women. They were also remarkably modest about their achievements. One can only assume that their personal papers were destroyed or sequestered [...] The 'single' status of these craftswomen was important. And while their lives are inherently interesting, mapping their careers full would also do much to challenge our perception of craft and design in Britain then.¹¹⁸

Harrod is correct that these women deserve to have their contribution both researched and acknowledged, and that such work could potentially alter current thinking on craft in post-war Britain. As a privileged white male, Rothschild cannot be considered a marginalised figure in the same way but I would argue the importance of his narrative in three main ways. Firstly, when taking into account his personal impact on craft through his retail, exhibition and collecting activity, he is woefully under-researched. Secondly, and by extension, he represents the non-maker in craft history and this research brings to light the important role of non-makers in this history. Finally, his social position as an émigré and the implications that has on his understanding of craft is highly significant.

The writing of personal narratives, or biographies, around craft figures tend to be presented in one of two ways: as a standalone biography, or within a catalogue as supplementary text. To begin with the standalone biography, these provide a focused in-depth exploration of an individual from birth to death. Both Emmanuel Cooper's work *Lucie Rie: Modernist Potter*, and Tanya Harrod's *The Last Sane Man: Michael Cardew* (both published 2012) are recent examples of this kind of narrative, although both apply different approaches. Firstly, Cooper, a potter himself, enjoyed a close friendship with Lucie Rie and the personal fondness he felt for her is evident in the work.

I first visited Albion Mews in the mid-1960s as a young, tongue-tied potter aspirational potter [...] Feeling somewhat in awe of Lucie's reputation and her beautiful pots, I was politely offered coffee or tea and her famous chocolate cake but little by way of conversation. Intimidatingly, she waited for me to broach topics of

¹¹⁸ Harrod, 2015, p.200.

conversation so it may well have been a somewhat stilted meeting. Later visits were more relaxed and conversational, though I was aware of intruding on her time despite her ability to return to potting the moment her guest had left, even if it was only for short time.¹¹⁹

This emotional connection to the subject does not detract from Cooper's research. He grounds Rie's early life in Austria firmly in historical context and he does not shy away from the more difficult aspects of her personal life. As a potter himself, Cooper places great emphasis on her work, clearly showing her progression from being highly-regarded in Austria, to making buttons in London, to the domestic ware and one-off work of later years. In comparison, there was no personal relationship between Harrod and Cardew, as noted in her acknowledgements where she recalls first becoming interested in the life of Cardew in 1987 (Cardew died in 1983).¹²⁰ A prolific writer on craft, Harrod is a non-maker, resulting in another difference in approach to Cooper. However, as with Cooper, Harrod's biography is meticulously researched and brings together a range of sources, including Cardew's own writing, published and unpublished.

Michael and [Svend] Bayer experimented with clay bodies. A new one, T8, turned out to be 'horrid and flabby' [Source: Cardew's diary]. Michael was also trying to create a porous high-fired ware for use over a direct flame - something that he had discussed in *Pioneer Pottery* [Cardew's 1969 text] but dismissed as almost impossible. [...] Bayer has grim memories of this clay [Source: interview with Bayer].¹²¹

Of interest to this research, Cooper comments on the working relationship between Rie and Rothschild:

Rie referred often to Rothschild's large brain and limited table manners: in his excitement, he spluttered food across the table. Perceptive but mercurial, Rothschild could change his mind with lightning speed and vent strong opinions with daunting candour. But he had a discerning eye for spotting well-made pots and assessing their qualities, enthusiastically supporting the potters he admired.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Emmanuel Cooper, *Lucie Rie: Modernist Potter* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p.199.

¹²⁰ Tanya Harrod, *The Last Sane Man Michael Cardew: Modern Pots, Colonialism and the Counterculture* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), p.xiii.

¹²¹ Harrod, 2012, p.337.

¹²² Cooper, 2012, p.149.

Rothschild is only briefly mentioned in Harrod's biography of Cardew. This is unsurprising in many ways. Rothschild did stock pottery from Cardew's Wenford Bridge studio, and included Cardew in some group exhibitions, but Cardew himself spent the majority of 1950s and 1960s in West Africa or touring America. They did have a friendship, as demonstrated by a personal letter in the Henry Rothschild Archive¹²³ and by Rothschild's attendance at Cardew's eightieth birthday.¹²⁴

Catalogue essays in the form of biographical narratives appear to be more common than in-depth work offered by Harrod and Cooper. It is important to note however that the primary objective is to support the exhibition. This approach can be found in *Ruth Duckworth: Modernist Sculptor*, published in 2005 to coincide with a major touring exhibition of Duckworth's work. Tony Birks provides an essay on Duckworth's early years, followed by Jo Lauria's work, 'Modernist Impulses in the Work of Ruth Duckworth'. The volume is then concluded with a chronology of Duckworth's life and work, and a 'checklist', detailing all the images used throughout. Birks moves quite rapidly through Duckworth's early years, noting her sickliness as a child, her ambition, her move to England and time at Liverpool School of Art.¹²⁵ Birks places an immediate emphasis on her background as a Jewish woman in Germany:

All over Europe this pattern of life in a stratified society was largely killed off by the Great War, and of course for German-Jewish families the ebbing away of bourgeois comfort was tinged with the rise of anti-Semitism during the years when Ruth was growing up. It is not surprising that her earliest memories are clouded by awareness of persecution to come. She was a fortunate girl in an unfortunate trap, female in a man's world, Jewish, and then later, as a refugee, female, Jewish, and German. In such a situation, you either sank or swam.¹²⁶

Undoubtedly the experience of being separated from one's home country has a lasting impact on a person's life. How a person's life may have developed without these instances of trauma is unknowable and it is understandable that in writing about these individuals these experiences are central. That said, it is important to consider

¹²³ Michael Cardew, *Letter to Henry Rothschild* (17 February 1982). DT.HRA/2/24. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

¹²⁴ Harrod, 2012, p.398.

¹²⁵ Tony Birks, 'The Early Years', in *Ruth Duckworth: Modernist Sculptor*, (London: Lund Humphries, 2005), pp.9 – 15.

¹²⁶ Birks, 2005, p.9.

the various ways people reacted to these traumas, and to avoid making generalised assumptions. Chapter three considers the émigré experience of Rothschild but seeks to contextualise it alongside other émigré narratives. Even within a family unit reactions can be quite different, as will be demonstrated by Rothschild and his brother Hermann.

Birks' work on Hans Coper was also produced to coincide with an exhibition in 1983. Birks breaks down Coper's life in terms of geography. He opens with a chapter on his early life in Germany, England and Canada, before focusing on his years with Lucie Rie at Albion Mews, his independent move to Digswell and so on. There are more personal photographs present in the text compared to Duckworth's. This in itself can be speculated upon. The simple explanation may be that Duckworth did not have as many personal photographs in her possession whereas Coper did. It may also be that Duckworth did not want to share her personal photographs whereas Coper's family was happy to have them published (Duckworth was alive at the time of the publication, Coper was not). This information is not present in the text, but certainly the availability and access of personal material is of great benefit to the writer. Access to personal papers and photographs of Rothschild's, as facilitated by his daughter, has been very important to building Rothschild's narrative. However, I would argue that it is important to view those images in the context of their time, without interpreting them retrospectively. For example, in commenting on a 1926 photograph of Coper on his first day of school, Birks writes: 'A prosperous middle-class background is indicated by the clothes, though the child's expression suggests a sad acceptance of rather than a delight in these trappings'.¹²⁷ Such a statement alludes more to Coper's personality as an adult - intelligent and skilled but quiet and contemplative – than is evident in the photograph.

The details of Coper's life in Dresden, following his father's suicide, are scarce and Birks presents the few facts as best he can. He acknowledges this 'lack' as being revealing in its own way:

This book is about a potter, not about politics. To dwell on his teenage years in Dresden under the persecutions would be inappropriate and in any event the facts are not known. That Hans never spoke of his personal experiences to anyone is eloquent enough [...] Hans reached England with almost no possessions, and almost no friends, and to his many friends in later year

¹²⁷ Tony Birks, *Hans Coper* (London: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1983), p.9.

he never said more than that 'those years were terrible'.¹²⁸

Unlike Duckworth who had expressed an interest in art and design from an early age, Coper came to it in his twenties and there is therefore little mention of it before his arrival at Lucie Rie's workshop in Albion Mews, London. His artistic approach and, later, his teaching, are discussed throughout the text but not in the same detail as his personal life. A key feature of this writing, and one which can also be commented upon with other texts, is the personal relationship between writer and subject. Birks first met Coper in the 1960s and so much of the text seems to draw on these personal reflections. For example, Birks offers his own recollections of the Hammersmith studio, rather than interpreting the recollections of others.¹²⁹ As Rothschild passed away two years before this research commenced, it relies on the recollections of those who knew him, as well as the papers and interviews he left himself. It is difficult to comment upon how this research may have differed had I known Rothschild but perhaps the emotional distance is sometimes necessary.

Published by the Crafts Council in 1986 *Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie: A Potter's Life, 1895-1985* offers a different approach to biography. As already stated by Harrod, Pleydell-Bouverie left little in terms of a personal archive for a biographer to work with. The text begins with an introduction by Barley Roscoe, then curator of the Crafts Study Centre. The emphasis for Roscoe is on Pleydell-Bouverie's professional developments as an artist, recounting her associations with Bernard Leach and Norah Braden, and her involvement with the Red Rose Guild and Craftsman Potters Association.¹³⁰ This is then followed by three short essays by those who knew her, the most personal of which is her cousin, Doris Pleydell-Bouverie. Detail of her family's aristocracy is offered before outlining, again, her professional life. There are snippets of information offered on her personal life: the loss of a brother during the First World War, and housing evacuees during the Second World War:

We all ate our rations together in what had been the old servants hall and tried to keep the young amused and out of mischief in the evenings with various classes. Bina [Katherine] took the little boys for sword dancing [...] Bina was made local Red Cross Commandant and

¹²⁸ Birks, 1983, p.12.

¹²⁹ Birks, 1983, p.57.

¹³⁰ Barley Roscoe, 'Introduction', *Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie: A Potter's Life, 1895-1985* (London: Crafts Council, 1986), pp.7-12.

would go to Shrevenham to help give the wounded hot drinks when they were flown in on their way to hospitals.¹³¹

Of most interest to this research is the inclusion of personal letters to Bernard Leach. These letters can be found in the Bernard Leach archive, now at the Crafts Study Centre in Farnham. These letters reveal Pleydell-Bouverie's approach to making in her own words, for example: 'As for the shapes, we [Norah Braden] don't seek soft, round curves. They happen like that because they're the most natural things for us both to make'.¹³² Unlike Pleydell-Bouverie, Henry Rothschild did leave an archive of material, but there are significant gaps in information. As demonstrated here with the inclusion of letters belonging to Bernard Leach, this research has relied on other archives in order to fill these gaps. For examples, the invoice books in the Lucie Rie and Michael Cardew archives provided a great deal of information on Rothschild's retail activities.

Margot Coatt's examination of the life of weaver Ethel Mairet is particularly unusual. As part of the Ethel Mairet Research Project (1981) and funded in part by the Crafts Study Centre and the Crafts Council, Coatt's work offers both a volume of conventional biography and a volume dedicated to source material.¹³³ In commenting on this approach, Coatts writes:

This supplement [...] comprises information which was incompatible with the style of presentation adopted in the main volume [...] in the course of my study I have relied very closely on documentary evidence backed up by the written or spoken word, and more varied references exist for the early and later periods than for the 1920s. The greatest handicap has been the complete lack of any letters, journals or published writings by Ethel Mairet herself for the years 1917-1927.¹³⁴

The supplement contains further biographical information on these 'missing' years, a chronology of Mairet's life, a list of apprentices and workers, partial interview transcripts carried out by Coatts, and information on Mairet's work and public

¹³¹ Doris Pleydell-Bouverie, 'My Cousin: An Appreciation', *Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie: A Potter's Life, 1895-1985* (London: Crafts Council, 1986), p.18.

¹³² Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, 'Letter to Bernard Leach, 29 June 1930', *Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie: A Potter's Life, 1895-1985* (London: Crafts Council, 1986), p.29.

¹³³ Margot Coatts: *A Weaver's Life: Ethel Mairet, 1872 - 1952* (London: Crafts Council, 1983) & *A Weaver's Life: Ethel Mairet, 1872 - 1952 - A Selection of Source Material* (London: Crafts Council, 1983).

¹³⁴ Coatts, *Ethel Mairet: Sources*, 1983, p.7.

holdings. That it exists in published form allows the reader to understand the research process behind the main text. This self-reflection and self-awareness on the part of the writer is significant to this research, considering the narrative approach to Rothschild and Primavera. The appendices to this research include details of Rothschild's collection, a list of his exhibitions and transcripts of the ten interviews carried out for this thesis. While supplemental to the main text, these appendices demonstrate how this research has been formed.

Summary

The purpose of this review was to assess literature on craft as a subject or history, and literature on personal craft narratives or biographies. Both strands of writing inform the research on Rothschild, and his activities at Primavera, as he was a key figure in post-war British craft. With regard to writing on craft, the main questions are what is craft, and where can craft be 'placed'. As shown these questions have been repeatedly debated and remain a point of issue among academics and makers. Rothschild - through the retail, exhibition and collection of goods both machine and handmade, both domestic and sculptural - effectively removed himself from taking a particular side in this debate. This understanding of craft is still relevant however as regardless of Rothschild's personal position, the success of his retailing and exhibition activities hinged upon both the production and consumption of craft within this context of debate.

Debates on craft until the 1980s seem to have focused more on modes of production, placing the maker at the centre. With the work of Harrod, Lees-Maffei and Sandino, there has been a shift towards consumption. This shift helps to inform this research; I would argue however that Rothschild occupies a middle ground between the two, one which has been overlooked. His position as a retailer and exhibitor makes him a facilitator between the maker and the customer. Throughout this research this position will be explored. From this position Rothschild was able to inform public taste and support makers. Furthermore, by considering both production and consumption this research will use Greenhalgh's understanding of craft in terms of its economic status to understand how unique Primavera actually was to open in 1946 and to still be in business in 1980 when Rothschild retired.

By examining Rothschild's retail, exhibition and collection practices it is possible to trace the development of craft in post-war Britain. Lucie-Smith's *Story of Craft* and Harrod's *Craft in Twentieth Century Britain* do this on broad scale, and do

so successfully. However, by focusing on a individual narrative and mapping that narrative onto these broader developments, it is possible to highlight particular experiences that offer a different perspective. By exploring a selection of narratives it is apparent that the maker is often seen as the main area of interest. It is unsurprising that all of the narratives discussed have centred on makers within the crafts. Rothschild's role as non-maker has been relatively side-lined and therefore bringing his narrative to the fore and developing it offers a different understanding of post-war British craft. Harrod and Coatts' commentary on the importance of archival and primary sources is key to the approach of this research. Throughout the following thesis, this issue is reflected on. By considering the narratives of émigrés - Rie, Coper and Duckworth - it becomes apparent that while there are shared experiences, the narratives are distinct and unique. I would argue that this uniqueness is sometimes overlooked in order to uphold the dominant narrative. Chapter three will consider Rothschild's experiences as an émigré while drawing on the experiences of others.

Chapter Three : Henry Rothschild and the Émigré Experience

In the essay 'From German 'Invasion' to Transnationalism: Continental European Émigrés and Visual Culture in Britain, 1933-1956', Cheryl Buckley and Tobias Hochscherf differentiate between the various terms used to describe those moving from one country to another, in this case Britain.

While the terms 'exiles', 'émigrés', 'refugees', 'migrants' are used as synonyms in a number of key texts, we seek to differentiate between those who came voluntarily and those who came to Britain by force. In so doing, the terms exiles, fugitives and refugees are used to refer to those who were repressed, persecuted, imprisoned or threatened by continental regimes. Émigrés, migrants and immigrants, however, are used as more general terms that do not specify the reasons for leaving another country for Britain.¹³⁵

These definitions are useful for the purpose of this work in clarifying Rothschild's move to Britain, at least to some degree. As will be discussed in further detail, Rothschild left Britain with the certainty that as a Jew the situation in Germany was rapidly worsening so he could be referred to as an exile; however, although he left in the October, nine months after Hitler became Chancellor in January 1933, he left before the Nuremberg Laws were passed in 1935. There is no evidence that he was politically active and so as an individual he was in no worse a situation than many others. According to his diaries of the time, he was also still moving around Europe to some degree before the war started in 1939. It seems better to use the term émigré to describe his situation, although conceding that had he waited another two years or so, and had he managed successfully to leave Germany, he would have been regarded more as an exile or refugee.

Having clarified the use of the word 'émigré', this chapter seeks to examine the wartime and post-war experience of those European émigrés who came to Britain prior to and during the Second World War. Furthermore it will consider to what extent this national and cultural identity impacted on their engagement with visual culture in Britain.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Cheryl Buckley & Tobias Hochscherf, 'Introduction: From German 'Invasion' to Transnationalism: Continental European Émigrés and Visual Culture in Britain, 1933-1956', *Visual Culture in Britain*, Vol.13, No.2 (2012), p.158.

¹³⁶ An edited version of this chapter appears as 'Negotiating a Home: Henry Rothschild and the Émigré Experience', in *Everyday Life in Emigration: Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies*, ed. by Anthony Grenville & Andrea Hammel

Underpinning the analysis presented in this chapter is the acknowledgement that although there may be some commonality between the experiences of émigrés, each émigré has a unique and individual narrative.¹³⁷ It is straightforward to consider the implications of nationality, whether the émigré has come from Germany, Austria or Poland for instance. For those of Jewish descent it is important to differentiate between Orthodox, Conservative and Liberal Judaism and to what extent their identification with the Jewish faith and community impacted on their experience of having to leave their country of origin, and of settling into British life. Gender, age, wealth and education also have a bearing on the émigré experience. Even within these demarcations of experience the impact on the individual will be unique. The difficulty lies in offering an account of that experience using the evidence at hand whilst being aware that such an account will never fully reflect every individual narrative. In his memoir *Confronting History*, the historian George Mosse succinctly states:

My life reflects the often cataclysmic events of our time, but it is still a personal life: these events are filtered through my own perceptions and experiences. Some of these were only to be expected, but others were contrary to the usual, normative reactions especially in the case of my experience of exile. I cannot claim to be truly typical for anyone but myself.¹³⁸

At the core of this chapter will be an account of Henry Rothschild's own experience as a German Jewish émigré surmised from the existing evidence. In order to show the complexity of that experience, it will be placed alongside the accounts of other émigrés to Britain, and within the broader narratives posited by historians and sociologists. The main focus will be on émigrés from Germany, as this was Rothschild's country of origin, although efforts have been made to include émigrés from other nations where possible.¹³⁹ I will demonstrate to what degree Rothschild's experience as an émigré was unique or normative in comparison with the experiences

(London: Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies, University of London, 2015), pp.41-63.

¹³⁷ Donald E Polkinghorne, 'Narrative Configuration in Qualitative Analysis', in *Life History and Narrative*, ed. by J. Amos Hatch & Richard Wisniewski (London: Falmer Press, 1995), p.11.

¹³⁸ George L. Mosse, *Confronting History: A Memoir* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), p.4.

¹³⁹ Accounts of German émigré experience also dominate the literature and studies available. For example the sample of respondents used in the edited collection *Changing Countries* are predominantly German.

of other émigrés who came to Britain during this time and consider how this impacted on his professional life as a retailer, exhibitor and collector of craft in Britain. It is first necessary to examine what is meant by identity in relation to nationality and culture.

Defining and Negotiating National Identity

According to Christiane Harzig and Dirk Hoerder, the concept of a nation state reached its pinnacle between 1880 and 1920. It was during this period that the autonomy and dominance of established empires began to be challenged by those under their rule and anti-imperialistic movements began to take hold. This resulted in the questioning of identity, whether a person was part of an empire or a nation and, in a more practical sense, the growing control over physical borders and boundaries which limited geographical movement.

Nationalism became aggressive; unconditional adherence to the “the nation” became a virtue. Under dynastic regimes, migrants had negotiated their status with the ruler of the society of destination, and they could “belong” by swearing allegiance. Under nation-state regimes, and with, by the 1880s, the introduction of citizenship and passport legislation, entry regulations became far more restrictive [...] ¹⁴⁰

Harzig and Hoerder go on to state that in order for a migrant to be accepted into the host nation, a process of assimilation would have to occur. In its broadest sense assimilation meant that the cultural and national identity of the host country would have to be adopted and be seen to supersede the cultural and national identity associated with the home country. The reality of assimilation is of course more complex. People do not carry with them values or beliefs that can be easily exchanged but rather a negotiation takes place, and it is up to the individual to decide the terms of that negotiation.

Assimilation – when it is not forced but rather left to the individual – can allow a migrant to retain something of their own national identity and merge it with the national identity of the host nation. Part of this negotiation might be the development of a public and a private identity, for example the honouring of religious tradition in the home but not being markedly religious in public. Migrant history is so diverse that

¹⁴⁰ Christiane Harzig and Dirk Hoerder, *What is Migration History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), pp.42-3.

no doubt this is possible in some circumstances.¹⁴¹ However, in other circumstances - dependent on the host nation, the home nation, the relationship between the two, or the reasons for the movement – the old national identity would have to be completely replaced by a new identity and any evidence of allegiance to a home nation could be dangerous. It could be argued that émigrés and exiles demonstrate the complexity and nuances of cultural and national identity because their movement, their relocation and their attempts to settle highlight that such identities are social constructs, subject to careful negotiation. By considering the movement of those who moved from mainland Europe to Britain in the 1930s, from their position at home to their position abroad, it is possible to examine the effects these negotiations had on individuals and to explore to what extent they carried that with them throughout their lives. For the purpose of this research it is important to understand the cultural and political situation pre-1933.

Germany and Europe Pre - 1933

Typical portrayals of inter-war Weimar Germany are largely informed by popular culture – the films of Marlene Dietrich and Josef von Sternberg, the novels of Christopher Isherwood, the plays of Bertolt Brecht – all of which paint an image of a decadent, culturally rich society, embracing progress and change. For Karl Fuhrer, this image does not give an accurate depiction of the reality of Weimar:

[...] our understanding of Weimar culture is incomplete without a grasp of broader patterns of cultural production and consumption, and skewed if it does not take into account the conservative tastes and the forces of tradition which also characterized it. Seen from this broader perspective, the cultural life of the republic emerges as less spectacular and less experimental than it appears in many accounts.¹⁴²

The absence of this conservatism from the popular Weimar narrative is largely due to the tendency to view it from the other side of Nazi Germany; that is to see it as

¹⁴¹ Examples include the labour driven migration of Europeans to America in the late 19th and early 20th century, forced migration of British convicts to Australia in the 18th & 19th centuries and political migration of Eastern Europeans to Western Europe during the 20th century. See Andrew Dawson and Nigel Rapport, *Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of Home in a World of Movement* (Oxford: Berg, 1998). Thomas Faist, Margit Fauser and Eveline Reisenauer, *Transnational Migration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).

¹⁴² Karl Christian Fuhrer, 'High brow and low culture', in *Weimar Germany*, ed. by Anthony McElligott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.260.

markedly different to what was to follow, as if to make the events in Nazi Germany all the more devastating. This is not to say this popular image was a myth; Weimar Germany was highly invested in the promotion of culture and art, particularly with regard to the theatre. Germany during this period prided itself on being a *Kulturnation*, a nation of culture. Rothschild refers to this period as a 'cultural flowering', which considering his young age at the time (7 years old in 1920) seems a remarkable observation to make, even in hindsight.¹⁴³ In more detail he notes a particular exhibition – *From Realism to Symbolism* – which he visited at the Festival Hall in Frankfurt in the early 1920s:

I lived there and knew many pictures by heart and see them today: *Dr Cachet* by Van Gogh and the vases and fields, Gauguin landscapes, Nolde, Kirchner and others of the German Expressionists. A mist of colours and splendidly heavy. Germany the outcast after war defeat was busy, anxious and successful in presenting art, literature, theatre and culture connecting with Europe and the World. The scale and scope of these exhibitions which I only saw in Frankfurt was truly grandiose.¹⁴⁴

There is an element in this description that suggests his memory of the event is being filtered through his subsequent experiences, as indeed all memories are. There is a need in this statement for the Germany of his childhood to be viewed positively, to understand that the culture and art of Weimar had promise and could have taken Germany in another direction. On a personal level, that this event stayed with him throughout his life demonstrates his strong engagement with the visual arts from an early age. It also suggests that, at least for the middle-classes, such encouragement to engage in cultural activities was fairly commonplace. Rothschild's cousin, Louise Rothschild-Graumann, also recollects visiting the theatre and opera:

To these performances, both opera and drama, I also often went, either because my father was traveling and my mother did not want to go alone or because my parents had other obligations that evening. My mother did not like opera. She used to make fun of it. "They sing, 'Let us flee, let us flee', for ten minutes and, of course, by then it is too late and the villain gets them. Or they sing, 'I am dying' for a long time. Who can sing when they are dying?" So often I went with my father who loved opera, and I saw the whole classic repertoire when I was young. My father, who had never had a

¹⁴³ Henry Rothschild, interviewed by Tanya Harrod for NLSC: Craft Lives (9-10 December 2003). F14338-F14342]. Sound Archive, The British Library, London.

¹⁴⁴ Henry Rothschild, *Orange Journal: Notes and Stories on the Family* (no date). Private papers, Liz Rothschild.

formal musical education, could hum all tunes of symphonies or operas, often not knowing what he was humming. My first opera was *Hansel and Gretel* by Humperdinck and I was totally overwhelmed, my second a musical version of *Peter Pan*.¹⁴⁵

The difference of opinion on opera here is interesting. For Louise's father, there seemed to be a genuine interest and attraction to opera and music, whereas for her mother it was an event one went to, possibly to be seen to be there, without necessarily engaging with it.

Although five years younger than Rothschild, George Mosse states, rather dismissively, that: 'I was considered much too young to take part in the cultural life of Berlin at the time [...] To be sure, like other children, I was taken to the opera [...] but never to the theatre'.¹⁴⁶ What is interesting about this statement is, firstly, the assumption that attending the opera is a normative experience; like Rothschild and his cousin Louise, Mosse came from a middle-class background and it is that background which makes this level of engagement seem ordinary. For the lower classes, such access to culture would have been limited. Secondly, this statement begs the question why the opera but never the theatre? As discussed earlier it is important to note that the cultural life of Weimar was certainly progressive in many ways but there was also a conservative aspect to it and, in this case, opera would represent that more conservative trend, and theatre the liberal. What is most significant, however, is that German-Jewish identity during this period, particularly for the middle and upper-classes was tied up in an engagement with culture.¹⁴⁷

That the Jewish population of Germany had such an impact on its culture has been the subject of much inquiry, particularly when considering that the Jewish population accounted for only one percent of the population. This, Fuhrer argues, is due in part to their visibility, playing significant roles in the community in politics, culture, business and media. Anthony Grenville and Irene Wells argue that the assimilated Jews of Germany and Austria – who viewed their faith as a tradition but who were by and large secularised - saw culture as a stand in for religion, a 'vehicle of assimilation, the means by which Jewish families could climb the social ladder and [...] could leave the world of trade and commerce for the academic and independent

¹⁴⁵ Louise Rothschild Graumann, *Memoirs of Louise Rothschild Graumann*, (1994). Private papers, Liz Rothschild, p.8.

¹⁴⁶ Mosse, 2000, p.11.

¹⁴⁷ Fuhrer, 2009, p.268.

professions'.¹⁴⁸ Certainly for the Rothschild family, who observed the traditions of their faith but who were effectively assimilated into German society, engagement with culture was a way of life, if only, for his father at least, to be seen in the wider community.¹⁴⁹ So therefore the small Jewish population were both producers and consumers of culture, which explains their prominence in subsequent accounts of the period.¹⁵⁰

Past historical accounts of German-Jews place them as the 'other' of German society and Kauders argues that their treatment in these historical narratives has been as objects rather than subjects of history. For Kauders, this is typical of earlier histories that portrayed Weimar as a prelude to the Third Reich, rather than considering it outside of the shadow of what was to come.¹⁵¹ Kauders does acknowledge that the Jewish experience of Weimar should be explored, but for different reasons. Weimar was a period of much conflict between those who supported tradition and those who sought progression and change; as this played out in wider society, the same debates were happening within the Jewish community: 'It is not only that a history of the Jews resembles a micro-history of the period, it is that the Jews were Weimar Germans with all their problems – and on top of that Jews whose status within society was being increasingly questioned'.¹⁵² For the most part, the Jewish community was greatly invested in the survival of the Republic and the overarching view from scholars is that 'German Jews were Jews in private and Germans in public [...]'¹⁵³

Kauders argues that the dominant questions of historical enquiry – could Jews be German? Could Germans be Jewish? – pre-supposes that the two groups were

¹⁴⁸ Anthony Grenville and Irene Wells, 'Culture, education, politics and the impact of historical development before emigration', in *Changing Countries: The Experience and Achievement of German-speaking Exiles from Hitler in Britain from 1933 to Today*, ed. by Marian Malet & Anthony Grenville (London: Libris, 2002), p.19. It is important to note that the studies taken from the edited collection *Changing Countries* are all drawn from the same oral histories.

¹⁴⁹ Henry's father, Albert, was more inclined towards business and commerce and so it was his mother, Lisbeth, who encouraged his passion for art and collecting.

¹⁵⁰ Grenville & Wells, 2002, p.19.

¹⁵¹ Anthony D. Kauders, 'Weimar Jewry', in *Weimar Germany*, ed. by Anthony McElligot (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.234 – 5.

¹⁵² Kauders, 2009, p.235.

¹⁵³ Kauders, 2009, p.236.

unable to have a mutually advantageous relationship. This school of thought has been reconsidered in recent years as, firstly, this strict separation is flawed and, secondly, Kauders maintains that the majority of Jews did not enter into the intellectual reposition of an abstract dialogue between Germans and Jews. Rather 'Weimar's Jews felt German and Jewish (and local), and many would have found it amusing to be asked to join the Jewish side in such a debate'.¹⁵⁴ Of course there were Orthodox Jewry whose faith was paramount to their identity and radical Zionist groups who were against assimilation; however, it would appear that equally there were German-Jews whose faith was more a tradition they upheld rather than a significant part of their everyday life. Rothschild himself states in an interview that he never felt any particular warmth towards the Jewish religion.¹⁵⁵ Whether this feeling was ever-present within Rothschild or whether it heightened over time, it is seemingly at odds with his daughter's account that he willingly continued the faith's traditional practices. Talking about the family, Liz Rothschild states:

I think they were the same kind of Jews that Christians are that go to Church on Christmas Day and Easter and obviously expect to have their children baptised, but it doesn't mean that actually they feel in any way profoundly Christian [...] The thing about being Jewish is that there's a sort of cultural identity with that as well in certain ways. You know, or cultural values. And some of those cultural values I would say Dad certainly demonstrated. [...] It's that very complicated thing [...] And Dad did always celebrate the high holidays and we went to my cousin Hilde, the one he grew up with and the one who moved to London [...] and she always kept a kosher house and she celebrated the high holidays and we went there and Dad always marked kosher, marked Yom Kippur, all his life, except until the very, very end when he started going to Quakers. So, something remained that mattered. And he studied the Talmud and the Bible with the rabbinical commentaries and things in later life, and wanted to be buried the next day immediately after he died which is a Jewish tradition. So, it's complicated what you are.¹⁵⁶

It is such paradoxes that muddy the waters when we enter into debates on a person's identity; if Rothschild's Jewishness did not count for much in his own life, why should it be the subject of discussion here? When considering his Jewishness

¹⁵⁴ Kauders, 2009, p.239.

¹⁵⁵ Rothschild, interview, 2003.

¹⁵⁶ Liz Rothschild, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (17 April 2012). Uncatalogued.

as religious or racial marker, it is included here as it was his Jewish identity that resulted in his life being pushed in the direction that it was, having to flee a Germany which placed a higher emphasis on his Jewishness than he did. Arguably it was also his Jewish cultural background which gave him the grounding and knowledge that then went on to inform his future work and practice when selling, exhibiting and collecting craft.

In understanding how Rothschild developed his cultural understanding we can look to his early schooling. The level of integration of Jews into German society is obviously hard to measure. It is estimated that most Jewish children attended a German school, although this was dependent on where they were based. In Frankfurt the figures are one in two, but in Berlin it was four in five.¹⁵⁷ Walter Laqueur argues that these figures are misleading as there is no clear definition of what is meant by a 'Jewish' school, some being very small and some adhering largely to the same curriculum as a German school with only a small part of the lessons being specific to Jewish history or culture.¹⁵⁸ According to Rothschild's daughter, the family were well integrated but Henry did attend a Jewish school which, she states, her father was 'not very excited about'.¹⁵⁹ Henry himself puts it rather more bluntly: 'I didn't like being in a Jewish school,' although he does not elaborate on the reasons behind this.¹⁶⁰ Laqueur's findings indicate that Rothschild's attendance at a Jewish school was fairly standard practice in Frankfurt and should not be taken to mean that the Rothschild family were fervently Jewish, as already ascertained.

Laqueur's research into the younger generation of German Jews during this period paints an image of Jewish schoolchildren enjoying an equal education and similar experience to their non-Jewish classmates. He maintains that most Jewish children growing up had non-Jewish friends and that 'cases of blatant discrimination or persecution were few'.¹⁶¹ Laqueur's conclusions are drawn from various interviews and first-hand accounts and so we can conclude that within that sample this was indeed the case. However anti-Semitism did not suddenly appear within German

¹⁵⁷ Walter Laqueur, *Generation Exodus: The Fate of the Young Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 2001), p.3.

¹⁵⁸ Laqueur, 2001, p.3.

¹⁵⁹ L. Rothschild, interview, 2012.

¹⁶⁰ Rothschild, journal, n.d.

¹⁶¹ Laqueur, 2001, p.3.

culture with the advent of Nazism and so it would be pertinent to contest this position as absolute fact and allow that there would have been examples of discrimination and persecution felt by this younger generation.

Anthony Grenville and Irene Wells found in their study that the majority of the Jewish respondents recalled some anti-Semitism prior to 1933, though in Germany it was never severe. Grenville and Wells argue that the respondents may have been offered some protection from it due in part to their middle-class backgrounds and degree of assimilation.¹⁶² For some, the awareness that their position in society was changing came about through previously accepted interactions. For example, Adelheid Schweitzer recalls a university friend telling her that their friendship could no longer continue: 'This gave me a terrible shock. It suddenly became real and I had never suspected him of having Nazi sympathies'.¹⁶³ George Mosse attended the Schule Schloss Salem boarding school in Southern Germany from 1928 until his exile in 1933. Mosse recalls that, despite the Jewish background of the school's founder Karl Hahn, anti-Semitism was a 'constant presence [...] encouraged by the politics of the last years of the Weimar Republic'.¹⁶⁴ Towards the end of his time there he recollects that:

The approaching storm cast its shadow over my school years. I remember seeing swastikas burning as fiery symbols on the hills surrounding the Hermannsberg, and the racist poison, though rejected by the school itself, had become so much a part of daily life that it penetrated the vocabulary of the boys and girls, aggravating the atmosphere of anti-Semitism. An awareness of the so-called 'Jewish Problem' was everywhere in those years; why should it have bypassed the school? The blond girl to whom I was closest at school told me often enough to go back to Jerusalem, and this despite the fact that she used to visit Schenkendorf as our guest during the summer.

These instances of racial tension were to grow, resulting in many European Jews, along with other political, ethnic and social groups having to consider where their future may lie; as the 1930s progressed, it became increasingly apparent that it was not in the proposed *Volksgemeinschaft* of the Nazi Party.

¹⁶² Grenville & Wells, 2002, pp.40-1.

¹⁶³ Marian Malet, 'Departure and Arrival', in *Changing Countries: The Experience and Achievement of German-speaking Exiles from Hitler in Britain from 1933 to Today*, ed. by Marian Malet & Anthony Grenville (London: Libris, 2002), pp.51-2.

¹⁶⁴ Mosse, 2000, p.64.

Leaving for Britain and Beyond

The first emigration of those Europeans who were fleeing persecution began in 1933. For many, it was a move across the border into Western Europe, mainly France, Holland and Czechoslovakia. From January 1933 to April 1934 no more than 3000 crossed the Channel to Britain. This increased as the decade moved on, although the Americas and Palestine were more popular destinations. However, from 1938, largely due to the Austrian *Anschluss*, these numbers increased; the outbreak of war in 1939 restricted any further movement and so those who had only intended to stay in Britain temporarily had to remain, some freely but some in internment camps.¹⁶⁵



Figure 3: Henry Rothschild in the lab at Frankfurt University, 1932

Rothschild was among those early émigrés. In 1932 he had begun reading chemistry at Frankfurt University (figure 3). As Rothschild recollects in a number of notes and interviews, the pursuit of chemistry was more his father's wish than his own but he worked hard at it, bringing his experiments home to work on in his makeshift lab in an attempt to keep up with his classmates.¹⁶⁶ In a fairly matter of fact way, Rothschild recalls the encounter that prompted his departure:

One day my lab boss, I believe Dr Klee, called me into his room. He was a Nazi but we had always got on. He

¹⁶⁵ Marion Berghahn, *Continental Britons: German-Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany*, 2nd Edition (Oxford: Berg, 1986), p.75.

¹⁶⁶ Rothschild, journal, n.d.

said, "Rothschild what are you going to do? Get out if you can, there is no future chance for you."¹⁶⁷

In 1933 Henry Rothschild found that his German identity had become superseded by his Jewish identity. This tension between national identity and religious identity has occurred repeatedly throughout history but the policies of the National Socialists gave a legal backing to it - in the eyes of the law you were no longer a German citizen if you were Jewish. This move towards the exclusion of Jews began in April 1933 with the boycotting of Jewish businesses and the dismissal of Jews from certain professions, resulting in lawyers, professors and journalists, among others, becoming unemployed. In 1935 there were regulations in place to stop Jews being present in public places such as cinemas, public baths and theatres. The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 formalised these changes and deemed that you could be a *Reichsbürger*, a pure blood citizen, or a *Staatsangehörige*, everyone else.¹⁶⁸

Rothschild's father, Albert Rothschild, held a position as a valued industrialist and considered himself to be a loyal German national. The rise of Nazism, however, resulted in him being viewed as the only thing that counted: Jewish. In his journal, which runs sporadically from 1923 - 1934, he commented on the anti-Semitism rife in German society and dissected the cultural idea of 'being a Jew'. In April 1934 he wrote: 'In the new dogma, the Jew is a stranger in Germany, [he] doesn't belong to the Aryan race and is therefore inferior [...] I wake up in the mornings and see the lovely German countryside over whom I have always spoken the language of which I speak and think [...] and I should now not be a German'.¹⁶⁹ Similar sentiments are echoed by George Mosse in his memoir:

My family, like most other Jewish families, considered themselves German without giving it another thought. What else could they have been? [...] I myself never doubted that I was German, until well into exile. That I feel compelled today to state this fact seems to me an example of how looking back from one time to another can distort history.¹⁷⁰

Both Albert Rothschild's and George Mosse's accounts suggest that the reconciliation between being Jewish and being German was a relatively easy one in

¹⁶⁷ Rothschild, journal, n.d.

¹⁶⁸ Malet, 2002, p.47.

¹⁶⁹ Albert Rothschild, *Diary, translated and transcribed by Henry Rothschild (1923-1934)*. Private papers, Liz Rothschild.

¹⁷⁰ Mosse, 2000, pp.43-4.

the inter-war period, at least for the Jews themselves, and that their perceived otherness was not profoundly felt. It is difficult to imagine then, in the space of a few years, how it would have been to be removed physically, emotionally and mentally from a society that had previously formed part of one's identity.

George Mosse reflects on this same period when he realised he had to leave Germany. The anti-Jewish laws that came into effect meant that he had to be out of the country by 31 March 1933 – 1 April would see the Aryanization of Jewish businesses and in some states Jews had to hand over their passports. Although Mosse comments that his family did not seem to rush the matter of him leaving, the importance of it was known, especially as if he stayed he may have been used as a bargaining chip for the signing over of the family's foreign investments or to push his father, a leading newspaperman, into making pro-Nazi statements within the media. Crucially however, it was Mosse's own under-achievements at school that nearly prevented him from leaving, as he had to complete a paper as punishment.

The quickest way to leave the country was by ferry from the German to the Swiss side of Lake Constance. As I walked to the ferry, both sides of the approach were lined by stormtroopers in their SA uniforms, scrutinizing those who boarded and examining their passports. When my turn came my passport was duly taken, the name noticed, and with meaningful looks and much nodding the passport was handed down the line from one to another of the troopers. [...] Yet, though I was convinced that I would be detained, to my astonishment I was allowed to board the ship, the last ferry before midnight. It was clear to me then, and today in retrospect, why I was allowed to depart, even though the stormtroopers had obviously recognised my name. Surely it would have been easy to find a pretext to detain me for the very short time (my memory tells me it must have been some fifteen minutes) before the ferry departed. I was saved by the often despised German conscientiousness and obedience to orders: the law took effect at midnight and midnight meant midnight and not a quarter to twelve.¹⁷¹

German Jews continued to leave throughout the 1930s as the restrictions to their lives became tighter and the danger they were in became more keenly felt. There were those, however, who held on to a belief that the German people, belonging to a civilised country, a country of progress, would turn against the Nazi party and Hitler would fall. Remarkably, this was a belief held by some right up until 1938. Margarete

¹⁷¹ Mosse, 2000, pp.68-9.

Hinrichsen recalls her parents trying to persuade her to return to Germany from Britain in June 1938, her father maintaining the confidence that it would all blow over - Hinrichsen stayed in Britain and her father died in the events of *Kristallnacht*.¹⁷² Rothschild remarks on his own father's views on the situation: 'my father found all this Hitler business very hard to swallow because he had always considered himself a German, accepted, successful and then suddenly it all came to nought'.¹⁷³ Although it was his father's ill health that prevented his leaving, rather than any dogged belief that things could change for the better, such ruminations demonstrate the level of disbelief at what was happening.

The potter Hans Coper was amongst those Germans who left at the very last opportunity in 1939. His Jewish father had committed suicide three years prior and his Aryan mother remained in Dresden. Aged 19, Coper secured a sponsor in Britain and left Germany by train.

By then any traveller with a Jewish name was likely to be detained by the Gestapo, and when Hans' train was stopped and searched he hid his papers under the seat and climbed out of a window while searchers went past, just managing to scramble back on board as the train moved off.¹⁷⁴

When Coper arrived in Britain his sponsor claimed to have no room for him, resulting in him finding lodgings that were a far cry from his middle-class upbringing in Germany. The issue of class is highly significant when it came to being able to leave Europe. It is important to note that not all German Jews came from the middle-class background of Rothschild, Coper, or of Mosse and, as such, did not always have the means to leave. In her 2000 work *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust*, Louise London examines the impact of the mass migration of Jews from Europe. A detailed account of British policy, as provided by London, is not necessary to the main body of this research. However, London raises some pertinent issues that relate to the circumstances in which Rothschild and his contemporaries would have found themselves in during this period of movement and settlement.

To escape from the Nazis, resourcefulness and money and support from family, friends and strangers were necessary, but rarely sufficient. Jewish organisations

¹⁷² Grenville & Wells, 2002, p.41.

¹⁷³ Rothschild, interview, 2003.

¹⁷⁴ Tony Birks, *Hans Coper* (London: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1983), p.11.

played the major part in organising emigration, raising funds and persuading governments to expand the possibilities of asylum.¹⁷⁵

Research shows that Rothschild was fortunate enough to be supported by his family and that he had contact with people already in Britain who could offer support, notably Harold Stannard who helped him get a place at Cambridge University, and his older brother Hermann Rothschild.¹⁷⁶ This was not the case for those without means. London's research indicates that there were 500,000 to 600,000 cases of families and individuals seeking refuge and around 80,000 of those were actually admitted: 'the conclusion cannot be avoided: escape to Britain was an exception for a lucky few; exclusion was the fate of the majority'.¹⁷⁷ Although such figures vary from study to study, what is made apparent is that admission was the exception rather than the rule and as such Rothschild was one of these 'lucky few', and it would appear the support of family money and position did go some way towards his having this advantage. In the introductory chapter to Grenville and Malet's *Changing Countries*, Grenville highlights the fact that, of the twenty-eight Jewish interviewees used in the study, the majority come from a middle-class background; to Grenville this is not a deliberate act, nor is it coincidental – it illustrates that lower-class Jews (referred to by Grenville as *Ostjuden*) were more likely to remain in Europe and that the small sample of émigrés in the study 'stem almost exclusively from prosperous, middle-class, urban Jewish backgrounds [which] points to important conclusions regarding the type of people who were best placed to make their escape from Nazi Germany'.¹⁷⁸

Since Hitler's rise to power in Germany, Austria had been holding its breath to see what was going to happen next. As had happened in Germany, there were many Austrians who believed Hitler and the Nazi party to be temporary, a government that would soon pass into history, and certainly not a party that would have any influence in Austria. There were others who anticipated the changes that were to

¹⁷⁵ Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933 - 1948: British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.6.

¹⁷⁶ Harold Stannard, *Letter to Henry Rothschild* (4 April 1933). Private papers, Liz Rothschild.

¹⁷⁷ London, 2000, p.12.

¹⁷⁸ Anthony Grenville, 'Introducing the refugees: family backgrounds before emigration', in *Changing Countries: The Experience and Achievement of German-speaking Exiles from Hitler in Britain from 1933 to Today*, ed. by Marian Malet & Anthony Grenville (London: Libris, 2002), p.4.

come. In Lore Segal's memoir, *Other People's Houses*, she recalls her Uncle Peter's comments, made in 1937, on those who were in denial over what was happening:

"We Jews are a remarkable people," Paul said. "Our neighbour tells us he's getting his gun out for us, and we sit watching him polish and load it and train it at our heads and we say, 'He doesn't really mean us'."¹⁷⁹

By the late 1930s there were an estimated 185,000 Jews living in Austria, the vast majority in Vienna. It was in Vienna where the potter Lucie Rie and her husband Hans lived. Rie was already established as a potter of some note, exhibiting and selling across Europe and in America. In 1937 she exhibited in the Austrian Pavilion at the *Paris Exposition Internationale*; in the same year Pablo Picasso exhibited his painting *Guernica* at the Spanish Pavilion. On the 10th March 1938 Rie, among others, was awarded a medal for her contribution to the Exposition; two days later the Nazis marched on Austria. In his biography of Rie, Emmanuel Cooper writes:

Despite the wet weather Hitler's entry into the city [Vienna] was triumphant. As his motorcade passed through the old Habsburg quarter, the streets, bedecked by bunting were lined with hundreds of thousands of waving euphoric Viennese, the church bells ringing in celebration. Terrified by the open display of jubilation, Jews stayed at home behind tightly closed doors in an attempt to protect themselves and shut out the frenzy. Lucie, safely in the flat, heard the shouting with mounting dismay. To divert her attention she read *Gone with the Wind* [...] imagining perhaps that she was Scarlett O'Hara in another place at another time [...]¹⁸⁰

The *Anschluss* resulted in a second wave of emigration. The appropriation of Jewish businesses had been building momentum in Germany since 1933; in Austria it took a matter of months, aided by fervent brutality. This culminated in *Kristallnacht* in November 1938. In the oral history project which forms the basis for *Changing Countries*, eight of the respondents were Austrian, seven of whom were Jewish. Despite this small sample, the experiences of the *Anschluss* are diverse. Gertrud Wengraf, a student at Vienna forced to abandon her studies, recalls being made to scrub the pavement along with other Jews who had just been walking through the park: 'I didn't mind scrubbing the pavement, but one never knew what was going to happen then [...] You couldn't prove or show or have any dignity, obviously, because

¹⁷⁹ Lore Segal, *Other People's Houses: A Novel* (The New Press: New York, 1963), p.3.

¹⁸⁰ Emmanuel Cooper, *Lucie Rie: Modernist Potter* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), pp.95-6.

that would have meant only beatings'.¹⁸¹ In contrast Mimi Glover had been able to finish her studies prior to the *Anschluss* and was already making arrangements to leave; there were very few Jews where she lodged in Sievering and thereby very little trouble.¹⁸²

Throughout this period Rothschild's parents remained in Frankfurt. As part of the naturalisation process it was necessary to post a notice of intent in *The Times*. In May 1938 Rothschild wrote a letter to the Home Office asking if such an announcement could be avoided. He reasons that:

My father, who lives in Frankfurt, is an elderly man, whose health is now seriously impaired, and I should never be surprised to receive an urgent summons to return home. The Germans have already made difficulties about renewing my passport, and would almost certainly cancel it if my desire to become a British subject were brought to their notice [...]¹⁸³

As it was his father died that same month and there is no evidence to suggest he returned home. It seems risky that he even considered the possibility of returning home at this time but of course such observations are made with hindsight. Liz Rothschild is of the understanding that her father wanted both his parents to leave Germany, following their children either to Britain or America, but it was Albert's ill health that prevented the move. With his passing, Rothschild was able to persuade his mother to leave, which she did, quickly joining him and his brother in London. Despite the family's wealth and connections not all escaped. Albert's brother, Max, along with his wife and eldest son Wilhelm, died in a camp, as did his cousin Lotte and her daughter Ruth. His other cousin, Lotte's sister, Louise Graumann (figure 4) was also in a concentration camp but survived and lived out her life in America.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Malet, 2002, p.57.

¹⁸² Malet, 2002, p.58.

¹⁸³ Henry Rothschild, *Letter to Home Office* (9 May 1938). Private papers, Liz Rothschild.

¹⁸⁴ Graumann, 1994.



Figure 4: Louise Graumann and Henry Rothschild, London, 1933

For those who did manage the journey, be it in 1933 or 1939, from Germany or Austria or Czechoslovakia, they were faced with a new set of challenges. Entry into Britain was not straightforward, nor was finding work or a home.

Settlement and Negotiation

As a capital city, London was unquestionably at the centre of émigré activity in Britain. Many German and Austrian refugees moved into middle and upper-class areas of London, primarily in the North and North-West districts, 'their meagre incomes notwithstanding, the German refugees maintained their middle-class lifestyle as far as possible'.¹⁸⁵ In the Hampstead area of Camden there existed a 'colony' of German speakers, including the exiled screenwriter Carl Mayer. This area also became home to the immigrant organisation the *Freie Deutsche Kulturbund* – the Free German League of Culture.¹⁸⁶ Jewish communities were focused around the West London Synagogue in Upper Berkeley Street and the Central Synagogue in Great Portland Street, both of which were relatively short distances from the upper-middle-class area of Sloane Street in the Kensington-Chelsea district, where Rothschild would later set

¹⁸⁵ Berghahn, 1986, p.127.

¹⁸⁶ Brigitte Mayr, 'Carl Mayer: Years of Exile in London', in *Destination London: German-speaking Émigrés and British Cinema, 1925 – 1950*, ed. by Tim Bergfelder & Christian Cargnelli (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), p.196.

up his craft shop Primavera. It was also around this area that Lucie Rie settled with her husband Hans, when they finally arrived in 1938. Whereas some émigrés found London ‘strange and unfriendly’ Rie was optimistic:

Disconcerting daily occurrences, such as people speaking too quickly for her to understand, electric light switches that had to be flicked rather than turned, bulbs with bayonet rather than screw fittings, and traffic that drove on the ‘wrong’ side of the road were all part of the charm. Less alluring was the relentless hunt for good, strong coffee, to which she was addicted.¹⁸⁷

Her optimism for a better future seemed to be matched only by her determination to make it work. She took English lessons to improve her language skills. Language was an obvious barrier to assimilation into British society. It would appear that the younger one was on arrival, the easier it was to pick up the language; for the older émigrés it was dependent on their prior knowledge. However, even those who felt they had a strong hold on the language ran into difficulties in understanding – in Peter Gellhorn’s case, having been taught English in Germany by an English teacher, he found that not everyone enunciated in the same way, they talked too fast and dropped sounds.¹⁸⁸ At one of his first meals at Caius College, Rothschild found himself sitting alone with another student. He recalls that the student had a severe stutter: ‘My limited English and his speech fault made conversation something of a trial. He read Law, I believe, and after term started by tacit agreement we never really clapped eyes on each other’.¹⁸⁹ Such recollections may seem rather trivial but for some the difficulty in communication further heightened the feelings of not belonging.

On his arrival in 1939, Hans Coper found himself lodging near the Slade School and opposite the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts. It is not known how well Coper spoke English on arrival but, as he would later show with regard to his pottery, he developed his English quickly, primarily through his role as a prompt at the Academy. In later life he spoke English with no trace of a German accent and spoke German only on occasion.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Cooper, 2012, pp.107-8

¹⁸⁸ Mariette Bearman, Marietta and Erna Woodgate, ‘Post-war: the challenges of settling down’, in *Changing Countries: The Experience and Achievement of German-speaking Exiles from Hitler in Britain from 1933 to Today*, ed. by Marian Malet & Anthony Grenville (London: Libris, 2002), p.233.

¹⁸⁹ Rothschild, journal, n.d.

¹⁹⁰ Birks, 1983, p.11.

Many respondents to Berghahn's study remarked that acceptance in Britain was marked by the refugee's willingness and ability to fit in with the British way of life. Official publications, such as the German Jewish Aid Committee's *While you are in England: Helpful Information and Guidance for Every Refugee*, encouraged this deference to an 'English' lifestyle, but as Berghahn argued this push for enforced assimilation only further exacerbated the feelings of loss. As one respondent explained:

[...] to be told, this is no longer your country, that is bad and it makes you slightly ashamed [...] When we came we could not speak German, one had to whisper; one was an enemy, one was treated as an enemy [...] Then, later, it made a lot of difference as a grown-up not to feel that there was a place really that fully accepted one for what one was.¹⁹¹

To then feel as disregarded and maligned in a country that one hoped to make a home would have undoubtedly left a mark on the psyche of these émigrés, including Rothschild. As evidenced above, Rothschild came to Britain at the ideal time – whether he knew it or not. His brother Hermann was already in London and arranged his boardings. He spent some time at Chelsea Polytechnic before securing a place at Caius College, Cambridge, to start in the Autumn of 1933. His move to Cambridge was not an easy one – his luggage never arrived at his new lodgings and it transpired that the landlady had hidden it from him, pawning the best items. He found it difficult to make friends, being set apart from the typical English student for his Germanness and Jewishness, but feeling equally out of place with the Jewish community.¹⁹²

It is difficult to measure the level of anti-Semitism in Britain during the 1933-1948 period and whether that altered as more Jewish refugees entered the country and as the atrocities in Germany became more widely known. London argues that although the official stance of the British government considered prejudice against Jews unacceptable, anti-Semitism did exist in varying degrees not only in wider society but also within the governing classes.

[...] moderate indulgence in social anti-Jewish prejudice was so widespread as to be unremarkable. Hostile stereotypes of Jews were accepted by law-abiding citizens. [...] But how did the widely diffused anti-Jewish prejudice within the governing classes condition the government's broad approach to Jewish refugee policy? What we can say is that British stereotypes of Jews

¹⁹¹ Berghahn, 1986, pp.145-6.

¹⁹² Henry Rothschild, *Biographical Notes* (2005). Private papers, Liz Rothschild.

were significant in marking them out as members of a group that was difficult, even dangerous, to help. Such prejudices helped to cast the image of the Jewish refugee in a problematic mould and thus to strengthen support for policies of restriction.¹⁹³

Grenville's research into the Association of Jewish Refugees and their publication *AJR Information* provides a more 'nuanced' image of the interactions between immigrant Jewish people and the home population. The journal comments on the difficulties and tensions, particularly between the British government and refugees and registered any anti-Semitic attitudes which threatened the position of the refugees. Aside from this it adopted a relaxed tone and largely sought to find solutions.

Far from seeing Britain as a hotbed of anti-Semitism rent by latent racial tensions, *AJR Information*, while keeping a watchful eye on the Mosleyite fringes of British politics, broadly depicted its adopted homeland as tolerant and generous, as a country to which refugees had been admitted in considerable numbers, at least in the period 1938/39, and where they had [...] been allowed to settle and, where possible, to thrive.¹⁹⁴

Grenville argues that the tone of the AJR does suggest that most Jewish refugees saw Great Britain as a site of democracy and freedom and it was this that drew people here; to what extent this portrayal was accurate is difficult to ascertain, as undoubtedly the AJR's readership did not spread to the whole of the Jewish refugee population. Grenville also comments that this overall positive portrayal of Britain may have been in part to comfort the readership.

[...] I would argue that the repeated depiction of British society as characterised by fair play and kindly manners fulfilled a need in the journal's readership: partly as a welcome contrast to the brutality and inhumanity of the society from which they had fled, partly as an idealised vision, a *Wunschbild*, of the new society into which they could by virtue of their qualifications and abilities, hope to integrate, thus completing the process of assimilation which had been cut short in their homelands. Like the image of a liberal Britain extending its freedoms to the refugees it admitted, it was not without its foundation in reality.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ London, 2000, p.276.

¹⁹⁴ Anthony Grenville, 'Listening to refugee voices: the Association of Jewish Refugees Information and research on the refugees from Hitler in Britain', in *The Yearbook of the Research Centre for Germany and Austrian Exile: Refugees from the Third Reich in Britain*, ed. by Anthony Grenville (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), p.203.

¹⁹⁵ Grenville, 'Listening to refugee voices', 2002, p.205.

There were refugees who found that the position they held in their own country, along with the qualifications or credentials they had acquired, had little or no meaning in Britain. The architect Alec Armstrong was refused membership to the Royal Institute of British Architects despite his credentials and the time he had spent studying at the Bauhaus. He became more an assistant than an architect, although in later years he turned to lecturing, resulting in a professorship in the History of Art and Architecture degree at Hammersmith College of Art and Design.¹⁹⁶ Ernst Sommer fled to London from Czechoslovakia in 1939. He was trained in Law but was developing a reputation as a novelist. These ambitions were interrupted by his exile to London:

In England, Sommer led the life of the déclassé émigré. Barred from practising his profession, he was forced to accept menial occupations – for a time he worked as a wine waiter – or short term literary commissions. [...] Over fifty, debarred from exercising his profession, Sommer felt the lack of status acutely and never came to terms with the existence of an émigré. He hated London, and sought to leave it at the first possible opportunity.¹⁹⁷

In 1940 approximately 27,000 German and Austrian émigrés were labelled as enemies and placed in internment camps, either in Britain or another Commonwealth country.¹⁹⁸ Ralph Fraser and his brother were two such individuals, German Jews who were arrested in 1940 as enemy aliens and sent to an internment camp in Canada – they were able to return to Britain on the grounds that they became members of the British Army, swearing allegiance to King and Country.¹⁹⁹ The potter Hans Coper also experienced internment in Canada before returning to Britain in 1941 as part of the Pioneer Corps. Due to Rothschild coming to Britain in 1933 he was able to become a British citizen in 1938 and later joined the British Army; the

¹⁹⁶ Bearman & Woodgate, 2002, p.224.

¹⁹⁷ Jennifer Taylor, 'Into Exile: Ernst Sommer in London', in *The Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile: Refugees from the Third Reich in Britain*, ed. by Anthony Grenville (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), pp.140-2.

¹⁹⁸ Anthony Grenville, *Jewish Refugees from German and Austria in Britain, 1933 – 1970: Their Image in AJR Information* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2010), p.29.

¹⁹⁹ Wendy Webster, 'Enemies, Allies and Transnational Histories: Germans, Irish, and Italians in Second World War Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol.25, No.1 (2014), p.64.

date at which he did this meant he was never considered an enemy alien by the British authorities.²⁰⁰ His timeliness in this matter was very fortunate:

Until the British declaration of war against Germany on 3 September 1939 the British nationality acts had operated normally *vis-à-vis* the Germans. These acts had permitted foreigners without regard to their origins to apply for naturalisation after five years of residence and, as German emigration had started already in 1933, a few of the first German emigrants after Hitler's assumption of power just managed to become British subjects before war began. [...] Others, who had come a little later, had applied and their applications were in various stages of completion but on commencement of the state of war all naturalisation proceedings stopped and whoever had not taken the oath by that date was still a German.²⁰¹

Rothschild was among the very few refugees to be naturalised during the 1930s due to the restrictions and escalation of events in Europe. The suspension of naturalisation in 1940 left 3,500 applications open, of which 1,600 were refugee cases.²⁰² With the close of the war in 1945, naturalisation became possible, although the guidelines regarding who was eligible were unclear and the process was a lengthy one.

In early 1946 the time lag between the submission of an application and its consideration was thought to be two years or more. In July 1948 it emerged that the intervention of other work in the Home Office meant that many orphan refugee children were still awaiting naturalisation, although most of some 800 cases were resolved by early 1949.²⁰³

The majority of the interviewees for *Changing Countries* went through the naturalisation process. Naturalisation by itself however did not result in the instant feeling of being 'British': 'For all of the refugees who had decided to stay in this country there came, however, the additional challenge was of integrating more fully into British society'.²⁰⁴ Again, a negotiation had to be made between the old and the

²⁰⁰ Home Office. *Oath of Allegiance: Heinz Wilhelm Jaques Rothschild* (22 November 1938). Private papers, Liz Rothschild.

²⁰¹ Peter Leighton-Langer, *The King's Own Loyal Enemy Aliens: German and Austrian Refugees in Britain's Armed Forces, 1939 – 1945* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2006), p.5.

²⁰² London, 2000, p.257.

²⁰³ London, 2000, p.258.

²⁰⁴ Bearman & Woodgate, 2002, p.217.

new identity and for many this negotiation was ongoing. Certainly Berghahn found this to be the case in her study:

German-Jewish refugees have by now lived in Britain for well over a generation [...] This was often pointed out to me by my respondents when I asked them whether or not they felt themselves to be fully-fledged British or English citizens. How could they not, after all those years, was a common reaction. [...] But further enquiry revealed that their feelings of identity were rather more complex and did not present a picture of simple progression from 'Germanness' to 'Englishness', with 'Jewishness' adjusted somehow along the way. Nor were attitudes towards Britain or Germany straightforward.²⁰⁵

In his study on Jewish refugees, which utilises the publication *AJR Information* as the primary resource, Grenville found that the majority of German and Austrian refugees no longer felt themselves to be German or Austrian, and furthermore had no desire to return to their 'home' countries. For many, 'home' was a place of atrocity and pain which could not be forgotten and the events that had taken place made it unrecognisable.

The German-speaking Jewish refugees had not only suffered the material loss of their homes and familiar surroundings in the way; by destroying the entire communities in which they had lived, the Holocaust had also robbed them of the possibility of re-establishing emotional and spiritual contact with the past.²⁰⁶

Rothschild carried these feelings of displacement with him, it seems, for most of his life, his heavy German accent stronger and more evident than the paper that proved his British nationality, the very issue of identity and identification remaining in flux, complex. Unlike some refugees – of note is the potter Hans Coper – Rothschild did return to Germany many times. He made his first return in 1949 remarking: 'People made me very welcome. I found it very, very tough to be there, you know I really was very unhappy until something like three or four years later I got over it. Frankfurt was very bombed [...]'²⁰⁷ In the 1960s and 1970s, Rothschild worked

²⁰⁵ Berghahn, 1986, p.173.

²⁰⁶ Grenville, 2010, pp.84-85.

²⁰⁷ Rothschild, interview, 2003.

extensively with German potters and with German institutions, putting on exhibitions and promoting German craftsman.²⁰⁸ However his brother, Hermann, never returned:

[Henry] forged those new relationships with Germany, and made all that new generation of friends with those German potters, which I think is very significant and speaks very highly of him. Whereas his brother, who is extremely materially motivated, very, very keen on being prosperous, and making money and so on - to be fair possibly because his real interests have been sort of cut off from him so he's left wanting to succeed with what he's been given which is to be materially successful, but anyway - for whatever reason, he never would do business with Germany. Never, not in his entire career. And he could have made a lot of money, in the business they were in [...] He wouldn't speak German and he wouldn't deal with Germany.²⁰⁹

However assimilated an émigré became, there often remains a pull towards the familiarity of home. In Rothschild's case his social circle was dominated by fellow émigrés, for example the gallery owner William Ohly.²¹⁰ Once Primavera opened, a number of the people in his employ were émigrés, some were family or were directed to him by friends or family. He was arguably drawn to the work of émigré potters – Lucie Rie, Hans Coper, and Ruth Duckworth – because he recognised their style and aestheticism.²¹¹ Of course he also championed the work of British artists, but the work of European and émigré artists forms a key part of his collection. Building these connections and positioning himself within an émigré community, whether it was intentional or coincidental, was of great importance for Rothschild as it was for many émigrés:

In each of their places of residence, they attempted to connect with key networks, institutions and localities to provide cultural, economic and social stability, but they also aimed to maintain connections with the country from which they had emigrated.²¹²

However, these networks were not only internal, with emigres seeking émigrés. The influence of those émigrés went beyond the émigré community: as

²⁰⁸ This will be explored in further detail in chapters five and six.

²⁰⁹ L. Rothschild, interview, 2012.

²¹⁰ L. Rothschild, interview, 2012.

²¹¹ This will be discussed further in chapters five and six.

²¹² Buckley & Hochsherf, 2012, p.162.

Buckley and Hochscherf put forward 'visual culture in Britain has been shaped by transnational movements as exiles, émigrés and migrant workers visited, settled or continued on journeys to and from Britain'.²¹³ The movement in the 1930s from mainland Europe to Britain impacted on the development of Modernism in Britain.

Indeed, modernism in Britain was much more varied and complex than many of its supporters in the 1930s were to acknowledge [...] It rarely corresponded to the abstract geometric machine-aesthetic promoted by the *Architectural Review* [...] ²¹⁴

Summary

The aim of this chapter was to consider Rothschild as an émigré and to what extent that experience impacted on his life and his work. As Buckley and Hochscherf comment:

The impact of German-speaking émigrés on the theories and practices of mid-twentieth century visual culture in Britain has been profound and [...] its historiography has taken various forms especially from the 1970s. A characteristic has been the emergence of nuanced, complex accounts that disavow neat disciplinary boundaries and mark a shift from an approach focusing on authorship to one foregrounding agency.²¹⁵

By comparing his own narrative to other émigrés it becomes apparent that he benefitted greatly from his family background in Germany, as did many others. Also in evidence is the role that luck often played – for George Mosse arriving to his boat 15 minutes before a change in law, for Hans Coper managing to climb back on to his train, and for Rothschild avoiding internment as British policy changed. To what extent his émigré status impacted specifically on his practices as a craft retailer, exhibitor and collector will be explored in more detail in the following chapters; undoubtedly he remained a European and an émigré all his life, in outlook and conviction. Fiona Adamczewski, an employee at Primavera and émigré herself from a South Africa under apartheid, reflects on the impact such a position had for them both:

I mean he was essentially a European really. Sophisticated, without illusions. God knows he'd lived through some stuff [...] I suppose we never talked much

²¹³ Buckley & Hochscherf, 2012, p.157.

²¹⁴ Buckley & Hochscherf, 2012, p.163.

²¹⁵ Buckley & Hochscherf, 2012, p.157.

about what both of us had experienced in police states but my experience was minimal compared to his. It's always horrible to watch your country turn into a fascist state and I think once it's happened and you've had to go you are then in a certain sense a displaced person forever more. In my case I would say I love England, I love living here, I wouldn't want to live anywhere else, I'm very grateful that they have me and I'm sure Henry felt the same. He'd been in the army and everything of course as you probably know. But I think you get out of those experiences a certain kind of detachment growth. It cannot but grow because if you weren't – it's difficult to express really. I think if you were focused all the time on what you'd lost you would just die, you know. You couldn't bear it. So you've got to put all your energy into other things or if you have any sense you do and he was a survivor.²¹⁶

For Henry Rothschild his energies were spent on the development of Primavera and on the championing of quality craft. The exposure to culture during his formative years in Germany, as well as his experiences in Italy during the war, provided him with the cultural and aesthetic knowledge he needed to make Primavera the success it was. His position as an émigré in Britain meant he felt little affinity with the established rules of craft, making Primavera a unique venture in post-war Britain.

²¹⁶ Fiona Adamczewski, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (21 January 2013). Uncatalogued.

Chapter Four: Craft and Retail in Britain, 1945 - 1980

I operated at a very good time because people were absolutely wanting stuff, '45, '46 [...] I think I got away with more than I would have done in normal times.²¹⁷

This chapter explores the social and economic context that allowed Rothschild to run Primavera as a retail outlet from 1946 to 1980. As the Second World War ended, Primavera emerged at a time when the public were ready – though not always able – to engage with consumerism and be driven by want rather than need. Rothschild, with a strong conviction in what he believed to be ‘good design’, was able to match that want through his activities at Primavera. First and foremost Primavera was a retail venture and remained so throughout its lifecycle under Henry Rothschild’s management from late 1945 to 1980; the main focus of this chapter will be to examine how the retail side of the organisation developed throughout these thirty-five years. Along with Primavera’s progression as a retail outlet, the chapter will also examine the impact of other institutions with an investment in, or influence on, craft during Primavera’s lifecycle, including the Rural Industries Bureau (1921), the Council of Industrial Design (1944), and the Crafts Advisory Committee (1971), which later became the Craft Council (1979). Rothschild had connections with all of these institutions throughout his career and the way in which he interacted with (or indeed did not interact with) each one had a bearing on the direction of Primavera and how it engaged with the retail of craft.

Between 1945 to 1952, Rothschild worked solely as a retailer. Faced with a number of restrictions with regard to stock, Rothschild had to be inventive and selective. As referenced above, the demand was there and Primavera was able to flourish. Although the retail aspect of the shop was maintained throughout his management of Primavera, in 1952 he began what was to be an extensive exhibition programme. Between 1952 and 1963 Rothschild had to respond to the shift between post-war consumption and the emergence of the ‘new consumers’, the young professional setting up home for the first time, who was keen to engage with the new and the modern. This chapter will examine this boom of consumerism and modernity and explore how this linked with the wider craft market, and more specifically with Rothschild and Primavera. It offer some insight into the types of customers Primavera attracted. In late 1958, Rothschild opened a second branch of Primavera in the traditional University town of Cambridge, opposite Kings College. However,

²¹⁷ Henry Rothschild, interviewed by Tanya Harrod for NLSC: Craft Lives (9-10 December 2003). F14338-F14342]. Sound Archive, The British Library, London.

Rothschild remained focused on the London premises. During this timeframe Rothschild also launched Primavera Contracts Ltd, the aim of which was to provide furnishing and textiles to businesses and schools demonstrating the thriving market for interior decor.²¹⁸ Much has been made of the 'Swinging Sixties' as a period of liberalism, decadence and bohemia. Current thinking considers this period to actually be more nuanced than the popular perception.²¹⁹ The geographical positioning and aesthetic ethos of Primavera from 1963 to 1969 allows for these nuances to emerge. In 1967 Primavera moved from Sloane Street to nearby Walton Street, where it remained until 1970. Thereby this period marks Primavera's last days in London. From 1970 to 1980 there is a shift in focus; Rothschild and his family relocated to the University town of Cambridge where he takes more control of the already established shop. This move was prompted in part by increases to the London rent and in part by Rothschild's own mental health, having been diagnosed as bipolar in the early 1960s. Managed by lithium, his condition undoubtedly attributed to his drive and in that last decade at Primavera, with one eye on retiring from shop life, he became involved more and more with exhibitions at different venues, including Kettle's Yard in Cambridge, as well as being an active member of the Crafts Advisory Committee.²²⁰

The narrative of Primavera, with all its changes and developments, is interwoven with the larger narrative of post-war Britain. Following the Second World War, the Labour government sought to put in place policies that would form a foundation upon which the country could build, primarily through welfare reform and housing. These policies were developed slowly and with a degree of caution; Labour did not want to make the same mistakes of 1918 in which the government attempted to pick up from where it had been before the outbreak of war, despite the economic devastation World War One had rendered. Instead Labour continued to control production and supply in the same way it had during the war with the aim of slowly building up employment levels and encouraging sustainable economic growth.²²¹ This slow relinquishment of control, particularly with regard to materials and trade practices, resulted in Rothschild having to develop his business in a more radical way

²¹⁸ There is no complete record of the activities of Primavera Contracts (Ltd). Tanya Harrod acknowledges this issue in her introductory essay on Primavera for the 1995 retrospective exhibition held at the Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead.

²¹⁹ Dominic Sandbrook *Never Had It So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (London: Abacus, 2005), p.xx-xiv.

²²⁰ Liz Rothschild, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (17 April 2012). Uncatalogued.

²²¹ Catherine R. Schenk, 'Austerity and Boom', in *Twentieth Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change*, ed. by Paul Johnson (London: Longman, 1994), pp.301-2.

than he would have done before the war. I would argue that these societal changes provided the environment under which a retail venture such as Primavera was able to develop and flourish. Therefore it is important to capture a societal snapshot of 1945 in order to appreciate the emerging narrative of Rothschild and Primavera.

Britain in 1945

For the newly elected Labour government of July 1945 the war had acted as a catalyst for social change. As David Kynaston states: 'the concept began to be accepted that the British people, in return for all their sufferings in a noble cause, deserved a new start after the war'.²²² Such a new start was slow in coming. A degree of caution was exercised in the immediate post-war, as evidenced by the continuation of rationing until 1958.²²³ What this demonstrates is that although the presence of war had gone, the shadow it cast still lingered in people's everyday life: 'In a very real sense these austerity years were a threshold to the whole first post-war era: rock-hard and grey, whitened maybe by dedication and labour, but opening on the warmer times within'.²²⁴

Labour's welfare reforms were informed by the 1942 Beveridge Report; at its core was the provision of a National Health Service, and benefits to support those out of work, those with children, and those of pensionable age. The ultimate aim of the Welfare State was to remove fear of want and destitution. The network of protection and care was created through five Acts: the 1945 Family Allowance Act, the 1946 National Insurance Act, the 1946 Industrial Injuries Act, the 1946 National Health Service Act, and the 1948 National Assistance Act. The system took time to roll out but by July 1948, three years after the end of war, it took hold:

Enormous publicity was required to explain the new system to the nation, and 14 million homes received a free copy of a booklet called the *Family Guide to National Insurance* [...] Cinema, radio, the press and voluntary agencies were all used in the publicity drive. By the appointed day in July 1948 when the whole scheme was to start the nation had to be administratively and psychologically prepared for the new system [...]²²⁵

²²² David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain: 1945 – 51* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), p.21.

²²³ Coal was the last commodity to cease being rationed.

²²⁴ Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945* (London: Penguin, 1982), p.71.

²²⁵ Derek Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State*, 3rd Edition (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p.255.

To no longer be afraid of unemployment, which had been equal to destitution and hunger, and to have access to healthcare, without concern over cost, provided a safety net. Although the so-called Golden Age would not flourish until the mid-1950s, the immediate post-war economy was relatively stable, employment was high and Labour's policy of nationalising major industries helped maintain the checks and balances of imports and exports.²²⁶

The development of welfare reform was a long term venture; the more immediate issue was that of housing. Cities across the UK had been heavily bombed during the war and while the Labour government were trying to push both the economy and the basic standard of living forward, they also had to invest in the rebuilding of a war-torn landscape. London, particularly the City and East End districts, had been worst hit by the German air raids. The more affluent West End was affected to a lesser extent but the landscape was still devastated: 'Despite the enormous pounding absorbed by the East End [...] the bombs respected no division between the two Londons, old and new'.²²⁷ The five years of bombing had resulted in London becoming 'confused and misshapen' and as such rebuilding needed to be addressed.²²⁸

The question of adequate housing had been a contentious issue for the inter-war governments, and one which Aneurin Bevan, who was responsible for housing from 1945 to 1951, had inherited. With approximately half a million homes destroyed and a further three million damaged during the air raids, the demand far outstripped the supply. The building of new houses, which had initially been mobilised to replace the Victorian slums, now had to also replace the bomb damaged. Materials were scarce and the devaluation of the pound in 1949 greatly affected expenditure. There was also the issue of where the need was greater. There were arguments by the opposition that industrial workers should be a priority, in order to bolster industrial productivity. In accordance with the traditional stance of the Labour Party, it was decided that housing should be provided to those with the most need - those living in damaged homes, homes without adequate sanitation, homes that were overcrowded.

[...] the vast majority of building licenses (ranging from 90 per cent in 1946 to 80 per cent in 1950) were reserved for the construction of high-quality council

²²⁶ Fraser, 2003, p.248.

²²⁷ Jerry White, *London in the 20th Century* (London: Random House, 2008), pp.39-40.

²²⁸ Peter Ackroyd, *London: The Biography* (London: Random House, 2001), p.746.

houses. The result was that the annual number of council houses completed reached a historical high. At their pre-war peak in 1938, 122,000 had been built. In 1948 the total was 217,000, and, despite public expenditure cuts, the figure never fell below 175,000.²²⁹

Although vital, the rebuild was slow, slower still if you were one of the many families waiting to be re-housed. Pockets of the West End of London in 1946 became a temporary home to squatters, who also took advantage of the now disused army camps. The restriction on investment in private housing meant that the total number of houses being built - private and council combined - was just over half the pre-war average.²³⁰ These issues around housing ought to have deterred Rothschild from his venture of selling for the domestic; for those who had found themselves homeless or living in buildings that would struggle to be categorised as 'home', shopping for a new tea-set or soft furnishings would have been understandably low on the list of priorities. However, the devastation was not all encompassing and there was a market for the types of wares that Primavera stocked. I would also argue that in those early days Primavera had at its core a promise of future beauty and comfort, even if immediate access to these were limited.

Any evaluation of British society in the post-war period must take into account the complexity of the class system. The Second World War shook the foundations of the class system to some degree - the threat from Europe had brought about a 'chummy egalitarianism of enforced contact between the classes' but the social boundaries were put back into place once those war-time conditions were removed.²³¹ Inevitably the determination of class was not based solely on income in post-war Britain, but rather 'what determined one's position was a complicated network of factors: birth, breeding and education, occupation, income, expenditure, accent and deportment, friendships, political and cultural attitudes and values'.²³² Whereas one could conceivably gain access to higher education, or work in a higher paid job, it is more difficult to learn the nuanced codes and practices of another class and harder still to eradicate traces of one's own background. Although Rothschild had what can be defined as a middle-class upbringing in Germany, this did not mean

²²⁹ Rodney Lowe, *The Welfare State in Britain Since 1945*, 3rd Edition (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.257.

²³⁰ Lowe, 2005, p.258.

²³¹ Ackroyd, 2001, pp.753-4.

²³² Sandbrook, 2005, p.34.

instant access into the British middle-class. Not only did his nationality, and perhaps more significantly his Jewish faith, mark him as an outsider, he did not have access to that innate, almost instinctive knowledge required to know how to belong in the British class system and to be fully accepted. Liz Rothschild comments that her father did not like 'rigidity' and this applied to the rigidity of the British class system: 'he really hated all that, and he hated the sort of narrowness and insular-ness you can find in England'.²³³

London has historically been at the centre of émigré activity - Greek and French communities had formed in the seventeenth-century around Soho; from the nineteenth-century German communities settled north of Soho, around Fitzroy Square, although the First World War saw many German immigrants re-categorised as alien enemies; and Italians had dominated the areas of Finsbury and Holborn since the 1850s. As Berghahn states: 'From the beginning, London obviously exerted a very strong attraction for refugees in this country, and [...] 'home' often does not mean Britain as much as it means London'.²³⁴ For the Jewish people coming from Eastern Europe prior to 1914, London was made smaller still and meant the East End. These communities were not unified by their 'Jewishness' but rather separated by their nationality. Rather the Jewish East End:

was a microcosm of London itself, with all its divisions of class and background and topography and world-view reconstructed on unique lines' separating the Polish, Lithuanians and Romanians, and causing conflict between the Orthodox and the more casual observer of the Jewish high holidays.²³⁵

However, the later immigration of German and Austrian Jews, beginning in the early 1930s, centred on the North and North-West districts of London, which were more middle and upper-class compared to the 'ghetto' conditions of the East End. As Berghahn states: 'their meagre incomes notwithstanding, the German refugees maintained their middle-class lifestyle as far as possible. To live in a 'good' neighbourhood, as they had done on the Continent, was an important part of it'.²³⁶ Following his re-entry into civilian life in November 1945, Rothschild himself found

²³³ L. Rothschild, interview, 2012.

²³⁴ Marion Berghahn, *Continental Britons: German-Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany*, 2nd Edition (Oxford: Berg, 1986), p.127.

²³⁵ White, 2008, pp.110-1.

²³⁶ Berghahn, 1986, p.127.

lodgings in Ebury Street, situated in the upper-middle-class area of Kensington and Chelsea in the South-West of the City, a few streets over from Sloane Street where he would go on to establish Primavera.²³⁷

1945 – 1952: Setting up Shop

A war torn London, overcrowded, and a society still living with rationing, trying to readjust to peace time, hardly seem the best circumstances in which to begin a new business, particularly in the line of furnishing, textiles and domestic wares when a 'make do and mend' approach was both commonplace and necessary. For Rothschild however, the end of the war meant a new beginning. Whilst stationed in Italy, he had travelled the countryside, witnessing the work of local artisans and makers. Building on his childhood preoccupation with buying small objects at the market, this experience in Italy inspired Rothschild: 'It definitely made me want to collect things. Whether I was prepared to translate into selling things I'm not sure'.²³⁸ On his return to the UK in 1945, and with the permission of his Commanding Officer, Rothschild set about travelling the country and building up contacts, and he continued these travels when he re-entered civilian life in the November. In a series of letters to friends and family he notes he has visited potteries in Manchester, has plans to visit Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire before heading to Scotland, and wishes to see Wales and Northern Ireland.²³⁹ He writes to Muriel Rose, ex-proprietor of the craft shop The Little Gallery and 'awaits with interest' her reply.²⁴⁰ Although he does not state exactly what he wrote, he anticipates that Rose will be reopening the gallery and presumably is seeking advice on stockists or, just as likely, enquiring about her future plans.²⁴¹ It would appear that any reply from Rose was curt in tone as he

²³⁷ Henry Rothschild, *Letter from Henry Rothschild to Sergio Donadoni* (29 November 1945). Private papers, Liz Rothschild.

²³⁸ Rothschild, 2003, interview.

²³⁹ Henry Rothschild: *Letter from Henry Rothschild to Lisbeth Rothschild* (6 October 1945); *Letter from Henry Rothschild to Beryl Eeman* (21 October 1945); *Letter from Henry Rothschild to Lisbeth Rothschild* (25 October 1945); *Letter from Henry Rothschild to David [unknown]* (17 November 1945); *Letter from Henry Rothschild to Sergio Donadoni* (29 November 1945). All private papers, Liz Rothschild.

²⁴⁰ Rothschild, *Letter to Lisbeth Rothschild*, 6 October 1945.

²⁴¹ Rothschild, *Letter to Lisbeth Rothschild*, 6 October 1945.

recollects in later years that 'she was far too anxious to avoid introducing anybody to me'.²⁴² In one letter to his mother he writes:

Mr Bell of the Cotton Board rang me up and has made some very useful contacts for me in London which I am looking forward to meet. I shall have a lot of new people to contact in London and altogether life will be full and I am surer than ever that this is the right thing for me [...] What a lovely country England is when you study it. I am really very keen on this thing and know that it is the right step.²⁴³

This furore of activity on Rothschild's part, developing networks and relationships with potential suppliers and customers, demonstrates his enthusiasm and commitment to Primavera. Considering Rothschild had never worked in this trade before, or even ran a business, this trust in his own ability and in his own taste is remarkable.²⁴⁴ This drive was combined with the fortunate situation Rothschild found himself in late 1945. Much of this early groundwork was carried out while he was still in the Army, based in Liverpool. He had an agreement with his Commanding Officer that, since there was little to do, he could take the time to travel.²⁴⁵ On leaving the Army in November 1945 it would seem he relied on family money, supported by his brother Hermann. That Rothschild was in a position to pursue his ambition through a generous agreement with the Army and with support from his brother should not be ignored; in this he was fortunate. The success of Primavera was certainly down to his own hard work but circumstance played its part.

His initial application for a business license was refused on the grounds that it was a new venture and that he had not been a member of the furnishing trade prior to the war. The news of the refusal left him 'rather down for a few days' but he appealed the decision and carried on with his travels.²⁴⁶ To his lifelong friend Sergio

²⁴² Rothschild, 2003, interview. Rose did not disappear from the craft scene – she wrote a number of texts on ceramics and crafts and organised with Bernard Leach the 1952 Dartington conference on the state of craft – but she never reopened her shop.

²⁴³ Rothschild, *Letter to Lisbeth Rothschild*, 25 October 1945.

²⁴⁴ Rothschild's ambitious nature and his innate belief in his ability can be seen in his application in September 1945 for the role of Assistant Art Director to the Arts Council (private papers, Liz Rothschild). Given his lack of experience it is no wonder that his application was unsuccessful but it is this ambition that carries Primavera.

²⁴⁵ L. Rothschild, interview, 2012.

²⁴⁶ Rothschild, *Letter to David [unknown]*, 1945.

Donadoni ²⁴⁷ he wrote that he was travelling the 'green country seeing the countrysmith [and] the woodcutter' and that he was hopeful to get a license soon.²⁴⁸ He was so hopeful that he already took on the lease for 149 Sloane Street in late 1945 (figure 5), stating that: 'I more or less tumbled into it. I saw the lease and I said to myself, I'll have to do it'.²⁴⁹ With the lifting of the Board of Trade's restrictions, he was able to begin trading on the 4th February, 1946.²⁵⁰



Figure 5: Primavera's window display, Sloane Street, London 1946

The Kensington and Chelsea area of London in which Primavera was based had been home to a number of similar ventures before 1945. Primavera was around the corner from where Muriel Rose's Little Gallery had been until its closure in 1940, and only a few streets from Elspeth Little's Modern Textiles shop in Beauchamp Place. Slightly further afield in Grosvenor Street was the modern design shop Dunbar Hay. Along with Ethel Mariet's New Handworkers Gallery, originally off Tottenham

²⁴⁷ Rothschild met Donadoni whilst based in Italy. Donadoni went on to become a leading Egyptologist, working at Turin University and the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

²⁴⁸ Rothschild, *Letter to Sergio Donadoni*, 1945. There is a sense of romanticism to this comment, which seems out of place with the assertion that Rothschild was not drawn to nostalgia (Pile, 2012). However, given Rothschild had spent the last six years following orders and a set routine, having the space and time to appreciate a calmer and more rural way of life was no doubt a breath of fresh air.

²⁴⁹ Rothschild, interview, 2003.

²⁵⁰ 'Shop Window for Taste', *Furnishing*, July 1946 [DT.HRA/3/2, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].

Court Road then later in Fitzroy Square, and Dorothy Hutton's Three Shields Gallery in Holland Street, such outlets were places where the discerning and well-off clientele could buy modern crafts from Britain and abroad in the inter-war years.²⁵¹ The rise of craft within the art market during this time is significant. Andrew Stephenson attributes this partly to the rise of modern living, whereby the younger middle-class 'wished to buy small-scale aesthetic objects more suited to the intimate rooms and limited wall space of the fashionable modern flat'.²⁵² This, along with increased taxation for luxury goods and reduction in government support for artists, led to a dip in the fine art market. In an attempt to survive this, London art galleries diversified:

[...] dealers embraced less formalised layouts, displaying paintings in a prominent position next to smaller-scale sculpture, studio ceramics, batik, block painted fabric and woven textiles [...]²⁵³

The dominance of women heading craft outlets in the inter-war period is worthy of some discussion here. In examining the broader social narrative, the 1921 census revealed that there were more women than men, largely due to the tragic number of men who fell during the Great War. This imbalance was more prominent among the middle and upper-classes. Overall this resulted in a growing number of unmarried women aged between twenty-five and twenty-nine. As Stephenson writes:

The consequences that these demographic changes would carry for art consumption would be considerable, not least because these younger middle and upper-middle-class women, coming from educated and relatively wealthy backgrounds, had experiences, greater employment opportunities during the 1914 – 18 War and were financially independent [...]²⁵⁴

Although many of these shops and galleries closed during the Second World War, some remained. At 22 Knightsbridge was Joyce Clissod's second Footprints shop, which was along from Betty Joel's design shop at number 25, while Heal's

²⁵¹ Janine Barker and Cheryl Buckley 'The Primavera Story, 1946 – 1967', in *British Design: Tradition and Modernity after 1948*, ed. by Christopher Breward, Fiona Fisher & Ghislaine Wood (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp.25-26.

²⁵² Andrew Stephenson, 'Strategies of display and models of consumption in London art galleries in the inter-war years', in *The Rise of the Modern Art market in London, 1850 – 1939*, ed. by Pamela Fletcher & Anne Helmreich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p.101.

²⁵³ Stephenson, 2011, p.106.

²⁵⁴ Stephenson, 2011, p.105.

Mansard Gallery on Tottenham Court Road, under the management of Prudence Maufe, continued to exhibit art, craft and design.²⁵⁵ This dominance of English middle-class women in the craft market meant that Henry Rothschild stood apart from his predecessors and contemporaries both as a man and as an émigré, but he succeeded in continuing the retail of craft beyond the Second World War.

Central to Rothschild's venture was that good design could be handmade or machine made and he sold both at Primavera as confirmed in a trades journal contemporary to the founding of the retail venture: '[Rothschild] believes implicitly in the importance of good design and in the necessity to combine all that is best of individual craftsmanship with the advantages of mechanical production'.²⁵⁶ Rothschild's implicit belief in good design underpins this research. It is important to note here that, particularly in relation his exhibition and collection practices, the handmade dominates and Rothschild remained all his a life a strong and passionate advocate for craft. However, he did not blindly believe handmade work was the only way good design could be produced and therefore welcomed mass produced work which another craft outlet may reject. This gave his primarily middle and upper-class customers a wider choice in objects and price as stocking work that was mass produced was also more cost effective.

The networking and travelling Rothschild had done in late 1945 was largely assisted by the Rural Industries Bureau. Founded in 1921, the aims of the Bureau were to promote and support rural industry and business. As Christopher Bailey states:

Alongside the training and re-equipping of craftsmen the Bureau developed strategies to promote higher standards of design through pattern books and drawings made by professional designers, and to increase sales through the application of marketing techniques for crafts products. Most visibly it also undertook a campaign of persuasion, through its reports on 'revived' industries, its advice pamphlets, and through *Rural Industries*.²⁵⁷

Although the Bureau had its headquarters in London, there were a number of regional Rural Community Councils, which enabled the Bureau to have a better understanding

²⁵⁵ Barker & Buckley, 2015, pp.25-26.

²⁵⁶ 'Shop Window For Taste', *Furnishing*, 1946.

²⁵⁷ Christopher Bailey, 'Progress and preservation: the role of the Rural Industries in the making of the modern images of the countryside', *Journal of Design History*, Vol.9, No.1 (1996), p.39.

of the challenges faced in each region, all of which had their own traditions, for example quilting in the North East, or basket making in Gloucestershire. There are a number of writings on the difficulties faced by the R.I.B. and whether or not they achieved their aims, but for the purpose of this research what is key is that they were able to compile, through these regional councils, a list of working craftsmen and it was through access to this list that Rothschild was able to make contact with the makers who would stock Primavera.²⁵⁸ Rothschild reflected that:

The Rural Industries Bureau was particularly important because the Crafts Centre refused to open their lists for reasons unbeknown [...] I think what might have been at the back of his [John Farleigh] mind was that they were opening themselves, the Craft Centre, and they didn't want anybody in competition. But it is of course entirely contrary to their duty to the public to refuse this. But the Rural Industries Bureau had much bigger files, possible not as artistic, but available for me to inspect and visit.²⁵⁹

Rothschild may be being unfair to the Crafts Centre of Great Britain, as they themselves were only just getting established in 1946.²⁶⁰ The Crafts Centre faced many difficulties and criticisms throughout the '40s and '50s, not least of all because of the narrow restrictions it placed on itself by supporting only what it termed as 'fine craftsmanship'. Considering the main funding for the Centre came from the Board of Trade via the Council of Industrial Design, and thereby tried to pull the Centre in a different direction, the identity of the Centre was always in a state of compromise and uncertainty.²⁶¹ With regard to the perceived animosity between the Centre and Primavera, the Centre did go on to develop their own retail outlet in 1950, and so Rothschild's assertion that they seemed more reluctant to help has some grounding. The retail and exhibition side of the Centre failed to live up to its potential and Rothschild – who understood that good design could be both handmade or machine

²⁵⁸ For further discussion on the Rural Industries Bureau see: Bailey, 1996; Sarah Clarkson, *Jobs in the Countryside: Some Aspects of the Work of the Rural Industries Bureau and the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas, 1910 – 1979*, (Kent: Wye College, Occasional Papers, 1980).

²⁵⁹ Rothschild, interview, 2003.

²⁶⁰ For an account of the formation of the Craft Centre of Great Britain see: James Noel White, 'The First Crafts Centre of Great Britain: Bargaining for a Time Bomb', *Journal of Design History*, Vol.2, No.2/3 (1989), pp.207 – 214.

²⁶¹ Tanya Harrod, 'A Brief History in Time', in *Contemporary Applied Arts: 50 Years of Craft*, ed. by Tanya Harrod & Mary La Trobe-Bateman (London: Contemporary Applied Arts, 1998), pp.10-11.

made – did not see it as a major competitor to Primavera. All in all, the Centre had a very different output and ethos to Rothschild and Primavera; it could therefore be seen as of benefit to Primavera that Rothschild did not become too indebted to them in those formative years.²⁶²

Alongside Primavera, Harrod identifies The Craftsman's Market and the Mansard Gallery at Heal's department store as other notable craft outlets, both of which Rothschild saw as his main competitors.²⁶³ Both craft and industrial production had suffered during the war due to material restrictions and this continued into the post-war period. However, individual makers and small workshops had greater freedom and could produce stock that was more aesthetically pleasing to the consumers. Harrod argues that this was recognised, not only by Primavera, but the larger department stores, citing that Heal's in particular 'took a special interest in the crafts in the difficult post-war period'.²⁶⁴ This special interest can be attributed to the difficulties in locating stock which led to department stores considering other avenues, such as handmade craft work, to an even greater degree than they had done before the war. Department stores, given the range of goods and physical space, were well versed in putting on large displays of their wares and Heal's was no exception to this.

By putting goods on display, and by showing connections and arrangements of goods assembled in a coherent whole, department stores further the lifestyleization project by teaching shoppers how to furnish not only their homes, but also their lives.²⁶⁵

It is important to recognise that as a new venture, with limited floor space, Primavera did not have the same advantages that the larger department stores had. Rothschild relied instead on developing relationships and networks with makers and other organisations, such as the R.I.B, in order to find stock. As demonstrated in figure 6, there was an emphasis on pottery, including pieces from Ray Finch's Winchcombe pottery and Harry and May Davies' Crowan pottery.

²⁶² Tanya Harrod 'Primavera: A History, 1945 – 1980', in *Primavera: Pioneering Craft and Design, 1945 - 1995*, ed. by Andrew Greg (Gateshead: Tyne and Wear Museums, 1995), p.9.

²⁶³ Harrod, 1995, p.9.

²⁶⁴ Harrod, 1995, p.9.

²⁶⁵ David Bell & Joanne Hollows, 'Towards a history of lifestyle', in *Historicizing Lifestyle: Mediating Taste, Consumption and Identity from the 1900s to the 1970s*, ed. by David Bell & Joanne Hollows (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), p.9.



Figure 6: Advertisement showing teapot by Lucie Rie (with cane handle) and a tea-set by Crowan Pottery, 1949

Lucie Rie was one of the potters Rothschild had visited in his early travels. Primavera began to stock Rie tableware a month after opening – two orders were placed in March 1946 and included forty-two sets of cups and saucers in different sizes, vases, bowls, handled jugs, a teapot and coffee set.²⁶⁶ This volume of ordering was maintained up until the late 1970s. Rie's biographer Emmanuel Cooper comments:

A visit from Henry Rothschild in 1946 during Army leave and still in military uniform was promising [...] and it was the beginning of a long if often turbulent relationship. [...] In quest of stock he visited Rie, initially placing orders for plates and buttons, the start of what was to become one of the chief outlets for her work in London.²⁶⁷

That such a modest and new shop would become a 'chief outlet' for Rie's work can be attributed not only to Rothschild's approach – actively forging relationships with makers – but also to the circumstances of the time. The example of Rothschild's relationship with Rie, who had gone from fame in Austria to an unknown in the UK, demonstrates the often overlooked serendipitous moments in the broader narrative.

²⁶⁶ Lucie Rie Pottery, *Invoice Books* (1946). RIE/8/1/3-4. Lucie Rie Archive, Craft Study Centre, Farnham.

²⁶⁷ Emmanuel Cooper, *Lucie Rie: Modernist Potter* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p.149. Given that Rothschild left the Army in November 1945 and opened Primavera in February 1946, this is a factual error on Cooper's part.

Rie is the most featured maker in Rothschild's collection at the Shipley Art Gallery and examples of the tableware sold at Primavera during the 1950s can be found (figure 7). This cereal bowl matches the description of given in an invoice from March 1952 for an order of six cereal bowls, with a black sgraffito outside, and a white glaze inside, each bowl priced at 11 shillings.²⁶⁸ Not only does this information help understand the retail aspect of Primavera, but it also contributes to our understanding of the collection. This illustrates that Rothschild was in effect one of his own customers, and used his contacts and position as a retailer to build his own collection.²⁶⁹



Figure 7: Stoneware bowl by Lucie Rie, c.1950-55

As previously stated, all of the potteries with which Rothschild worked at this time had to make do with a scarcity of resources and the industrial potteries were further restricted by government regulations on the use of colour and decoration. Graham McLaren argues that the effect of the Utility scheme on ceramics has been relatively ignored due in part to the reputation and position of its main proponent Gordon Russell but also because it came along later in the scheme in 1943.

[...] the application of the Utility scheme to the production of ceramics resulted [...] in the reduction of shapes to a bare, ascetic minimum and the limitation of any coloration, even to produce a backstamp. As a result Utility ceramics offer very few aesthetic or critical footholds by comparison with Utility furniture or fashion. While other areas can still be discussed to an extent in

²⁶⁸ Lucie Rie Pottery, *Invoices - filed alphabetically* (1953). RIE/8/6/1/3. Lucie Rie Archive, Craft Study Centre, Farnham.

²⁶⁹ A discussion of Rothschild's collection at the Shipley Art Gallery forms the basis of chapter six.

terms of form, decoration and workmanship, Utility ceramics were truly 'utilitarian'.²⁷⁰

Such restrictions were in no way limited to pottery but existed across the board under the Utility scheme. From 1948 until 1952, furniture manufacture was restricted to Utility designs.²⁷¹ Decorated ceramics had been banned for home consumption from June 1942 until August 1952. Many textiles could only be purchased with coupons. As Harrod states: 'the situation was difficult for retailers whose customers were impatient for change, colour and variety'.²⁷²

Ignoring this desire for change, the Board of Trade saw the continuation of Utility production from wartime to peacetime as an opportunity to maintain the principles of 'good design'. By offering 'good design', it was believed that public taste would become accustomed to it and therefore demand a higher standard. Debates on taste had become increasingly complex since the surge of production in the mid-nineteenth century. As Nadine Rottau writes:

In a changing society wherein the possession and purchase of goods constantly gained greater importance, taste was used as a general criterion in aesthetic debates. Taste described not only a subjective beauty, but was also seen as a system of social conventions. It was considered as a civilising achievement which was teachable and learnable. Therefore, principles were sought after to cultivate and shape an objective, universally valid taste.²⁷³

In the post-war period, taste as a 'teachable and learnable' ideal can be seen best in the ethos of the Council of Industrial Design. The COID produced a series of texts on designed objects with the aim of informing the public on 'good' and 'bad' taste entitled *The Things We See*. In Volume 4, *Pottery and Glass*, it is stated that a 'good' pot must have the right texture, balance, form, pattern, rhythm and, rather cryptically,

²⁷⁰ Graham McLaren, 'Moving forwards but looking backwards: the dynamics of design change in the early postwar pottery industry', in *Design and Cultural Politics in Postwar Britain: The Britain Can Make It Exhibition of 1946*, ed. by Patrick J. Maguire & Jonathan M. Woodham (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), p.88.

²⁷¹ 1952 marked the end of the Utility scheme in its entirety.

²⁷² Harrod, 1995, p.8.

²⁷³ Nadine Rottau, "'Everyone to his taste" or "truth to material?": the role of materials in collections of applied arts', in *Material Cultures, 1740-1920: The Meanings and Pleasures of Collecting*, ed. by John Potvin and Alla Myzelev (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p.72.

mood in order to please 'the full orchestra of the senses'.²⁷⁴ The volume covers basic forms, production processes, and decorations, illustrating with pieces that 'lack' and pieces that fulfil the requirements of 'good' taste. The volume concludes with this invitation:

You have read through this book and examined the photographs; now it may amuse you to make your own criticisms of the pieces [...] What do you think of them? Try them on your friends, and particularly children, whose criticisms are often fresh and amusing. Probably no two opinions will agree at all points, but it is stimulating to be made to define one's likes and dislikes.²⁷⁵

While the writer states that there are no right or wrong answers the rest of the text contradicts through warnings of the 'uninspired', 'ill-balanced', 'over-elaborate' and 'inharmonious' traits used to describe the pieces clearly understood to be 'bad' taste. Overall, the Utility scheme suggested a lack of trust in public taste.²⁷⁶ As already stated, Rothschild strongly defended the principles of good design. However he also believed 'the public to be more enlightened on design than some of the big-store buyers seem to think'.²⁷⁷ Although seemingly directed towards the buying policies of the larger department stores, there is also an underlying criticism here of the paternalistic values that were at the core of Utility and the Council of Industrial Design. This said, Rothschild's own convictions about 'good design' and by extension is understanding of taste directed much of his own retail activity. In this way, he was also part of this broader move towards directing quality and taste.

Although writing specifically about ceramics, McLaren argues that Utility design altered the traditions of production and design but it is less clear if it informed the changes that came in the 1950s, that is a 'taste for strong, simple shape[s] and 'modern' surface decoration'.²⁷⁸ Perhaps it was more that Utility designs shook off the perceived excess of decoration, allowing for industrial potteries and studio potters (as

²⁷⁴ Bernard Hollowood, *The Things We See: Pottery and Glass* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1947), pp.6-7.

²⁷⁵ Hollowood, 1947, p.61.

²⁷⁶ Judy Atfield, 'Good design by law: adapting Utility furniture to peacetime productions: domestic furniture in the reconstruction period 1946 - 1956', in *Design and Cultural Politics in Postwar Britain: The Britain Can Make It Exhibition of 1946*, ed. by Patrick J. Maguire and Jonathan M. Woodham (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), pp.99 - 110.

²⁷⁷ 'A Shop Window for Taste', *Furnishing*, 1946.

²⁷⁸ McLaren, 1997, p.89.

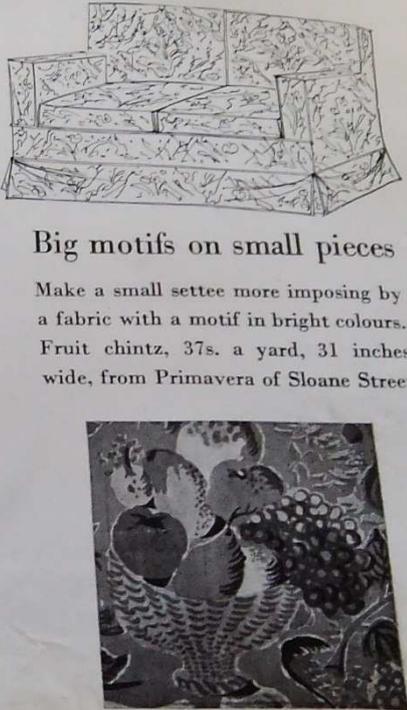
well as furniture and textile designers) to begin again and create a new aesthetic that was both a progression of and a departure from the Utility model.

This aesthetic freedom gave the studio potters the opportunity to gain a foothold in the market as they could provide retailers with an alternative, particularly the bigger department stores such as Heal's, who found industrial suppliers to be lacking. As the collector Ken Stradling recalls:

[...] after the war when there were all these restrictions on tableware, you could only get white, this was a great help for the studio potters setting up there, so like Marianne de Trey did a lovely range of handmade tableware, for example, and there was a big sale of that because you had something colourful and nice handmade which you couldn't get from the commercial boys. So there was a big feeling about that and that helped a lot of people and that's why after the war a lot of people, a lot of potters, started up and now so many of the potters now are not doing tableware they're doing more individual pieces. There was certainly that trend, definitely.²⁷⁹

Rothschild actively sought out studio pottery which countered the Utility drive in the late 1940s and early 1950s. His innate resourcefulness and understanding of what the public wanted was a perfect solution to his situation. In these early activities Rothschild positions himself as a trailblazer for the new and the modern. As well as sourcing studio ceramics that differed from the Utility norm, he also printed hand-block design on linen (figure 8), which was coupon free, and he used parachute silk and fishermen's nets as wall hangings and room dividers.

²⁷⁹ Ken Stradling, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (17 January 2013). Uncatalogued.



Big motifs on small pieces

Make a small settee more imposing by a fabric with a motif in bright colours. Fruit chintz, 37s. a yard, 31 inches wide, from Primavera of Sloane Street



Formality for period chairs

An all-over design reveals the characteristic shape of a Provençal chair. Lime and figured white linen, 33s. a yard, 30 inches wide, from Primavera

Figure 8: Advertisement for Primavera textiles, 1949

The textiles Primavera sold at this time were not particularly modern but they were bright as shown in figure 8 with the fruit chintz on the left and the lime and white linen on the right. It was more affordable to buy new material to cover old furniture than it was to buy new pieces; Rothschild makes this explicit in the above advertisements, demonstrating his understanding of the market.

I have watched Primavera's shop window with delight. There is always something different. Lovely English pottery, hand-made rugs, hand-woven material, coupon-free materials. Only a limited edition of each pattern. A length of hand-woven material narrowly striped in gold and white, was snapped up by the owner of a Regency house almost before it was unwrapped.²⁸⁰

The reference to textiles as a 'limited edition' suggests exclusivity, making items more desirable. Of course the item is a 'limited edition' because of stock restrictions but, by turning the negative into a positive, Rothschild could appeal to the post-war consumer who desired to be at the forefront of the new and the modern.

²⁸⁰ 'Primavera', *Exclusive London*, September 1947 [DT.HRA/3/2, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].



Figure 9: Sewing table designed by Frank Austin and Neville Ward, c.1950

With regard to furniture Primavera stocked items such as the Hillestak chairs which could be found in other retail outlets. Significantly Rothschild also stocked items specially designed for Primavera as can be seen in figure 9. This demonstrates that Rothschild was willing to take a risk on investing in designers, without the guarantee that their work would sell. It also works in reverse, with the designers clearly being impressed enough with Primavera to trust that Rothschild would be able to sell their work.

Primavera sold declaredly “modern” furniture and lighting to match – the Walters standard lamp, Danish, and later Japanese paper shades, as well as a range of slatted beech plywood shades [...] But Primavera did not subscribe to the extremes of the ‘Festival’ style in the 1950s, particularly when it came to furniture. Rothschild favoured solid wood and in general “everything natural appealed”. For Rothschild ‘contemporary’ styles could be “just as vulgar as Mock Tudor or debased Hepplewhite.”²⁸¹

The restrictions imposed on stock and the physical size of the shop meant that Primavera could only operate on a small scale, catering towards a limited consumer base. As his main competitors were larger businesses this did have repercussions; for example the Leach pottery did not deal with Primavera until the

²⁸¹ Harrod, 1995, p.12.

1950s as most of their stock was bought up by Heal's.²⁸² Despite these limitations, Rothschild maintained that the ethos of Primavera was one of inclusion, the idea that it was open as a space to people of all classes. Rothschild defined it as being 'anti-snob', referring in part to the traditions of other retailers, such as Muriel Rose and Dunbar-Hay, which may have relied on their middle-class customers having an innate knowledge or appreciation of design.²⁸³ It is likely that the customers who frequented Rose and Dunbar-Hay's outlets, turned to Primavera after the war. How successful Rothschild was in expanding on this existing clientele, and whether there was some footfall from the lower middle or working-classes, is undocumented; certainly for those coming in to buy the prices were aimed at the more professional class.

[In Primavera] I priced a coffee set for six people at £2 7s. 6d., small early morning tea sets at 31/3, a lidded butter dish at 5/- and cruet sets at 7/6 [...] stoneware vases and bowls always lend themselves to flower and leaf arrangements. These come in all sizes starting from £1.²⁸⁴

This excerpt from *The Queen* is one of a number of small features from this period which detail stock and price. According to a writer at *Harper's Bazaar* Primavera 'is well worth a visit if only for the pleasure of seeing pretty pieces for your house again, at prices that a human being can afford'.²⁸⁵ That these advertisements are appearing in publications such as *Harper's Bazaar*, *The Queen*, *The Lady*, *House and Gardens*, and *Vogue*, all of which would have had an upper middle-class readership, demonstrates further that this was the consumer base Primavera was realistically aiming at despite Rothschild's own assertion that good design could be and should be available to all.

The average customer at Primavera was looking to update his or her home, possibly one of the townhouses unscathed by war, or one of the new modern homes being slowly developed out in the suburbs. They were civil servants or teachers, as well as more creative types. As his daughter recounts:

²⁸² Rothschild, interview, 2003.

²⁸³ Rothschild, interview, 2003.

²⁸⁴ 'Editorial Comment', *The Queen*, May 1946 [DT.HRA/3/2, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle]. To put these prices into context, the average weekly wage in 1950 was £6.8.0 (Sandbrook, 2005, p.109).

²⁸⁵ 'Pers for your House', *Harper's Bazaar*, June 1947 [DT.HRA/3/2, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].

Well, I mean it's a clientele of architects and actors and people like that, the word gets round a certain set [...] Because they're looking for something a little bit different and something a bit exciting, thought provoking, I think those are his customers'.²⁸⁶

As the 1940s drew to a close the opportunity for consumers to engage with more exciting products increased. The 1946 *Britain Can Make It* exposition, organised by the Council of Industrial Design, had been intending to showcase the best of British manufacturing to an international market. The exhibition was the idea of Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade. Initially thought of in 1945, plans for the exhibition moved quickly for its launch in September 1946. The result was an exhibition of products largely unavailable to a British market, earning it the reimagined title of 'Britain Can't Have It'.²⁸⁷ In contrast the 1951 *Festival of Britain* had a wider appeal, taking place across the country and intending to provide a sense of British identity through the art, science and technology.

The 1951 Festival was conceived in the immediate post-war period [...] It was to be both a celebration of Britain's victory in the Second World War and a proclamation of its national recovery. There were nine official, government-funded exhibitions in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, twenty-three designated arts festivals, as well as a pleasure garden in Battersea. Eight and a half million people visited the London South Bank exhibition [...].²⁸⁸

In May 1951 on the bomb damaged South Bank, the *Festival of Britain* offered a change from the grey days of austerity, it offered 'colour, light, innovation, flair and the excitement of the new'.²⁸⁹ Primavera, having built up a comfortable consumer base and diverse stock in a short five years, was to be a small part of the event.

²⁸⁶ L. Rothschild, interview, 2012.

²⁸⁷ Becky E. Conekin, *The Autobiography of a Nation: The 1951 Festival of Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp.50-1.

²⁸⁸ Conekin, 2003, p.4

²⁸⁹ White, 2008, p.46.



Figure 10: Dining table by Rural Industries Bureau, dining chairs by Primavera Ltd, Home and Gardens Pavillion, Festival of Britain, 1951

In the Home and Gardens Pavillion, designed sets of imagined kitchens and parlours featured Primavera furniture including sewing tables, kitchen stools and armchairs.²⁹⁰ Figure 10 shows dining chairs by Primavera Ltd in one such set. Rothschild later recalled that the Festival 'had a tremendous story to tell, it had opposition of people who didn't quite get on with each other therefore there was this startling contrast, I thought it was marvellous'.²⁹¹ Given the scale of the Festival, the opposition Rothschild refers to is easily found: those working on the Festival came from a range of backgrounds. For example, the Council of Industrial Design was more concerned with promoting Britain as a leading force in design and technology, whereas the Rural Industries Bureau focused on promoting Britain's more traditional output, such as ironwork and leatherwork. In this way both organisations offered a different understanding of 'Britishness'. This opposition can be seen in Primavera's own contribution to the show. The chairs in figure 10 are wooden with what appears to be woven basket seats, all appealing to a traditional rural aesthetic and yet the shaping of the overall chair, in particular the cut out shapes on the back, engage with British modernism. Furthermore Rothschild's apparent delight in the opposition and difference is very telling of Rothschild's own eclecticism as demonstrated through his

²⁹⁰ Council of Industrial Design: *Festival of Britain, Home and Gardens Pavillion, South Bank, (1951)* [photographs]. DCA1569/628/35; DCA1593/628/5; DCA1604/628/68]. Design Council Archive, University of Brighton.

²⁹¹ Rothschild, interview, 2003.

buying, exhibiting and collecting habits. He commented that he had found the 1951 Festival of Britain 'fantastically stimulating' and perhaps this in part motivated him to explore the possibilities of exhibiting alongside his retail activities.²⁹²

1952 – 1963: New Consumers

The Festival of Britain was to be the last hurrah of the Labour government. In October 1951 the election of a Conservative government marked yet another turning point for the immediate post-war years. Unlike the previous Labour government, the Conservatives inherited a relatively stable economy, where 'the transition from wartime to peacetime production and distribution had been accomplished' and 'the most painful elements of reconstruction had been completed'.²⁹³ The core aims of the Welfare State were continued by the new government, although some nationalised industries (iron, steel, and road haulage) were returned to private ownership. With regard to housing the Conservative's return to power saw a promise of 300,000 homes being built per year, which was achieved. They encouraged the building of both council and private houses, removing restriction on land use and building licenses. Outwardly successful in terms of numbers, these actions had an adverse effect on quality and space.²⁹⁴

Overall Britain's economy had been greatly improving since 1951 with an increase in the rate of GDP combined with low inflation rates, as well as low unemployment. Developments in science and technology, built upon research carried out during wartime, identified Britain as an international force. According to Hobsbawm, much of the post-war boom was powered by a technological revolution. He argues that this led to a number of changes including, the transformation of everyday life, not just in terms of consumer goods such as television and radio, but also with regard to food preservation. Hobsbawm argues that 'the major characteristic of the Golden Age was that it needed constant and heavy investment and, increasingly, that it did not need people, except as consumers'.²⁹⁵ The spectacle of the young Queen's Coronation in 1953 is a good example of Britain moving out of

²⁹² Rothschild, interview, 2003.

²⁹³ Schenk, 1994, p.313.

²⁹⁴ Lowe, 2005, p.258.

²⁹⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914 – 1991* (London: Penguin, 1994), pp.264-6.

austerity and into a Golden Age. The first coronation to be televised it portrayed a Britain embracing technology while keeping hold of tradition. This shift towards the new and the modern was propelled by this the consumer of the 1950s was a different type compared to the early twentieth-century.

Growing consumerism in this period is often attributed to the under-30-year-old market, who are portrayed as being single, in work and with an expendable income allowing them to engage in consumer activities, particularly fashion and music, in a way their parents' generation had not. Although this consumer group has been well documented, they are subject to a number of assumptions which need to be addressed.²⁹⁶ Firstly, much of this activity, particularly around fashion and design, begins and flourishes in London. The regions were slow to respond to these changes; this can be attributed to geography as well as economic difference between the capital and the regions.²⁹⁷ In London Mary Quant opened her boutique Bazaar in 1955 on Kings Road and John Stephen opened his men's clothing boutique, His Clothes, in nearby Carnaby Street in 1957 - these were forerunners of the boutique culture which sprung up in Chelsea and Kensington in the 1960s. That Rothschild's Primavera was already established in this area (Sloane Street being in walking distance of the Kings Road) is important to the continued success of the venture with these new customers walking by.

Secondly, the importance of the young married couple buying for their first home is often overlooked in favour of the young, free and single consumer.²⁹⁸ Larger pieces of furniture were passed down from family or purchased through store credit. However, buying new tableware, decorative pieces such as wall hangings, or a one-off chair or table, was a way of adding a personal touch to a home. This in itself was still an issue of class. Spending on domestic items increased 115% during the period 1951 to 1961; this spending was not evenly distributed over all the social classes.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁶ See: John Benson, *The Rise of Consumer Society in Britain, 1880 – 1980*, (London: Longman, 1994).; David Bell and Joanne Hollows, 'Towards a history of lifestyle', in *Historicizing Lifestyle: Mediating Taste, Consumption and Identity from the 1900s to the 1970s*, ed. by David Bell & Joanne Hollows (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), pp.1 - 20.

²⁹⁷ See: Hilary Fawcett, "'We Gotta Get Out of This Place": Fashion, Gender and Identity in the North East in 1960s', *Made in Newcastle: Visual Culture*, ed. by Hilary Fawcett (Newcastle: Northumbria University Press, 2007), pp.19-35.

²⁹⁸ Arthur Marwick, *A History of the Modern British Isles, 1914 – 1999* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p.241.

²⁹⁹ Catherine McDermott, 'Popular taste and the campaign for contemporary design in the 1950s', in *Did Britain Make it? British design in context, 1946 - 1986*, ed. by Penny Sparke (London: Design Council, 1986), pp.145 - 155.

In the first instance the availability of housing itself was still problematic; a survey conducted among young couples in Bethnal Green found that just under half of newlywed couples had to live with their parents while they waited for council housing. Attempts to save for a deposit were rare given that building societies and banks usually demanded 30% to 40% of the house value.³⁰⁰ Despite this, this demographic remained a target for both advertisers and the government drive for 'good taste':

There were sound economic reasons for this, usually cloaked in moral arguments. One furniture retailers complained that 20% of the national income was spent on tobacco and drink while only 3.5% went on furnishing.³⁰¹

In Catherine McDermott's examination of 'good taste' promotion during this period, the influence of the Council of Industrial Design was found to be paramount. Developments in the class system and in family life led to the female consumer becoming a vital part of the economy. In her discussion on the housewife of the 1950s, Angela Partington comments that the 'consumption of new goods and services became part of the housewife's expanded job-description'.³⁰² The position of women as consumers was recognised by the CoID. They attempted in earnest to promote their ideas of 'good design' by encouraging publications such as *Woman* to run articles on the same affordable contemporary furniture that also featured in the higher end publications such as *House and Garden*.³⁰³ *Woman*, first established in 1937, had been initially marketed towards a middle-class readership; however the:

[...] aspirational nature of magazine reading [...] and unparalleled successful expansion meant that by the 1950s it sold over 2 million copies per issue. The subsequent handing-on of each issue between readers undoubtedly meant that the magazine reached a cross-section of women, many of whom were working-class.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁰ Sally MacDonald and Julia Porter, *Putting on the Style: Setting Up Home in the 1950s* (London: The Geffrye Museum, 1990).

³⁰¹ MacDonald & Porter, 1990.

³⁰² Angela Partington, 'The designer housewife in the 1950s', in *A View from the Interior: Women and Design*, 2nd Edition, ed. by Judy Attfield & Pat Kirkham (London: The Women's Press Ltd, 1995), p.206.

³⁰³ McDermott, 1986, p.160-1.

³⁰⁴ Trevor Keeble, 'Domesticating modernity: *Woman* magazine and the modern home', in *Design and the Modern Magazine*, ed. by Jeremy Aynsely & Kate Forde (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p.96.

It was this wide demographic that the Council hoped to reach. Encouraged by the Council, *Woman* ran a series of features throughout the 1950s in which they visited new homemakers. The overall tone of the articles was informal and therefore more appealing to the (female) homemaker than the design-speak previously employed by the Council in *The Things We See* series:

What is significant about the 'Woman Visits the New Homemakers' series is that it establishes a somewhat 'domestic' approach to the information concerning the design, construction and decoration of domestic space [...] Any distance which might have been felt between the everyday homemakers and the design professional is effectively removed due to the magazine's mediation [...] it sought to explain and justify the intrusions of modernity whilst all the time praising its benefits. In doing so, it trod a very careful line between maintaining the 'modern' cause, to which its editor had been conscripted, and ensuring not to alienate its readers by presenting anything artificial or unrealistic.³⁰⁵

In keeping with this direct appeal to female homemakers, in 1952 Whitechapel Art Gallery held an exhibition entitled 'Setting Up Home' with the premise of showing how one could create a modern living space on a budget. The catalogue for the exhibition was written as a letter to a young couple just returned from their honeymoon. With a £50 budget Bill (the husband) was encouraged to look at modern, practical furniture, well made and 'honest'. His wife – Betty – would then look after it: 'you are lucky to have a wife who finds homemaking fun, but even luckier that Betty will never be one of those house proud horrors who keeps the place so like a museum its unbearable to live in'.³⁰⁶ As loaded as it is with gendered assumptions this idea of the furniture being easy to look after, easy to dust and keep clean, is important. As Alison Ravetz writes:

The year 1950 might be taken as a watershed to mark the close of one era and the opening of the another, because by then two things of profound significance had occurred: the middle-class wife had finally and irrevocably lost her servants and the working-class wife had gained, or was in the process of gaining a whole house to look after [...] Space was left for an apparently new figure, the 'ordinary housewife'. Rich or poor, they were all now multiple role, all-purpose, 'high-value-low-cost' housewives, responsible for the material and personal care of other family members, for active

³⁰⁵ Keeble, 2007, p.108-9.

³⁰⁶ As cited in MacDonald & Porter, 1990.

consumption in the market and, of course, for housekeeping.³⁰⁷

With the Council promoting their own idea of 'good design', Rothschild had his own ethos as articulated in figure 11. In this advertisement we see the Primavera ship, flying the flag for 'Honesty of Design' and 'Quality Service', sailing the dangerous waters of 'Bad Taste', 'Lack of Originality' and 'Piracy of Design'.



Figure 11: The Good Ship Primavera, 1958

None of these statements are at odds with the Council's ideas but the tone is different. I would argue that the Council focused their attention on educating consumers on taste, rather than looking to the costs of manufacturing and the availability of quality products, thereby allowing consumers to make their own choices. Certainly, Primavera is being promoted as a place of 'good taste', but the onus is on Rothschild to provide the goods, providing the consumer with freedom of choice. The advert itself, which can be attributed to Sam Smith, is striking in its illustration. It featured in *ARK* magazine, which was published by the Royal College

³⁰⁷ Alison Ravetz, 'A View from the Interior', in *A View from the Interior: Women and Design*, 2nd Edition, ed. by Judy Attfield & Pat Kirkham (London: The Women's Press Ltd, 1995), p.189.

of Art from 1950 until 1978. It is of note that Rothschild was looking to bring in customers from the art schools, branching out from his mainly middle-class clientele of the 1940s and early 1950s. According to Tony Birks, this appeal was successful:

In this era, Henry Rothschild was to the world of applied arts [...] what Helen Lessor was to the first significant post-war clutch of British painters at her Beaux Arts Gallery in Bruton Lane. I mention Helen Lessor in this context since, as with Rothschild, there was a social dimension to her and her gallery's influence. Artists of all ages would gather there, and a diversity of artists would get the first chance to shine in what were in both cases quite modest premises.³⁰⁸

Rothschild's vision of good design can be seen clearly in the formation of Primavera Contracts Ltd. This subsidiary company was established around 1960 and its main objective was the commercial production of textiles and furnishings for the trade. Unfortunately there is very little archival material regarding this business. An editorial in *Design* magazine in 1957 details Rothschild move into interior design, as he was asked to refurbish common rooms in two of the Colleges at Oxford University:

Not much money was available and Mr Rothschild worked to a strict budget. He was, however, given a free hand to choose the furniture and colour schemes, and the rooms have an integration that is lacking many of these common rooms [...] In the Senior Common Room at St Hilda's some of the former furniture was retained; chairs by H.K Furniture Ltd, with a deep red upholstery have been added, and the curtains, 'Cornucopia' by Edinburgh Weavers Ltd, are grey, black and white; the ceiling is dark grey, the walls light grey and the paintwork white. The Lindsay Memorial Room at Balliol is a student's entertaining room. The chair and table are by Ernest Race Ltd, and the curtains, hand-printed by Michael O'Connor, were designed for the room. The floor is covered with Dutch rush matting, and the fabrics for the chair coverings, in yellow, red, orange and turquoise, were specially selected by Mr Rothschild and are not part of the manufacturer's standard range.³⁰⁹

This project may have been the inspiration for Primavera Contracts Ltd, as the main customers of the company seems to be universities and colleges. In 1964

³⁰⁸ Tony Birks, 'The Early Years', in *Ruth Duckworth: Modernist Sculptor*, (London: Lund Humphries, 2005), p.26.

³⁰⁹ 'College Common Rooms', *Design*, July 1957 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

Primavera Contracts designed a set of textiles known as the University Range which were exhibited in February 1965 (figure 12).³¹⁰

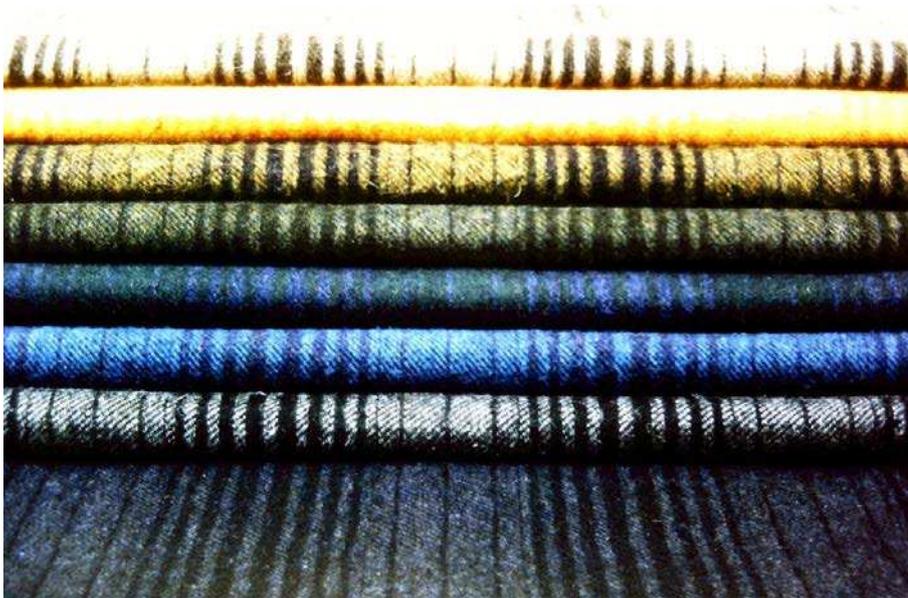


Figure 12: The University Range, Primavera Contracts Ltd, 1965

In 1965 these striped bedspreads won an award through the Design Centre Awards, organised by the Council of Industrial Design. One reviewer felt the awards favoured goods that were aesthetically pleasing but did not interrogate their functionality or durability. As an example of this they cite the Primavera blanket, asking:

For instance, that pretty blanket of Primavera's which receives an award this year: how would it stand up to *Which's* comparisons on size, weight, warmth, strength, pilling, mothproofness, washing and cleaning? The shopping public ought to know.³¹¹

Such a statement suggests that the writer thought the blanket would not prove a good buy for the universities or the shopping public. It seems unlikely that Rothschild would have allowed a product to go out that he felt failed in some way, or that the Council of Industrial Design would award a bad design and therefore the example of Primavera's blanket could be coincidental, with the writer endeavouring to make a more general point. Rothschild himself stated that the Contracts company had been more of a social endeavour than a commercial one.³¹²

³¹⁰ The blankets were displayed alongside stoneware by Marianne de Trey and John Reeve. It is likely that the textiles were an 'add-on' to the exhibition.

³¹¹ 'Time to grow up (or get out of the living room)', *The Architect's Journal*, 19 May 1965 [DT.HRA/3/17, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].

³¹² Rothschild, interview, 2003.

As well as the perceived need to educate consumers on good taste, the other obstacle faced by manufacturers and makers was that of availability. Where were the outlets that could provide modern and contemporary furniture design? According to MacDonald and Porter sourcing furniture could prove difficult, even within the fashionable centre of London:

Only a small number of retailers specialised in contemporary furniture, notably Heal's and Woollams in the West End of London and Bowmans in Camden Town. There were also small shops that sold on-off items, the most fashionable of which was Primavera in Sloane Street. Some up-market stores in the suburbs such as Dunns of Bromley and Harris and Gibson in Ilford stocked small quantities. Outside London it could be extremely difficult to find local retailers who stocked contemporary styles.³¹³

MacDonald and Porter go on to state that the main customers for the contemporary style were 'to be found amongst the liberal professional classes' and that the working-class homemaker - whom the Council of Industrial Design had failed to attract - felt more comfortable with 'official canons of taste', with which they were more familiar.³¹⁴ As already stated, Primavera catered towards a middle-class consumer, but arguably within that the younger middle-class, setting up a home. Interested in pottery from a young age through trips with her parents, the potter Jane Hamlyn recalls buying a small Lucie Rie bowl from Primavera in the early 1960s.

And I remember the Lucie Rie pots in the window on the right and I know they were those candle-shaped [...] so white, straight up, cylindrical but at the top rounded with the hole in the top but rounded, curved round at the top, they weren't straight at the top, and then they had a small hole and they had a white volcanic kind of glaze on the outside and I don't remember whether maybe even one or two of them might have had a very simple flower arrangement in them. They were sort of vases. And I think I went away, I can't remember exactly, but I know that I did save up and go back and buy a bowl, with a simple thrown foot ring you could only see from the bottom, thrown and then I think when it was fairly soft made oval and it had a dark brown rim.³¹⁵

Hamlyn would be an example of the type of customer Primavera had in the early 1960s. She comments that she saw the shop as 'rather sophisticated' and that

³¹³ MacDonald & Porter, 1990.

³¹⁴ MacDonald & Porter, 1990.

³¹⁵ Jane Hamlyn, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (10 October 2012). Uncatalogued.

she had to save up for the Lucie Rie bowl.³¹⁶ She was by no means a regular customer of Primavera but this exchange demonstrates Primavera as a place where even those with limited means could purchase something both aesthetically pleasing and useful for the home. The domestic was at the heart of British character - it was based on the comfort of home, and the notion that an Englishman's home is his castle.³¹⁷ Perhaps this need to be in control of - and not controlled by - domestic space, and to use it as a form of expression, ties in with the popularity of the domestic ware Rothschild provided through Primavera. In response to these new consumers and with the lifting of restrictions, Rothschild began to introduce a wider range of stock.

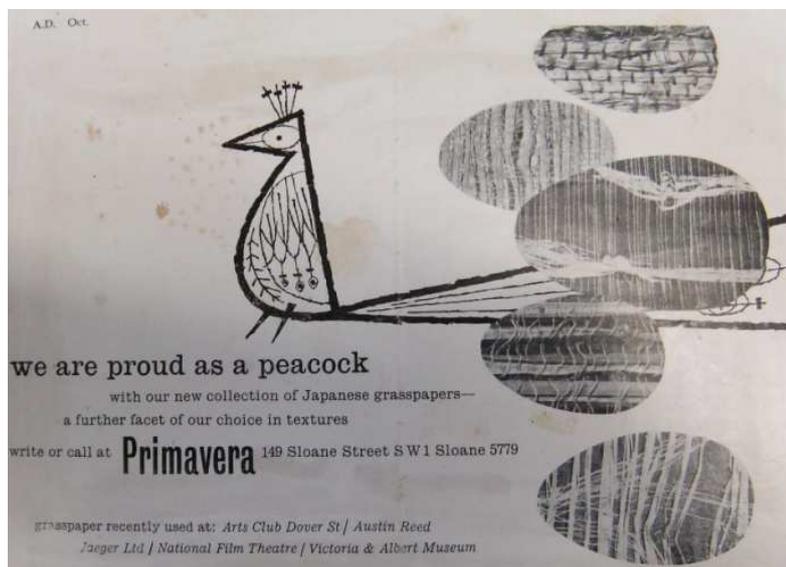


Figure 13: Advertisement for Japanese grass paper, c.1960

One such new introduction was that of Japanese grasspapers as illustrated in figure 13 which states that Primavera ‘are proud as a peacock’ to introduce this new collection, with reference made to past customers including the National Film Theatre and the Victoria and Albert Museum. The retail of this grasspaper demonstrates that Rothschild was providing his young middle-class consumers with something different and contemporary: the simplicity and delicacy of the grasspaper contrasted with the heavy decorative style of the pre-war generation. Rothschild himself had just married in 1952 and, although he could no longer be classified as ‘youthful’ at 39, he and his wife, Pauline, decorated their own home with stock from Primavera.³¹⁸ This can be

³¹⁶ Hamlyn, interview, 2012.

³¹⁷ Sandbrook, 2005, p.33.

³¹⁸ Rothschild’s wife Pauline was always in the background of the running of Primavera but, as recollected by Liz Rothschild, Anthony Shaw, Fiona Adamczewski and Gordon Baldwin,

seen in family photographs such as figure 14, where the Japanese grasspaper is visible on the wall behind the flowers.



Figure 14: Japanese grasspaper at Henry and Pauline Rothschild's home, c.1960

Primavera prided itself on providing objects and furnishings that were different to the norm. As one editorial states 'they have the kind of things you don't see anywhere else in the country'.³¹⁹ In addition to the Japanese grasspaper this statement alludes to a range of toys and gifts including Dutch dolls, straw figures and Danish pastry moulds.³²⁰ Rothschild calls these items 'Doodles, Playthings and Useful Occupations for Young and Old', stating clearly that such items are for the 'Discerning and Elegant' and that they do not supply 'treetrunks, raffia, leather thongs or plastic paint', the implication being that these latter items are cheap, commonplace or inferior.³²¹ Other advertisements and editorials from this period indicates that Rothschild continued to sell more traditional stock including ceramics, textiles and furniture but whether it was typical or atypical, the key message of these advertisements was that Primavera was a place for the 'discerning' customer³²² and that visitors to the shop would be regarded

she often provided a counterpoint to Rothschild's strong temperament, keeping the peace between him and members of staff and moderating the letters Rothschild sent to *Crafts* and *Ceramic Review*.

³¹⁹ 'Primavera', *The Queen*, April 1961. [DT.HRA/3/4, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].

³²⁰ Rothschild had an exhibition of Dutch pastry moulds in 1960 which is discussed further in chapter five.

³²¹ 'Advert for Primavera: Christmas Box', unknown publication, c.1960. [DT.HRA/3/4, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].

³²² 'Advert for Primavera: Christmas Box', c.1960.

as 'connoisseurs'.³²³ The language used here is not just about how Rothschild wanted Primavera to be seen but also demonstrates an awareness on Rothschild's part that his customers wanted to be viewed as knowledgeable about good taste and good design and that, through shopping at Primavera, they would be held in high regard by their contemporaries. Deborah Cohen traces this desire to bring objects of 'good taste' into the home back to the late nineteenth-century, and this was particularly true of objects that had a degree of 'otherness' to them:

Certain kinds of objects, the odder the better, communicated an artist flair. It was the 'delightful irregularity' of Japanese bric-a-brac which appealed to all those who rebelled against the oppressive order of the matching room [...] As shops set out to cultivate their customers' tastes the distinction between art and commerce eroded.³²⁴

As Cohen's research suggests, the middle-class consumer is a highly significant player in retail history, particularly in the retail of objects for the home. They are more likely to be concerned with the latest fashions and trends whilst also looking to affirm their own fragile identity.³²⁵ Although quietened by the events of the First World War, this engagement continued and can be seen on the shop floor of Primavera.

Overall this period marks a shift from the early years of Primavera, one in which the middle-class customers that Rothschild sought to attract were becoming more engaged with design and, most significantly, had the money to participate. This growing affluence, coupled with a desire to be done with the bleak austerity of the immediate post-war, would only increase in the 1960s as Britain (but more specifically London) became a focal point on the international stage with regard to popular culture.

1963 - 1970: 'Swinging' Sixties?

In 1964 the Labour Party came back into power after thirteen years as the Opposition. During the election the new Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, had emphasised his own

³²³'Advert for Primavera: Connoisseurs', unknown publication, c.1960. [DT.HRA/3/4, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].

³²⁴ Deborah Cohen, *Household Goods: The British and their Possessions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), pp.66-9.

³²⁵ Cohen, 2006, p.140.

background, a Yorkshireman who 'owed his success to plain living and ordinary values'.³²⁶ Wilson understood the cultural changes in society and reflected the apparently growing 'classlessness', that is, a growing fluidity and movement between the working and middle-classes. It was a sharp shift away from the Conservatives who could not seem to reach the younger generation. Alongside this growing feeling of 'classlessness', typically the 1960s are viewed as a period of 'hedonism, liberation and excitement' with an emphasis on 'tolerance, freedom and, above all, love'.³²⁷ However, Sandbrook argues that the 'British experience in the 1960s was much more complicated, diverse and contradictory than it has often been given credit for'.³²⁸ As Ackroyd states:

[...] the phenomenon of the 1960s was essentially theatrical and artificial in nature [...] To see the decade clearly it is important to see it steadily, and as a whole, encompassing all its realities.³²⁹

As is stated in the introduction to this thesis, the cultural and economic life of London is not always representative of the wider British Isles. The 'Swinging Sixties' is a prime example of this disparity, which describes the capital more than the outer regions. In the other regions of the UK these developments in youth culture would not be felt until the latter half of the decade. As Hilary Fawcett states:

Commonly received perceptions about the 'look' of the '60s are based on iconography of dominant London based media [...] They are consistently offered as evidence of the supposedly classless new world for young people in the 1960s [...] This is a highly questionable premise and far from a universal given. For many young people across the country an engagement with a bright new consumer world in which they were supposed to play a central part was largely illusory in the first half of the 1960s.³³⁰

As for London itself, a growth in affluence was becoming more and more visible. In the twenty years since the war real earnings had risen by approximately 70 per cent and the baby boom of the immediate post-war resulted in a new generation fully

³²⁶ Sandbrook, 2005, p.5.

³²⁷ Sandbrook, 2005, p.xxii.

³²⁸ Sandbrook, 2005, p.xx.

³²⁹ Ackroyd, 2001, p.759.

³³⁰ Fawcett, 2007, p.20.

engaged with consumer culture.³³¹ London was becoming a city for the young; however this had been a gradual progression rather than the sudden explosion that exists in the popular imagination. As Ackroyd states:

There was no sudden transition, in other words, to the 'Swinging Sixties'. There were cafes and coffee bars and jazz-clubs in Soho; there were clothes-shops and small bistros in Chelsea some years before the efflorescence of boutiques and discotheques.³³²

The popular image of 'Swinging London' became more visible as the decade went on, largely due to the media and the emergence of celebrity culture. Notable examples of this include the music television show *Ready Steady Go* first broadcast in 1963, the depiction of a model's life by Julie Christie in 1965's *Darling*, and 1966's *Blow Up*, which offered a fictional account of the fashion photographer, loosely based on the life of David Bailey. As Mark Donnelly writes:

London was seen to be at the heart of the wider social and cultural loosening of the sixties, soaking up influences from the provinces and abroad and morphing them into an exotic motif of hedonism, modernity and affluent liberation. This newly fashioned identity was then transmitted for wider national and international consumption via a range of media.³³³

The emergence of pop art full of colour and humour contrasted with the austerity of the 1950s. The convergence of pop art and retail is best demonstrated with Terence Conran's store Habitat which was founded in 1964 with the ethos of selling a 'pre-digested shopping programme' which included a range of furniture, lighting, textiles and kitchenware that could be bought in part or in full, mixed and matched. Conran was as interested in the branding of his store as much as he was in the contents of it:

The design of the packaging, advertising and shop interiors was crucial to this. Big, brightly coloured red-and-yellow carrier bags with Pop Art-style drawings of Habitat objects were a reminder that the shop was 'in fashion'. The stores were very simple with open-plan, quarry-tiled floors, timber shelving and discreet

³³¹ Ackroyd, 2001, p.738.

³³² Ackroyd, 2001, pp.754-5.

³³³ Mark Donnelly, *Sixties Britain: Culture, Society and Politics* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2014), p.91.

groupings of furniture, goods and accessories to suggest a particular 'look' or 'lifestyle'.³³⁴

Situated nearby to both Sloane Square and Walton Street, on the corner of Sloane Avenue and Fulham Road, Habitat is often viewed as a trailblazer in modern design. Marwick writes that 'instead of individuals (middle-class, of course, rather than working-class) having to search around for their own individual items of style and charm Habitat and its imitators would do the work for them'.³³⁵ This demonstrates that as much as there may have been a cultural revolution and an embrace of freshness and brightness, underneath that was also a blatant commercialism and the notion it was possible to sell taste and a readymade lifestyle. In this way, Habitat was a trailblazer in branding and consumption. However, Primavera can also be regarded as a trailblazing enterprise. Rothschild was careful in how he presented Primavera and he sold stock that was unavailable elsewhere. He was also a character of strong conviction, unafraid to speak his mind.³³⁶ During her time as curator at Bristol City Art Gallery, Cleo Saunders recalls:

I always found him slightly intimidating because he was very clear about what he thought was good and what wasn't. There was no ambiguity at all. And he would come out and he would absolutely just say "Well that's terrible" or "I think that's awful" he would say, and just like that, and you would think "Ooh!" So they were very hospitable and they would make you very welcome but you didn't exactly feel - you felt slightly tense because they were people of such strong decisions.³³⁷

Although both Habitat and Primavera were both ran by strong characters I would argue the difference between the two ventures lies in motivation. The ethos of Primavera was never about commercialism or consumption and although Primavera had developed a reputation of quality by the 1960s, Rothschild would never have considered Primavera as a brand in the way Conran did with Habitat. Primavera was able to exist within this timeframe as something of an antidote to that, yet offering something that still differed from the norm. In considering this difference, Fiona Adamczewski, Rothschild's assistant at the Walton Street premises, comments:

³³⁴ Cheryl Buckley, *Designing Modern Britain* (London: Reaktion Press, 2007), p.177.

³³⁵ Marwick, 1982, p.139.

³³⁶ Adamczewski, interview, 2013.

³³⁷ Cleo Saunders & Karin Walton, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (16 January 2013). Uncatalogued.

Everything that Henry achieved he achieved on his own ability and strength of purpose. He was very determined and so admirable. Because one must remember that when he started the whole thing there wasn't any Terence Conran or Habitat or anything like that. This was really a pioneering operation and everyone was influenced by it. People looked at it and thought, I'd like to do something like that.³³⁸

That Conran opened Habitat in the fashionable Kensington and Chelsea area was a deliberate move; if the idea of the 'Swinging Sixties' actually refers more to London than the regions, it can be diluted further to only pockets of London, with Kensington and Chelsea at the epicentre. When Rothschild set up Primavera in the same district in the mid-1940s it was for similar reasons – historically it has been an area of wealth and since Primavera's inception it had provided a middle-to-upper-class customer base. As already shown, Rothschild was able to adapt and cater to the changing needs of his customers with relative ease. Arguably the 1960s was the most difficult period of change but one which Rothschild did overcome to some degree. Until 1967 Primavera was positioned near the top end of Sloane Street which leads onto Sloane Square, only a short walk away from the Kings Road, before moving to Walton Street, close to Habitat. Rothschild was in his 50s during the 1960s and, having known life before the war and the hardships that followed, belonged to a different generation than of the young trendsetters in the Kings Road. Rothschild himself gave no direct accounts of how he saw London at this time but his assistant Ronald Pile offered the following observation:

I think he enjoyed London, he enjoyed the buzz, but from my perspective what Henry cared far more about was the position of art schools at the time and type of students that were coming through and how interesting that was. [...] You know, 1945, a lot of London was still bomb site wasn't it? So you know he lived through this fantastically interesting period. But rather than flared jeans and flower power and so on I imagine it would be more the wonderful [...] the architecture that was coming along, the design world [...] well he clearly was, certainly inclined much more to take an interest and being involved in that sort of area.³³⁹

What this demonstrates is that it was possible to exist in London at this time as a business without having to fully immerse oneself into counter-culture lifestyle. As indicated previously, Rothschild was used to a position outside of the mainstream – his émigré status enforced that to some degree – and he had complete faith in his

³³⁸ Adamczewski, interview, 2013.

³³⁹ Ronald Pile, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (2 October 2012). Uncatalogued.

own vision and direction. Rothschild turned his attention to the art schools and those makers who sought to blur boundaries between art and craft, but he maintained links with the traditional wares. I would maintain that Rothschild succeeded throughout the 1960s because he understood the changing fashions but he also understood that the basis of 'good' design could exist outside of fashion and trends. When questioned about London in the 1960s Fiona Adamczewski answered:

[...] by the '60s things were looking up a bit. It was the '60s after all and there was quite a lot of stuff going on, hopeful kind of stuff. There was an optimistic atmosphere much more than there was in the '50s and we had – I mean he had a reputation, the gallery had a reputation and a lot of people came to it, people of great interest. I could reel off names endlessly but every kind of person from Nureyev the ballet dancer, to somebody like Sandy Shaw who was a pop singer who happened to live in Walton Street and ran around in her bare feet and was always popping in and out.³⁴⁰

Liz Rothschild also recalls some of the 'celebrity' customers including actor Peter Ustinov and the presenter David Attenborough.³⁴¹ As Rothschild told his daughter about these customers, it can be reasoned that he at least recognised the value of their custom and influence. The 1960s saw a rise of 'celebrity' and this can be linked to consumer culture, where there was a degree of cache to shop where the rich and famous shopped: 'people were consumers, aspirational consumers at that'.³⁴²



Figure 15: Henry Rothschild at Primavera, Sloane Street, London, Christmas 1966

³⁴⁰ Adamczewski, interview, 2013.

³⁴¹ L. Rothschild, interview, 2012.

³⁴² Ellis Cashmore, *Celebrity/Culture*, 2nd Edition (London: Routledge, 2014), p.42.

Primavera's appeal to a range of customers can also be attributed to the range of stock. As can be seen in the photograph to the left (figure 15) stock included a paper lamp (in use), woven textiles (it is not clear exactly what these are, possibly coverings for seat cushions), and a selection of toys and games, which a customer is perusing.³⁴³ The photograph on the right shows a selection of wooden toys and ornaments on the shelf. These photographs were taken on Christmas Eve and the emphasis on gifts and novelty items is not unusual for the time of year. In the archive there are lists that relate specifically to Primavera's Christmas stock which demonstrate that Rothschild was importing objects from all over the world as well as sourcing domestic stock. Examples include: a Finnish glass salad bowl, straw stars from Germany, Italian teak and brass salt and pepper set, Japanese table lamps, Indian printed cotton squares, wooden spoons from Wales, and a Noah's Ark with animals made in England.³⁴⁴

These photographs show the last Christmas at Primavera Sloane Street. In 1967 Rothschild moved Primavera to Walton Street, situated about half a mile from the original premises. The move had been decided by the end of the lease in Sloane Street which Rothschild chose not to renew.³⁴⁵ Due in part to its short lifespan, there is little archival material concerning the Walton Street premises. Fiona Adamczewski, who worked there for the entirety, recalls that:

Yes it was one main gallery on street level and downstairs there was a stock room, quite a big one, and a packing facility and upstairs there were offices [...] we had exhibitions there and we carried on just the same as they had done in Sloane Street only on a slightly smaller scale.³⁴⁶

The lack of archival material may also be due to Rothschild himself stepping back from Primavera London at this time. Due to his bipolar diagnosis in 1964, the family had moved to Cambridge for a quieter life; during the time Walton Street was operational Rothschild, by this time in his 50s, spent more time in Cambridge than in London. Adamczewski, along with David Jewell as manager, ran the shop: 'I think what he was quite good at was finding people [...] who would serve him [...] I mean

³⁴³ It is understood that the customer in the photograph is an as-yet-unidentified actor.

³⁴⁴ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Christmas Ideas from Primavera"*, (c.1960s). DT.HRA/5/2/42. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

³⁴⁵ Rothschild, interview, 2003.

³⁴⁶ Adamczewski, interview, 2013.

they'd understand what he wanted, what his aim was, what his vision was'.³⁴⁷ Considering that Rothschild had been so central to the running of Sloane Street, this stepping back marks a shift in his approach to Primavera. I would maintain that his exhibition programme became his main focus from around this period and, as Adamczeski comments, he chose his employees carefully so as to allow him to pursue his other interests. Interestingly, Anthony Shaw recalls Rothschild not being 'terribly happy' about the Walton Street premises, which he felt had become more of a gallery than a shop.³⁴⁸

All I know is Henry poo poed that, he thought it was far too much, he didn't the idea of it being a...so he liked putting on exhibitions but he didn't like, he felt that was too grand to have a gallery as such. He'd much rather have a shop and just fill it with stuff.³⁴⁹

The differentiation that Rothschild made between a gallery and a shop is very significant to the understanding of Primavera. His daughter argues that Rothschild saw Primavera more as a shop than a gallery, always referring to it as such, and the distinction between the two terms seems dependent on clientele and stock:

I suspect he found the gallery world quite pretentious and materialistic and only serving a narrow band of wealthy customers. He liked the broad base the shop attracted, the fact that beauty could be purchased for less than a pound and a lot more. He valued a wide range of objects as beautiful [...] which would seldom if ever be found in a more formal gallery. He liked being on the high street and for the shop to feel accessible and varied not austere and forbidding.³⁵⁰

Following the accepted definition of gallery, 'a room or building for the display or sale of works of art', is not surprising that the term was applied to Primavera.³⁵¹ The words 'gallery' and 'shop' could be seen as interchangeable, with gallery being viewed as more specific and shop as general, but the distinctions between the two were clearly significant to Rothschild. As his daughter comments here, a gallery is suggestive of a

³⁴⁷ Adamczewski, interview, 2013.

³⁴⁸ Shaw, interview, 2012.

³⁴⁹ Shaw, interview, 2012.

³⁵⁰ Liz Rothschild, *Email Exchange with Janine Barker for thesis* (August 2015). Uncatalogued.

³⁵¹ Oxford Dictionaries, *Gallery*. Available at: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/gallery> (Accessed: 14 September 2015).

selective and exclusive outlet and Rothschild did not see Primavera in this way. Liz Rothschild comments that in the obituaries for her father he was described as a 'gallerist' which she found 'strangely disturbing'.³⁵² The term gallery is used often in reviews and subsequent references to Primavera. This usage can be viewed in two ways: firstly, that Primavera was held in high esteem and the word 'gallery' was used to indicate that; secondly, customers wanted to elevate their own status by sourcing their goods from a gallery, rather than a shop. In any case, the use of the term, despite Rothschild's own consternation about it, demonstrates a lack of control one can have over a personal narrative.



Figure 16: Primavera Walton Street, London, c.1970

With regard to its stock, Walton Street (figure 16) carried on in much the same way as Sloane Street: there were ceramics, glass and furniture – as the space allowed - alongside traditional folk art. However, in comparison with the Sloane Street premises (figure 15) there appears to be a greater restraint in how the stock is displayed: there are row of pots displayed in the window, and a jewellery display at the left of the picture (figure 16). The arrangement of the Walton Street premises, orderly and controlled, results in the 'gallery' appearance Rothschild was reportedly concerned about. Along with Shaw's account of Rothschild's involvement, this shift in presentation demonstrates his move away from London.

1970 – 1980: From London to Cambridge

³⁵² L. Rothschild, email exchange, 2015.

Broadly speaking 1970s Britain was a period of political and economic unrest. In June 1970 Edward Heath became Prime Minister. During his four years in post, the Conservative government was forced to declare five states of emergency. Sandbrook comments that the domestic challenges that Heath faced – power cuts and strikes – had a foundation in international changes.

At a very basic level, the power cuts and strikes of the 1970s, the hysterical headlines and predications of disaster, were rooted in profound international challenges, from the collapse of the old colonial empires to the surging tide of globalisation [...]³⁵³

This image of 1970s Britain is in sharp contrast with the affluent and aspirational 1960s. 1970 saw Rothschild finalise his move to Cambridge, although the premises on Kings Parade, opposite Kings College, had been open since late 1958.³⁵⁴ The size and scope of the capital compared to Cambridge is a clear demarcation between the two sites. Rothschild's assistant Ronald Pile remarks that Cambridge would have 'felt a very small place to [Rothschild] after London'.³⁵⁵ Cambridge itself is rather unique as a town; whereas most large cities in Britain have a university, in Cambridge's case the university and the town are deeply intertwined. Much of the real estate is owned and rented out by the university and the university is therefore central to both its identity and its economy.³⁵⁶ This situation applied to Primavera on Kings Parade:

[...] pretty much the whole of the centre of Cambridge is owned by different colleges so it's still, it's owned by Corpus Christi, that particular premises and always will be barring acts of God. [...] I don't know how, how initially supportive of his activities the colleges were, the college was, I imagine they were pleased with what he was doing.³⁵⁷

Alongside the resident population of Cambridge, the town also attracts a number of tourists, drawn to the architecture and culture of the colleges. Kings

³⁵³ Sandbrook, 2011, p.12.

³⁵⁴ In the interest of narrative, the history of the Cambridge premises is discussed here.

³⁵⁵ Pile, interview, 2012.

³⁵⁶ For further reading on the formation of Cambridge as a university town see: Nicholas Chrimes, *Cambridge: Treasure Island in the Fens* (Cambridge: Hobsaerie Publications, 2009).

³⁵⁷ Pile, interview, 2012.

College is of particular interest; Rothschild's choice of renting a property opposite may have been directed by this proximity (figure 17).



Figure 17: Upper floor of Primavera Kings Parade, overlooking Kings College, c.1960s

When Rothschild first took on the Kings Parade premises, he hired the architect Gordon Bowyer to design the layout.³⁵⁸ As seen in figure 18 the white walls and carefully placed lighting brightens the small space. The shelving appears to be adjustable depending on stock but the shelves contain more than can be seen in the later Walton Street premises (figure 16). In this way there is more of connection between Kings Parade and Sloane Street, with Rothschild taking control and returning to Primavera as a shop, rather than a gallery.

³⁵⁸ Gordon Bowyer, along with his wife Ursula Bowyer, ran a successful architecture firm. Their work includes: the Sports Pavilion at the Festival of Britain, 1951; the Cabinet War Rooms and the National Portrait Gallery.



Figure 18: Interior of Primavera, Kings Parade, c.1960s

As discussed in chapter three, Cambridge had been Rothschild's first introduction to British life when he arrived as a student in 1933. As he prepared to open the premises on Kings Parade he was asked 'Why Cambridge?' to which he replied: 'I am a Cambridge man myself, and the combination of university and country town appeals to me'.³⁵⁹ It is of note therefore that in later years Rothschild would recall: 'I've never quite forgiven Cambridge for being so stodgy. You couldn't do in Cambridge what you could do in London'.³⁶⁰ Rothschild does not elucidate further on the specifics of what could not be done in Cambridge but he may have felt the customer base of university students and faculty were not as adventurous as some of the customers in London. In examining the exhibitions he ran in the 1960s when both bases were in operation there is a marked difference. The first key difference is the rarity of a Kings Parade exhibition, with twenty-five over a twenty year period compared to eleven over a three year period at Walton Street.³⁶¹ Secondly, of these twenty-five exhibitions there was a focus on regional artwork ("Viewpoint 1965: Artists from East Anglia", October 1965; "Art from Digswell", October 1966) and textiles and jewellery ("Leading the Way", June 1966; "Semi-precious stones, minerals, and jewellery", December 1967). This

³⁵⁹ 'For the Contemporary Taste: A Shop with its Own Standards', *The Cabinet Maker and Complete House Furnisher*, 19 December 1958 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

³⁶⁰ Rothschild, interview, 2003.

³⁶¹ This can be attributed to Rothschild hosting exhibition outside of Primavera during the 1970s. See chapter five for further discussion.

different approach to the exhibition programme would have been informed by these different customers, drawn more to a sense of the local and familiar than the metropolitan Londoner. Though Rothschild seemed to have a slightly dispassionate view on the shop in Cambridge, for the customers he did attract, the shop heralded something new for the town. Ronald Pile recalls that when he came to join Primavera in the late 1970s there was very little competition for Rothschild,³⁶² and Cleo Saunders, who was the curator at Bristol City Art Gallery during the 1970s, recalls from her student days in Cambridge:

[...] going to Primavera when I was a student, it was amazing because there was nothing else, there wasn't anything else like it in Cambridge [...] I bought some studio pottery mugs and it was a really major thing to start your new student life and to buy these lovely fresh things, and they were actually cheap enough that you could buy them. That was the other thing that you could look around and you would be terrified about the price of ceramics, but actually there were things that you could buy and that was a large part of it, that sense of something. The whole shop felt completely fresh and different from anything that you would see anywhere else because all of it was different [...]³⁶³

This idea of affordability was key to Rothschild's ethos. The potter Jane Hamlyn, from whom Rothschild began buying in the 1970s, recalls that the more expensive ceramics were out of her price range but that 'there were lots of stock shelves with mugs and teapots and functional things [...] and that was the only part of the shop that I could afford to buy anything in myself'.³⁶⁴ With regard to the everyday stock Rothschild established the Kings Parade site with similar aims to the London premises with more emphasis placed on textiles: 'Fabrics, wallpaper, furniture will be sold and Cambridge residents will see on display some 4000 textile patterns, mainly of contemporary prints and weaves'.³⁶⁵ At this time Primavera was only on one floor of the townhouse before expanding over the other two floors of the building in 1964.

³⁶² Pile, interview, 2012.

³⁶³ Saunders & Walton, interview, 2013.

³⁶⁴ Jane Hamlyn, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (10 October 2012). Uncatalogued.

³⁶⁵ 'London Firm's Cambridge Shop', *Cambridge Daily News*, 1 December 1958 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

In 1970 when, the Kings Parade premises was the only outlet, Rothschild continued his exploration of craft, looking more and more outwards to Europe, bringing European, particularly German, craft to the UK through exhibitions. These connections coincided with Britain becoming an official part of the European Economic Community in 1973. Being German born and, crucially open to working with German makers, Rothschild was able to navigate the link between Britain and Germany with relative ease, but crucially this change in status meant it was easier for Rothschild to import and export the goods he wished to sell.³⁶⁶ This included an increasing interest in products from India, including carvings, silks, and clothing, culminating in an exhibition in 1977 called "Selected for Cambridge, Collected From India" held at both Kings Parade and Kettle's Yard (figure 19).



Figure 19: Examples of clothing for sale sourced from India, c.1970s

In 1971 the Crafts Advisory Committee (later known as the Crafts Council) was founded with the aim of advising and instructing the Government on the needs of the artist craftsman. It had been felt that the position and significance of the crafts had been ignored and though the makers had survived, it had been an 'uphill battle':

During this century the crafts in Britain have been subject to various changes in fortune, with some isolated bursts of creative energy but a general pattern of diminishing activity. The pattern is now reversed and in recent years a remarkable renaissance has taken place. This has been largely self-generated, owing

³⁶⁶ As discussed in chapter three, not all German émigrés felt at ease with Germany including Rothschild's own brother Hermann, who would never speak German or have any business dealings with German companies.

much to the tenacity and vitality of the craftsmen involved.³⁶⁷

Chaired by Sir Paul Sinker, and with Victor Margrie in the role of Secretary, the Committee was awarded an initial grant of £45,000 with which to further support the artist craftsman.³⁶⁸ With this new organisation came the publication *Crafts*, a quarterly magazine launched in 1973. The aims of the magazine were broader than the Crafts Advisory Committee, intending to appeal to 'craftsman' and 'artist craftsman'. According to the introduction to the first issue the two could be defined as such:

A craftsman sets his own standards: something either pleases him or it does not. For the traditional craftsman, concerned largely with achieving a high degree of technical skill, this is exacting enough; for the artist craftsman, whose intention is also to make a personal statement, it can be even more daunting.³⁶⁹

This separation between 'craftsman' and 'artist craftsman' would prove a point of contention for Rothschild. Rothschild was an active member of the Crafts Advisory Committee from its inception, sitting on the commissioning and buying subcommittee as well as the exhibition subcommittee. However in 1974 Rothschild left the CAC, apparently frustrated with the committee's limited aims. In a retrospective letter to *Crafts* he writes:

During the time that I was retailer, I had two major disappointments [...] [secondly] the activities of the Crafts Council, formerly the Crafts Advisory Committee, on which I served three frustrating years. The real tragedy was that from the start the Crafts Council assumed a brief to assist the "artist" craftsman and spurn the craftsman [...] all energies should be directed to help craftsmen start on their own, with grants, or better still, loans at rate well below the present interest level [...] The task of finding out and showing the work of unknown or little-known good craftsmen is done by the private galleries and shops and not, as it should be, by the Crafts Council, which contents itself with those of established status [...] What is needed, and what was hoped for by the craftsmen of country when the CAC was set up, is an organisation which would promote

³⁶⁷ Crafts Advisory Committee, *The Work of the Crafts Advisory Committee, 1971 – 1974*, (London: The Crafts Advisory Committee, 1974), p.1.

³⁶⁸ The total grant equalled £50,000; however £5000 of that was directed to Scotland and administered by the Joint Crafts Committee. The remaining £45,000 was for use in England and Wales.

³⁶⁹ 'Introduction', *Crafts*, No.1, 1973, p.7.

crafts and really pay attention to the needs of craftsmen generally, for marketing, advice and financial help. This is what the Crafts Council has signally failed to do.³⁷⁰

As laid out here Rothschild's frustrations with the CAC were primarily concerned with the lack of support for new makers. As will become more evident in the subsequent chapters, Rothschild looked to encourage the makers he sold and exhibited through the shop, particularly those at the beginning of their careers, providing them with some opportunity to market their work. It would be naïve to assume that Rothschild did not also look to make profit from these new makers - his was a private enterprise after all - but it is clear that he thought a government funded project such as the CAC would be more philanthropic. The editors of this issue of *Crafts* decided to allow Victor Margrie an opportunity to respond to Rothschild's claims.

It must be a matter of concern when a former member of the Crafts Advisory Committee [...] writes an open letter to a magazine suggesting that his three-year service was a frustrating experience. My remembrance of the same period is quite different. It was a time of considerable fervour [...] Henry Rothschild was an active and respected figure in these deliberations and, whilst it would be wrong to imply that all the decisions were to his personal liking, his continued membership of the Committee did suggest an acceptance of the consensus view. There is, however, a grave misconception contained in his letter, which may account for much of his disappointment. The CAC [...] did not assume its brief to support the artist craftsman; this was given to it by Parliament, as indeed was the directive to improve standards.³⁷¹

Margrie's comments on the State's involvement to 'improve standards' can be likened to the approach of the Council of Industrial Design and the Crafts Centre of Great Britain in the immediate post-war. This demonstrates that craft was viewed as an important part of the economy. Furthermore the State's insistence on the term 'artist craftsman' reveals there still existed a notion of accepted taste and that 'artist craftsman' carried more weight to it than a plain 'craftsman', which implies more rural trades such as basket making and leather work. Evident here is that the terms used to define makers can have serious implications for how they can operate within the craft world.

³⁷⁰ Henry Rothschild, 'Letters: Crafts Council Policy with a reply from Victor Margrie', *Crafts*, No.45, 1980, pp.55 - 56.

³⁷¹ Rothschild, 'Letters: Crafts Council Policy with a reply from Victor Margrie', 1980.

Summary

In outlining the linear narrative of Primavera, with specific focus on the retail activity of the shop, this chapter has examined the broad development of the shop with regard to the retail and consumption of craft. Furthermore it has sought to position Primavera within the narrative of post-war Britain. Historical context is of course important in the understanding of any individual, place or event; I would argue however that historical context should not be viewed as a background on which to overlay a more discrete narrative but rather to understand both components the interactions between the two should be explored.

By providing a snapshot of 1945 this chapter has highlighted the difficult circumstances in which Rothschild established Primavera. It has considered the geographical and cultural landscape of London at this time and illustrated how Rothschild navigated his way through it. The networks Rothschild established along with his understanding of craft, partly informed by his **German** background, aided this navigation. The linear approach in this chapter has allowed for a detailed analysis of the key changes within the thirty-five period under review. The Utility drive of the late 1940s and early 1950s, along with the government's influence on 'good design' through the Council of Industrial Design, allowed makers an opportunity to offer the consumer an alternative. Rothschild and Primavera facilitated this. Moving into the 1950s, as the economy began to strengthen, Primavera was able to cater for the new consumer, who looked to remove themselves from the pre-war era. While the 1960s are often regarded as a time of huge social change, by considering a small outlet such as Primavera it is possible to see that they were actually a much more nuanced decade. For Rothschild, the 1960s were a time of personal change and he began the move out of London and into Cambridge. Rothschild's time in Cambridge sees a step back from retail, with a greater focus on his collecting and exhibition activities. The following chapter will explore Rothschild's exhibition programme. This will be done thematically rather than in a linear fashion but it will be possible to map these themes against the timeline presented in this chapter.

Chapter Five: Exhibitions at Primavera and Beyond, 1952 - 1980

Of course there would be a conflict because the shop's so small. I don't believe that that's vital really; what's vital is vibrance, vitality and beauty and novelty. Those are the things that bring people into a shop and people are not put off by the fact there's something else on show. If they are then can always walk out. I think looking back I probably overdid the exhibition side.³⁷²

Over a period of twenty-eight years, from 1952 to 1980, Rothschild hosted 109 exhibitions, averaging between three and four a year. Considering Primavera was a small, independent retailer, this is an impressive programme and it is understandable that Rothschild himself thought that he 'overdid' the exhibition side.³⁷³ As outlined in chapter four, by 1952 Primavera had established a reputation for selling a range of crafts. In the short six years since opening, and in difficult times, Rothschild felt it was time to expand Primavera's activities and he became more focused on the exhibition of craft. This dual role can be seen in one of Primavera's larger competitors, Heal's, who opened the Mansard Gallery in 1917 as an exhibition space. However, compared to Heal's and the Mansard Gallery which operated in parallel, Primavera occupied a very small space. As Rothschild recalled: 'I saw it as a shop. It became a gallery when there were exhibitions, otherwise it was a shop'.³⁷⁴ According to his daughter, Rothschild saw the exhibitions as a 'purer form of retailing, without the clutter'.³⁷⁵ In this chapter the tension between exhibition and retail will be explored. All of the items Rothschild exhibited were for sale and many of the artists featured were regular suppliers to the shop. In this way Rothschild could focus attention on a particular maker or type of work, highlighting it as 'novel', even if it may be available as part of Primavera's regular stock.

Both the Sloane Street and Walton Street premises were small in size and therefore they would be cleared of other stock during exhibitions, which normally ran for a week to ten days, leaving the exhibition as the main focus. The Cambridge premises had a basement, a ground floor and an upper floor (which was used as Rothschild's private offices) and so allowed for more creativity with the space and duality of purpose. Despite the small retail spaces he occupied, Rothschild put on

³⁷² Henry Rothschild, interviewed by Tanya Harrod for NLSC: Craft Lives (9-10 December 2003). F14338-F14342. Sound Archive, The British Library, London.

³⁷³ For a complete list of exhibitions see Appendix A.

³⁷⁴ Rothschild, interview, 2003.

³⁷⁵ Liz Rothschild, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (17 April 2012). Uncatalogued.

exhibitions with ambitious regularity. The 1950s saw twenty exhibitions, including those of emerging ceramicists Percy Brown (1954), Waistel Cooper and Susan Sanderson (1955) as well as more established makers such as Katherine Pleydell Bouverie (1956, 1958) and Bernard Leach (1957, 1958). Rothschild hosted three exhibitions of work by Alan (Sam) Smith, a toymaker who was also responsible for designing Primavera's promotional material. 1957 saw the first exhibition made up entirely of glasswork, produced by the Juniper Workshop in Edinburgh, as well as two exhibitions of Sicilian cart carvings. With the opening of the Kings Parade premises in Cambridge in 1958, running alongside Sloane Street until 1967 and then Walton Street until 1970, Rothschild was able to run a greater amount of exhibitions numbering sixty-five during the 1960s. There were a number of large folk art exhibitions including "Crafts from Thailand" (1960), "African Contemporary Crafts" (1961), "International One" (1963) and "Contemporary Crafts from South America" (1969). Rothschild also began to engage more with makers from the art schools including Ian Auld and Gillian Lowndes (1962, 1966), and a group exhibition from Goldsmiths (1961). With the closure of Walton Street in 1970, Rothschild concentrated on the Cambridge premises. Although exhibitions numbered a more modest twenty-four, they tended towards large group shows.³⁷⁶ Rothschild also organised exhibitions at different venues, both at home and abroad.³⁷⁷ These developments and trends evident in Rothschild's exhibition programme from 1952 to 1980 will be discussed throughout this chapter, particularly in relation to the wider developments in craft and society.

Rothschild's collection at the Shipley Art Gallery is dominated by ceramics, and this is reflected in his exhibition programme with sixty-nine of the shows from 1952 to 1980 featuring ceramics, indicating that for Rothschild this craft was his main passion. However, Rothschild also showed glass, textiles and woodcarvings though to a lesser degree. An interest in folk art and traditional craft was also present from the offset - Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas were all represented. By examining a selection of Rothschild's exhibitions three key themes have been identified. Firstly, as outlined in the literature review, the relationship between craft and fine art has been historically complex. Rothschild, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, began to show craft that challenged the boundaries between craft and art. Secondly, the inclusion of folk art or traditional craft demonstrates Rothschild's broad understanding

³⁷⁶ This figure includes the 1980 show in Germany (see Appendix A).

³⁷⁷ Of particular note were the eight shows at Kettle's Yard and six shows in Germany (see Appendix A).

of craft and the consumer market. Finally, the presence of European makers in the exhibition programme can be linked to Rothschild's own background. This chapter will consider the importance of these three key areas within the broader narrative of craft during the post-war period. Furthermore, it will consider how Rothschild's own clear idea of what constituted 'good design' led him to show work by makers who challenged the confines of craft and thereby directed consumers – both individuals and institutions – tastes. However to appreciate the scope and scale of Rothschild's exhibitions programme, this chapter will begin with an assessment of his first three shows, all of which demonstrate Rothschild's ambitious and bold approach.

Beginnings

In an interview with Tanya Harrod, Rothschild stated that by the early 1950s he had found the day to day running of the shop to be 'boring' and 'hard work'.³⁷⁸ If we consider the enthusiasm Rothschild had in late 1945 - travelling the country and making contacts, and taking the lease for the Sloane Street premises before he had a license to operate – this admission seems at odds with his personality. However, those who knew Rothschild called him a 'dynamo'³⁷⁹, someone who was 'easily bored',³⁸⁰ and who had 'tremendous energy'.³⁸¹ Therefore I would argue that with the beginning of the exhibition programme in 1952 Rothschild was not losing his enthusiasm for Primavera, but he was looking for new challenges. A close examination of the first three exhibitions – ceramics from France, baskets from the UK, and a group show in Amsterdam – demonstrate clearly Rothschild's ambitious approach to exhibitions.

By 1952 Rothschild had developed working relationships through his retail activities with a number of Britain-based potters – Lucie Rie, Ray Finch, Michael Cardew, Harry and May Davies to name a few – but for his first ceramics exhibition in May of that year he chose the work of two French potters, Francine Del Pierre and

³⁷⁸ Rothschild, interview, 2003.

³⁷⁹Gordon Baldwin, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (6 December 2012). Uncatalogued.

³⁸⁰Anthony Shaw, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (21 November 2012). Uncatalogued.

³⁸¹Fiona Adamczewski, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (21 January 2013). Uncatalogued.

Albert Diato.³⁸² In the early 1950s Rothschild had travelled to Paris and met Del Pierre, a journalist who had turned to pottery in 1948, and her assistant Diato, who was also a poet and a painter and with whom she had established the *Atelier le Tryptique* in Vallauris, known as a favourite spot of Picasso's. The pair relocated to Paris in the early 1950s. At this time Del Pierre worked in coiled earthenware, producing vessel forms. In comparison Diato's work was influenced by Picasso's sculptural pieces. Rothschild recalled purchasing some work during his visit and decided to give them an exhibition.³⁸³ Rothschild invited them to the UK, setting them up with a workshop space – this was to avoid the import charges of bringing their work direct from France. The ceramicist Rosemary Wren recalls Rothschild commandeering the Oxshott based pottery belonging to Helen Pincombe:

[...] he had come across two potters who were doing something totally original of making animals in clay which were hollow and built up using strips of clay: and they were Albert Diato [...] and Francine Del Pierre [...] And it had been arranged that they would do an exhibition at Primavera for Henry Rothschild but make the pots in England so they wouldn't have the trouble of importing them. He had said to them, 'Oh, I'm sure you can work in Helen Pincombe's studio', this was Henry Rothschild, he said [to Helen] 'You won't mind if these people come down and work in your workshop will you?'³⁸⁴

Although this may on the surface seem to be rather intrusive of Rothschild, Pincombe was not only a close family friend of the Rothschild's, but she also sat on the Board of Trustees for Primavera and so had a professional investment in the shop's success.

There are no records of the pieces included in this first exhibition but ceramics by both artists are represented in the Henry Rothschild Collection that correlate with the early 1950s date. Diato's work in particular stands out as an early example of Rothschild engaging with more sculptural forms (figure 21). In contrast, Del Pierre went on to exhibit with Bernard Leach and Shoji Homada; she could be regarded as

³⁸² In Tanya's Harrod's essay on Primavera (1995) she writes that the basket exhibition was Rothschild's first exhibition and the Diato and Del Pierre show was his second or possibly third, after Amsterdam. However, research by Del Pierre's biographers (Gournay & Staudenmeyer, 2004: 76) reveals that this show took place a year earlier than previously thought.

³⁸³ Henry Rothschild, *Artist Notes* (2006). Private papers, Liz Rothschild.

³⁸⁴ Rosemary Wren, interviewed by Hawksmoor Hughes for NLSC: Craft Lives (5-6 April 2005). C960/50. Sound Archive, The British Library, London.

a potter's potter, critically well-respected but never achieving much in the way of commercial success (figure 20).



Figure 20: Earthenware Vase. Francine del Pierre, c.1953



Figure 21: Earthenware Bowl, Albert Diato, c.1956

That Rothschild chose these two artists, both well-known in France but not in the UK, for his first exhibition demonstrates that Rothschild had faith in his intuition. As related in chapter four in his letter to *Crafts* in 1980, Rothschild felt it important to promote lesser-known makers. It is of note that he did this so early on when a show of work from an established potter would have been a more secure prospect, as the consumer base would have been guaranteed. Again, this demonstrates Rothschild's position as a trailblazer of contemporary crafts.

Nearly eighteen months after this first exhibition, Rothschild hosted a show on baskets at the Tea Centre, Regent Street, in collaboration with the Rural Industries Bureau. By working with the Bureau, Rothschild may have been exercising a degree of caution, wanting the support of an established body in order ensure the exhibitions success. In addition to this, I would argue this is another example of Rothschild understanding the social and cultural importance of traditional crafts as more than a retail opportunity. The objective of the exhibit was:

[...] to arouse public interest in the craft of the basket maker. These craftsmen located all over the country, at one time satisfied the national need for baskets of all kind but cheap imported baskets have now largely captured the retail market, especially in London.³⁸⁵

³⁸⁵'Baskets for Town and Country', *Cambridge Independent Press* 23 October 1953 [DT.HRA/3/3, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].

British basket making in the early 1950s was in the decline and, as Rothschild understood it, British craftsmanship was being diminished by poor quality, mass produced goods imported from the Continent. This exhibition sought to redress this imbalance. The year before this exhibition, Enid Marx and Margaret Lambert published their work *English Popular Art*, which sought to consider not only the history of traditional crafts in England, but also to question how it could remain relevant in the modern age.

The “innocent eye” is disappearing in England, not, we think, entirely due to mechanisation, but rather from changing social habits, bringing a certain lack of initiative and interest in things with a distinctive individual character. As the country side becomes more urbanised and we buy more from chain stores, the country craftsmen are dying out and with them that individuality in design and decoration that gave life to the old popular art. This is not a thing that can be artificially revived; to try and do so would be to get the antithesis of the genuine tradition. But by preserving examples from the past for study and enjoyment we may, through our designers of the future, possibly regain some of the old individual qualities and delight in simple forms.³⁸⁶

Echoing these remarks, in one review Rothschild stated: ‘Today it is hard to get young people interested in the trade and there is severe foreign competition [...] British made baskets are by far the best for quality and detail’.³⁸⁷ Rothschild’s support of British basket makers hints towards a patriotism not normally credited to him. Rothschild did not support any strand of British craft out of a sense of loyalty but rather he championed ‘good’ craft and craftsmanship whatever its source. Indeed future exhibitions would see him laud the skill of makers from a host of other countries and he was not against importing work from outside the UK. The Rural Industries Bureau was singularly concerned with the promotion of British rural crafts and it is safe to say it was they who directed the objectives of the exhibition.

While Rothschild kept a number of scrapbooks throughout his career that contain exhibition reviews, this basket exhibition is the only one that has a dedicated scrapbook, which highlights that Rothschild saw this as an important exhibition in his

³⁸⁶ Enid Marx & Margaret Lambert, *English Popular Art* (London & New York, BT Batsford, 1951), pp.v-vi.

³⁸⁷ ‘Dying Craft’, *Cambridge Daily News*, October 1953 [DT.HRA/3/3, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].

career. In an interview he recalls the then director of the Royal College of Art, Robin Darwin, congratulating him on the show, saying ‘Damn fine show you’ve done there Rothschild, but then you can’t go wrong with baskets, can you?’³⁸⁸ This positive response was echoed in the many reviews. Why then could one ‘not go wrong with baskets’? Why did a show of basketry, a traditional and rural practice, do so well? As we have seen in the previous chapter on retail, the early 1950s saw a British public moving towards the new and the modern, a push towards the future, beyond austerity. The success of this exhibition demonstrates that this push was matched, at least in part, by a pull back to the past, towards nostalgia and sentiment. This sentimentality comes through in one article written for the *Art News and Review*:

Once upon a time the crafts movement centred largely around the self-conscious bijouterie of middle-class aesthetic escapism. More recently, however, there has been a growing realisation that whilst ladies in Kensington were hammering out copper ash-trays, and gentlemen in Chelsea were making “quaint” parchment shades, the authentic crafts of England were still being carried out in thousands of country homes and small villages.³⁸⁹

This statement reveals a longing for the rural – however pleasing the wares produced in Kensington and Chelsea, they are found lacking in authenticity because of their urban roots. Glenn Adamson refers to this as a ‘pastoral feeling’. He argues that:

[...] craft exemplifies both the positive and negative aspects of pastoral: its double structure – in which making a chair or pot is valued not only in itself but also as a symbolic gesture about the value of lifestyle [...] but also its tendency toward sentimental escapism.³⁹⁰

The lifestyle and escapism associated with the pastoral cannot be created in an urban setting. To the middle-class city dweller of the 1950s, the life and work of people out in the countryside or along the coast, perhaps not even on the mainland, could appear remote and far removed from their own experiences. While the concept of the ‘Other’, as outlined by Edward Said, is often associated with discussions on race or gender, I would argue in this instance it can be applied to the difference between the urban

³⁸⁸ Rothschild, interview, 2003.

³⁸⁹ ‘Tea Centre’, *Arts News and Review*, November 1953 [DT.HRA/3/3, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].

³⁹⁰ Glenn Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), pp.104-5.

middle-class and the rural working-class.³⁹¹ The baskets that Rothschild put on show could be seen as artefacts from a people who might as well live on the other side of the world or come from a bygone era. A number of the newspaper reviews of the exhibition make the claim that attendees – mainly middle-class and mainly women – could revive this dying art by purchasing a basket or two.

Arrange your cheese straws, vol-au-vent, and other delicacies on it, hand it round at a party and be original. Apart from knowing that it looks effective you will have the satisfaction of personally contributing to a national revival of what is rapidly becoming an extinct craft in this country.³⁹²

By purchasing a basket, one is not just a consumer with 'original' taste, but one can act as a philanthropist, supporting a threatened rural industry.³⁹³ As Gloria Hickey writes: 'the marketing of rural craft allows for rural economic development at the same time as glorifying the common man and heritage'.³⁹⁴ This 'glorification' of the maker is most apparent in the later discussions of the folk art and traditional craft exhibitions held by Rothschild, as well as in the exhibition and sale of studio pottery, which conjures the idea of the individual maker, working and living his or her craft.

Rothschild's third show took place in November 1953, opening just days after the basket exhibition in London closed. This was his first international exhibition, funded by the British Council, at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. The Stedelijk was founded in 1874 and was originally focused on fine art particularly Dutch and French work; in the 1920s their remit shifted and the focus lay on modern and contemporary art including examples of design, craft and photography. In the

³⁹¹ In his work *Orientalism*, Edward Said theorises that the Western understanding of the East is predicated on the perceived differences between the two: the West understands the East as the 'Other'. See: Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 3rd Edition (London: Penguin, 2003).

³⁹² 'Seen in London this week', *The Jewish Chronicle*, 1953 [DT.HRA/3/3, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].

³⁹³ In 2011, the Sainsbury Centre held an exhibition on 'Basketry: Making Human Nature', which approached basket making from a material culture and anthropological perspective. It is of note that nearly sixty years after Rothschild's basket exhibition, similar concerns were being expressed. For further information see: Penny Sparke, 'Archives, Collections and Curatorship: "Basketry: Making Human Nature"', in *Journal of Design History*, Vol.25, No.1 (2012), pp.88-92.

³⁹⁴ Gloria Hickey, 'Craft within a consuming culture', in *The Culture of Craft*, ed. by Peter Dormer (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p.92.

exhibition catalogue, Rothschild acknowledges the Stedelijk Museum as a site of particular importance stating:

It is here that conventional ideas, limitations to time and style and even the appeal of big and famous names are put aside to favour a simple and humane search for the beautiful, the strong and the grand amongst artists and crafts people.³⁹⁵

Again, Rothschild's reference to the inclusive collection policy of the Stedelijk links to his own approach at Primavera. The 1953 show was called "English Ceramics". The potters represented included Michael Cardew, Ray Finch, William Newland, Bernard Leach, Lucie Rie and Hans Coper, Harry and May Davies, and Henry Hammond as well as work by Rye Pottery and Royal Doulton. The Rye Pottery first began production in 1793 and at the time of the exhibition they were being run by the Cole family after a short period of closure during the Second World War.³⁹⁶ Royal Doulton was originally a producer of industrial ceramics but in the early 1860s began to produce domestic ware.³⁹⁷ The inclusion of mass-produced ceramics alongside studio ceramics is explained in Rothschild's introductory notes:

In England pottery has to its advantage that it can look back on a rich past; however it is for the first time in thirty years that it can look forward to a renewed interest, thanks to the example and the many publications of Bernard Leach in particular. The post-war restrictions that because of government legislation were dictated to mass-producers of decorative pottery have influenced the possibilities for individual potters in a positive way.³⁹⁸

Industry and studio ceramics are often viewed as distinct from each other, despite the use of similar materials and forms. In presenting them together, Rothschild intended to present a unified image of English ceramics on the international stage. It is of note

³⁹⁵ Stedelijk Museum, *Engelse Ceramiek, 18 November 1953 – 11 January 1954* [in Dutch, translation: Suzanne Prak, with thanks] (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1953). [DT.HRA/5/1/2. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].

³⁹⁶ Rye Pottery, *About – Rye Pottery: Makers of Fine English Ceramics*. Available at: <http://www.ryepottery.co.uk/about> (Accessed: 20 April 2015).

³⁹⁷ Michael Perry, *Royal Doulton – Pottery Histories: Histories of UK Potters and Pottery Manufacturers*. Available at: <http://potteryhistories.com/doultonhistory.html> (Accessed: 20 April 2015).

³⁹⁸ Stedelijk Museum, 1953.

that the only example of industrially produced ceramics in Rothschild's collection at the Shipley comes from this exhibition (figure 22).

From 1952 until 1956, the Scandinavian designer Agnete Hoy, led production at Doulton's Lambeth pottery, designing and throwing prototype shapes which were then decorated with incisions and coloured slips.³⁹⁹ Although born in England in 1914, Agnete Hoy lived and studied in her parent's homeland, Denmark, before returning to the UK in the late 1930s for what was intended to be short stay with her brothers. The declaration of war in Europe in 1939 meant she was unable to return and therefore she began work for Buller's pottery in Stoke on Trent. In 1952, when Buller's closed, she moved to London and began work for Doulton as the Head of the Lambeth studio, staying in post until 1956. Cheryl Buckley attributes Hoy's success within a male dominated industry to her education at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in Copenhagen where her studies on craft technique and design practice were complemented by work placements in industrial potteries.⁴⁰⁰

Scandinavia proved to be a strong influence on British industrial design throughout the inter-war years. To some extent it represented the acceptable face of Modernism in that craft and industrial processes were combined to produce designs which bore more relation to traditional design values than those inspired by the harsh modernity of Bauhaus.⁴⁰¹

In the nineteenth-century Doulton had had a strong reputation for producing high-quality art wares using traditional decorative techniques; Hoy sought to build on that existing quality whilst developing her own style.⁴⁰² A large squat bowl, produced during Hoy's time at Doulton, is unique in the collection for having been made in a factory (figure 22).

³⁹⁹ Cheryl Buckley, *Potters and Paintresses: Women Designers in the Pottery Industry, 1870 – 1955* (London: The Women's Press, 1990), p.147.

⁴⁰⁰ Buckley, 1990, p.143.

⁴⁰¹ Buckley, 1990, p.146.

⁴⁰² Buckley, 1990, p.147.



Figure 22: Stoneware Bowl, Agnete Hoy, 1954

The exterior is decorated with a floral motif, with a layering of blue glaze to create light and shadow. The interior is incised with birds, as shown, with a lighter glaze highlighting their wings. The decoration is understated yet skilled.

Among the ceramics, Rothschild also displayed baskets, wall hangings, rugs and other textiles; these were produced by individual artists such as Michael O'Connell, Peter Collingwood and Eileen Flockhart-Mackenzie as well as the larger companies of Edinburgh Weavers and the Donald Brothers. The inclusion of this work was to 'provide a suitable background' to the ceramics and Rothschild recognised that it was 'in no way representative' of this type of work in England.⁴⁰³

The exhibition was not only significant in Rothschild's own narrative, but in the narrative of the Stedelijk Museum itself. This was the first time contemporary British ceramics had been shown *en masse* and the purchase of some of the pieces on show by the Stedelijk 'constitute the basis of a modest, but satisfying collection of British ceramics'.⁴⁰⁴ Examples of work by Waistel Cooper, Bernard Leach, Helen Pincombe, Lucie Rie and Hans Coper can all be found in the Stedelijk collection and can be attributed to this exhibition.⁴⁰⁵ It is of note that despite the success of the Stedelijk exhibition, Rothschild would not host another exhibition outside of the UK until 1971. There are no records to indicate why this was the case but it may have been due to lack of opportunity or due to financial and logistical implications. As the exhibition ran immediately after the basketry show, it may also have proved a more demanding task

⁴⁰³ Stedelijk Museum, 1953.

⁴⁰⁴ Stedelijk Museum, *Keramik in het Stedelijk* [in Dutch & English] (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1998), p.49.

⁴⁰⁵ Stedelijk Museum, 1998, p.115-126.

than Rothschild first considered. Although he may have stepped back from Europe, he kept the momentum going at home.

Craft and Art

As is the case in examining Rothschild's retail stock (chapter four) and his collection (chapter six) there is a balance in his exhibition programme between craft that fits a largely domestic purpose, and craft that blurs the boundaries with fine art and sculpture. Arguably this balance weighed in favour of the domestic in the 1950s, before tipping in favour of the art school makers by the mid-1960s. This shift can be seen as a larger trend in ceramics. In 'Redefining Practice through Exhibitionary Practice', Laura Breen considers the causes of this shift from domestic pottery to ceramic art. Breen comments on the tension between the Crafts Advisory Committee, formed in 1971 and who sought to unify craft including pottery, and the makers who viewed clay as an expressive material that did not have to result in a functional object.⁴⁰⁶ As has been discussed in the literature review, tensions between craft and art existed in the immediate post-war period with Leach's proclamations that art schools could not teach craft in any meaningful way. Arguably this tension between the two factions increases as the art school makers become more visible through exhibitions during the 1960s and 1970s. By using Rothschild's exhibition programme it is possible to chart this tension between craft and art.

The longevity of Bernard Leach's career means that he is a constant presence in Rothschild's exhibition programme. Rothschild exhibited Leach as a solo maker five times and in a number of small and large group shows from 1953 until 1972. Although Bernard Leach had featured in the Amsterdam show, it was in January 1957 that Rothschild held the first solo exhibition of his work. At the age of 70, Leach was still producing work through his base in St Ives with the support of his family and a number of apprentices. Over 230 pieces were shown with prices ranging from £2 for a tenmoku⁴⁰⁷ mug, up to £35 for a large vase with black slip sgraffitto.⁴⁰⁸ Overall the

⁴⁰⁶ Laura Breen, 'Redefining Ceramics through Exhibitionary Practice (1970-2009)', in *Journal of Art Historiography*, Vol.11 (2014), p.3.

⁴⁰⁷ Tenmoku – a dark glaze made of feldspar, limestone and iron oxide, resembles oilspotting.

⁴⁰⁸ Sgraffitto – a type of decoration where a surface colour is scratched or incised to reveal the layer of colour underneath.

show did well, selling over three quarters of the stock and returning only forty-five of the pieces unsold.⁴⁰⁹

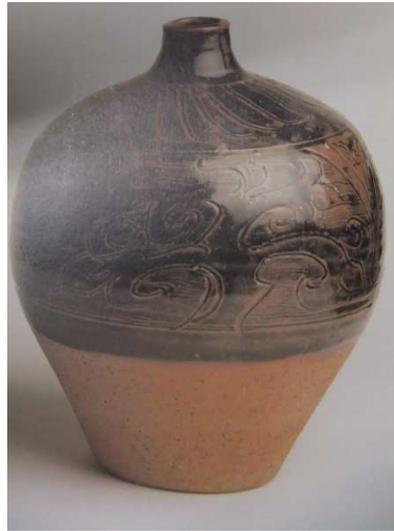


Figure 23: Stoneware vase, Bernard Leach, c.1957

Leach's stoneware vase, represented in figure 23, has both a tenmoku glaze and sgraffito decoration and was purchased by the Victoria and Albert Museum for £30.⁴¹⁰ The V&A, only a short distance from Sloane Street, had been buying through Primavera since the early 1950s. Although one of many outlets the V&A purchased from, Primavera can be seen as contributing to their extensive studio ceramics collection. Buying from an exhibition, particularly the solo shows, gave the curators an opportunity to select prime examples of an artist's work, rather than what was available through general retail.

In March 1958, Rothschild held a second Bernard Leach exhibition. As one reviewer noted:

He has not done much in the latter [porcelain] material from some years; the quality of this fine surface and the unique attraction of the slight human imperfections of asymmetry and textural changes gives the man-made object its inimitable charm.⁴¹¹

This was a slightly smaller exhibition than in 1957, with 162 pieces on show. Prices ranged from £0.25.0 for a small bottle-like vase, to £30 for a large stoneware

⁴⁰⁹ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Bernard Leach"* (9-23 January 1957). DT.HRA/5/1/5. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁴¹⁰ Oliver Watson, *Studio Pottery: Twentieth Century British Ceramics in the Victoria and Albert Museum Collection* (London: Phaidon Press Ltd, 1993).

⁴¹¹ 'Bernard Leach: Primavera', *Studio*, May 1958 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

pot with tenmoku engraving.⁴¹² The exhibition was well received, although one reviewer felt that some of the pots had been rushed in order to be displayed on time.⁴¹³ One reviewer commented on the size of Primavera: 'although excellent use had been made of the space, one was rather forced into close contact with all present. That is not altogether to be deplored at Primavera, because it always seems to attract such interesting visitors'.⁴¹⁴ As detailed in chapter four, these 'interesting visitors' were likely to be a mixture of the upper-middle-class residents of the Kensington and Chelsea area, looking to buy for their grand townhouses, as well as other potters and makers who revered Leach as the grandfather of studio pottery. This comment suggests that the Primavera exhibitions were an event in themselves, somewhere to be seen, regardless of the work on display. As often seems to be the case, Leach's position in the interstice between East and West was commented upon.

There is a true maturity about this show, and a true freedom of expression. It succeeds in being neither orientalisising nor traditional English. It is the highly individual work of a fine artist-potter who has succeeded in creating works which reflects himself at his best.⁴¹⁵

The exhibition was not only well-reviewed but, as with the previous Leach exhibition, was a great success, with reportedly 'more than £500 already sold and barely half remains'⁴¹⁶ and over sixty visitors per day.⁴¹⁷ One reviewer notes ash trays and table lamps also on sale which are absent from the exhibition list; these were perhaps subsumed into Primavera's retail stock.⁴¹⁸ As demonstrated through the previous examples of the Leach purchase by the V&A, items from this show were also purchased by museums for their collections. In this case a number of international organisations made purchases, including the Trondheim Museum in

⁴¹² Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Porcelain and Stoneware by Bernard Leach" (4-19 March 1958)*. DT.HRA/5/1/10. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁴¹³ Bernard Leach, 'Primavera', *Pottery Quarterly*, March 1958 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

⁴¹⁴ Bernard Leach, 'Primavera', *Pottery Quarterly*, 1958.

⁴¹⁵ Cottie Burland, 'Porcelain and Stoneware by Bernard Leach', *Art News and Review*, 15 March 1958 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

⁴¹⁶ 'Tale of Two Potters', *Evening Standard*, 7 March 1958 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

⁴¹⁷ Bernard Leach, 'Primavera', *Pottery Quarterly*, 1958.

⁴¹⁸ 'Round the Galleries', *Financial Times*, March 1958 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

Norway and for a 'well known authority' in Copenhagen, Denmark.⁴¹⁹ Coupled with the exhibition in Amsterdam, such activity demonstrates that Rothschild and Primavera were becoming eminent on the international market. Considering Primavera was in actuality a very small independent outlet, this international support is incredible and, again, secures Rothschild's position as a trailblazer in the craft market. By showing Leach, an established potter of such standing, Rothschild could draw these international buyers to his small shop in London with the aim of building and maintaining these networks.

Bernard Leach's third solo show opened in February 1960. By now Leach was 73 years old, and while still making and held in high regard, one reviewer of the exhibition felt 'disappointment' at the porcelain and stoneware on show.

I find myself in a quandary because the exhibition is an odd mixture of disappointment and enchantment. Since Leach is technically one of the most accomplished potters of the West there should be no room for disappointment; but I am troubled to have to say that in my view at least his attempts at natural decoration are complete failures. The porcelain plate with willow tree pattern for example, would not deserve a second look if it were not signed by Leach [...] The failures are perhaps the result of an imperfect merging of East and West. For the small tile *The Sea*, entirely Japanese in feeling and in calligraphic line is magnificent.⁴²⁰

This statement that had the plate not been signed by Leach it 'would not deserve a second look', is very telling of a shift in the craft market. Coming into the 1980s, debates were being raised about the collectability of craft and how the big names – Leach, Lucie Rie, and Hans Coper included – were attracting huge sums of money regardless of quality.⁴²¹ This will be discussed in further detail in chapter six, but perhaps this could be seen as one of the first indications of how the craft market was falling into line with the fine art market.

Otherwise the third exhibition of Leach at Primavera was well received. Eric Newton, writing for the *The Guardian Manchester*, comments that 'there is no such thing as perfection of form [...] but aristocracy of form is another matter and Mr Leach,

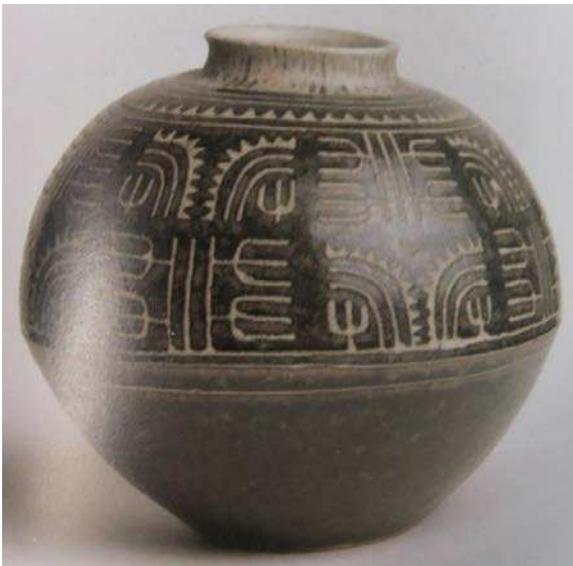
⁴¹⁹'The Art of the Potter', *West London Press*, 14 March 1958 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

⁴²⁰ Max Wykes-Joyce, 'Bernard Leach, Primavera', *Arts News and Review*, March 1960 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

⁴²¹ Ian Bennett, 'Do I hear £1000?', *Crafts*, No.43, 1980, pp.32 – 35.

by virtue of an unusually close collaboration between hand and eye [...] achieves it in the majority of his pots'.⁴²² Newton's use of the word aristocracy in this context further reveals the position enjoyed by Leach as a potter whose talent for some appeared to be waning but yet his market value and credentials as a maker remained untouchable. These positive reviews confirmed Leach's position within the studio pottery market.

In November 1958 Rothschild showed work by Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie and Helen Pincombe.⁴²³ Both makers had worked under Leach at his pottery in St Ives and his influence can be seen particularly in their early work. Rothschild had great admiration for both artists calling Pleydell-Bouverie a 'character' and Pincombe 'modest and determined'.⁴²⁴ There were over two-hundred pieces in the exhibition consisting of bottles, bowls, dishes, jars, pots and plates, some thrown, some coiled. Two of Pincombe's vases from the exhibition were bought by the Victoria and Albert Museum.⁴²⁵ The taller vase (figure 25), which is coil built, is unglazed on the exterior but glazed on the interior and was purchased for £4.20.0. The rounder vase (figure 24), is also coil built with a white glaze inlaid with a tenmoku glaze and was purchased for £8.40.0.



⁴²² Eric Newton, 'Aristocrat of Potters', *The Guardian Manchester*, 16 February 1960 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

⁴²³ Primavera had hosted a solo exhibition of Pleydell-Bouverie's work in 1956 and both artists had featured in the 1953 exhibition in Amsterdam.

⁴²⁴ Henry Rothschild, *Artist Notes*, 2006.

⁴²⁵ Watson, 1993.

Figure 24: Stoneware vase, Helen Pincombe, 1958

Figure 25: Stoneware vase, Helen Pincombe, 1958

As with earlier purchases, the presence of buyers for museums demonstrates Primavera's position as a prominent and reputable supplier of quality craft. By purchasing ceramics from the shop museums, such as the V&A, were adding value to these objects by marking them worthy of inclusion in national collections. Such activity also affirms Rothschild as a man of good taste who could be trusted to acquire the best of a maker's work for display.

As was the case with earlier Primavera exhibitions, the consumers for such objects were not only museums and galleries, but also the individual seeking to decorate their home and garden. Indeed, the reviews included in domestic publications seem to focus on how Pleydell-Bouverie and Pincombe's pots were well suited as flower pots and garden decoration.

I was delighted to see that both women make just the flowerpots I'd been looking for: stoneware pots in mellow, sandy tones, with a little scratched-in or stuck-on decoration in the same colour. I heartily agree with Miss Pincombe who said, 'The plant's the thing we want to look at: the pot oughtn't to distract the eye'. [...] Among all the other usual pottery ware [...] I was attracted to some of the vases. Some were small and tubby, some tall and slender, and most of them had small opening – so useful for people with small town gardens and the odd bloom or two they want to bring in and proudly show off!⁴²⁶

Another maker Rothschild admired, describing her work as 'simple' and 'refined', was the Australian born Gwyn Hanssen.⁴²⁷ Hanssen came to England in 1958 and worked with both Bernard Leach at St Ives and Michael Cardew at Wenford Bridge before setting up her own workshop in London. Her 1966 show at Primavera Sloane Street came just before her move to France with her potter husband, the Canadian Louis Hanssen. There are over 200 items – a mix of stoneware and porcelain - listed in the exhibition sheets for the show, but a number of these are actually sets: among them a twenty-five piece white decorated dinner set for £60, a porcelain tea-set consisting of a pot and four footed bowls for £16, and a soup set for £30.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁶ 'Pots for Indoor Gardners', *Housewife*, November 1958 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

⁴²⁷ Rothschild, *Artist Notes*, 2006.

⁴²⁸ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Gwyn Hanssen"* (1966). DT.HRA/5/2/32. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.



Figure 26: Gwyn Hanssen exhibition, Primavera Sloane Street, 1966

Figure 26 is a rare photograph of Sloane Street's interior during an exhibition, in this case showing the work of Gwyn Hanssen. There is an ordered neatness to the way Hanssen's pots are organised, with unobtrusive labels giving the corresponding number for the exhibition list. The shelving on the white panels appears to be adjustable so they can accommodate taller pieces if needs be. The wall hanging is not present on the exhibition list and is likely a method of Rothschild's to fill a blank space without distracting the viewer from the main attraction, as he did with the Amsterdam show. The photograph itself was taken from the raised level at the back of the shop. To the right of the picture is the potter Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, known as "Beano" to her friends, talking with another visitor. Pleydell-Bouverie's presence is indicative of the close network of potters working at this time, particularly those who followed a more traditional line in their work.

Leach, Pleydell-Bouverie, Pincombe and Hanssen all produced largely domestic work in a workshop setting. This type of work seemed to sell well at affordable prices, not only through the exhibitions but also through the retail side of Primavera. However, Rothschild was also keen to embrace another strand of ceramics, that which was coming out of the art schools. In the immediate post-war, art schools were continuing to teach according to a syllabus which was largely unchanged from the nineteenth century. In the late 1940s a number of changes began to take hold - these changes were propelled by a wave of new leaders in the principal London-based art schools - Robin Darwin at the Royal College of Art, William

Johnstone at the Central School of Art and Design and William Coldstream at the Slade School of Art. Darwin at the RCA established a Diploma of Design which ran alongside the already established Diploma in Fine Art; the intention of this new Diploma was to promote artistry in design and to encourage students to consider their place in the design industry. Of the fifty-nine graduates, the RCA reported that forty-four had gone to posts 'in industry'.⁴²⁹ According to Martin, this introduction of 'design' to fine art practice opened the doors for craft practice to be considered within that same arena:

The approach of the RCA differed from that of its main rival, the Slade School, which was characterised by an intellectual and individualistic form of fine art that was based on respect for tradition [...] At the Central School of Art and Design, William Johnstone fostered a different approach to pedagogy by bringing artists into technical departments [...] Thus, in the decade after 1948, the tutors in the department of industrial design under A.R. Halliwell included the ex-Bauhaus jewellery designer Naum Slutsky, the abstract painter Victor Pasmore, the design theorist Bruce Archer, the photographer Nigel Henderson, the sculptor William Turnbull, the designer Douglas Scott, and the artist and textile designer Eduardo Palozzi.⁴³⁰

That craft practice was finding a place within this new curriculum can be attributed in part to the introduction of Basic Design in the 1950s. Influenced in part by the Bauhaus, the aim of Basic Design was to strip away preconceived ideas about art and design by having the student do exercises in colour, form and space. The Central School was a main supporter of Basic Design:

It was a move from technique based teaching to an open-ended experimental and critical approach. Pasmore's original idea of devising a visual grammar that would provide the objective basis for abstract art was different from, but complementary to, that of Hamilton, who was interested in developing new ways of analysing the visual world. The course evolved into a foundation year that was common to all first-year students, who would subsequently specialize in painting, sculpture, textiles or stained glass, and in the

⁴²⁹ Simon Martin, 'Pop goes the art school: design and education', in *British Design from 1948: Innovation in the Modern Age*, ed. by Christopher Breward & Ghislaine Wood (London: V&A Publishing, 2012), p.159.

⁴³⁰ Martin, 2012, p.160.

1960s influenced the general introduction of foundation courses for all art students.⁴³¹

This approach allowed a creative freedom for the students (and teachers) by encouraging trial and error and experimentation. It also gave students the opportunity to experiment in different mediums, including those such as textiles and ceramics which were traditionally taught in workshops through apprenticeships. The artist Gordon Baldwin was amongst the first to engage with this way of learning. He began his arts education with a year at Lincoln School of Art doing Intermediate Arts and Crafts; for his craft he chose pottery, a subject he was admittedly unfamiliar with. Baldwin wished to pursue the artistic lifestyle but also wanted to branch away from home; students could only apply for grants if they studied a subject which they could not do in their home town and so this led Baldwin to the Industrial Pottery course at the Central School of Art and Design:

Well I was, looking back, incredibly lucky because there were only a handful of students and we were, Central had a sort of underlying philosophy like the Bauhaus, and the principal those days was William Johnston who was an artist and was a practising artist, and rather a good one at that. You won't find many practising artists principals of art schools any longer; you will find managers, managerial people.⁴³²

Rothschild was quick to engage with the art schools and the emerging practitioners and began exhibiting their work alongside the traditional workshop-based makers. As Lesley Jackson writes:

Although it is true that Rothschild also stocked the work of Leach and his followers, his shop initially provided one of the few outlets for progressive 'Contemporary' craft during the post-war period, and gave the public a rare opportunity to see studio pottery sympathetically displayed alongside 'Contemporary' glass, textiles and furniture.⁴³³

Through his networking and involvement with the wider craft community, Rothschild was able to stay up to date with what was happening and, as Jackson states, he was among the first to exhibit these emerging makers. This move into the art school ceramics began in June 1959 with a show of Dan Arbeid's work. This was

⁴³¹ Martin, 2012, p.160.

⁴³² Baldwin, interview, 2012.

⁴³³ Lesley Jackson 'Contemporary' design of the 1950s', in *Lucie Rie and Hans Coper – Potters in Parallel*, ed. by Margot Coatts (London: Herbert Press, 1997), p.24.

to be Arbeid's first solo exhibition and it consisted of seventy-one pieces of stoneware. There were vases, pots and dishes, all hand-built rather than thrown. Arbeid had no formal training as a potter but in 1957 had worked as a technical assistant at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London. At this time the Central School taught the importance of hand-building as a way of learning to handle clay; Arbeid embraced this technique and became well known for this approach.⁴³⁴ One reviewer commented that this technique resulted in pieces 'akin to primitive sculpture', possessing a 'rough elemental strength' with an 'absence of symmetry and regularity'.⁴³⁵ These descriptions all present as masculine, and indeed Arbeid's work appears to demand the space it occupies. As evident in figure 27 the unevenness and broadness of Arbeid's work implies weight and presence.



Figure 27: Stoneware vase, Dan Arbeid, 1959

The exhibition list is particularly descriptive of the types of glazes employed: orange peel textured, crackled blue, ash green and banded blue glazes.⁴³⁶ The rough quality of the glaze and irregular form lends itself more to the sculptural tradition rather than domestic ware, and here we see the blurring of art and craft practice that features increasingly in the exhibition programme at Primavera. The form is not forced and appears to have been developed organically. As Max Wykes-Jocye comments:

⁴³⁴ Emmanuel Cooper, 'Dan Arbeid Obituary: Potter known for his unconventional handbuilt forms', *The Guardian*, 22 November 2010.

⁴³⁵ 'Mr. Arbeid's Hand-built pots', *The Times*, 10 June 1959 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

⁴³⁶ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Handbuilt Stoneware by Dan Arbeid"* (9 - 20 June, 1959). DT.HRA/5/1/17. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

They appear in a sense to be objects for nature, rather than of artifice; so that even the smallest of the seventy-odd pieces on display has a rugged grandeur about it, like a chunk of quartz, or a lichened tree-trunk.⁴³⁷

This vase (figure 27) was purchased by the Victoria and Albert Museum for £8.40.0, and demonstrates a trend that these larger museums were looking to purchase the more sculptural pieces that were coming out of the art schools, alongside the domestic ware purported by workshop traditions. As with the V&A's purchase at earlier exhibitions, their role as customers again enforces the idea that Rothschild's tastes were to be trusted.

An exhibition of stoneware by Ian Auld and Bryan Newman was held at both Primavera's Sloane Street and Kings Parade premises (February 1962 and March 1962 respectively). This was the first time Rothschild 'toured' his exhibitions between the two locations. Both Auld and Newman were proficient in handbuilding rather than throwing and, as was becoming more and more common through art school practice, sought to blur the lines between traditional pottery and sculpture.

The display of pottery by Mr Ian Auld and Mr Bryan Newman [...] is of note for the plastic qualities which are the special aim of both these ceramicists and is to be considered under the heading of art rather than utility. Pottery has its own abstract virtues, which they cultivate in different and individual ways.⁴³⁸

The exhibition list shows that Auld dominated the exhibition with 118 pieces including a small faceted pot for £0.15.0 and a round coiled pot with applied stamps and in an ash glaze for £20. One piece described as a large rectangular pot was noted as 'sold but can be repeated', revealing that Auld was happy to work on commission. This idea of repeating work is also more in keeping with craft practice than fine art or sculpture where the uniqueness of the object is central to its appeal. What should not be forgotten is that, alongside some teaching work, these makers were reliant on sales and the market for craft objects was not nearly as lucrative as fine art. Newman had forty-seven pieces in the exhibition including a group of small abstract figurines at £1.1.0 each and an abstract stoneware sculpture titled 'Citadel' for £22.⁴³⁹ The exhibition was well received with one reviewer stating it was of

⁴³⁷ Max Wykes-Joyce, 'Stoneware', *Arts News and Review*, 20 June 1959 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

⁴³⁸ 'Pottery into Sculpture', *The Times*, February 1962 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

⁴³⁹ 'Pottery into Sculpture', *The Times*, 1962.

'unusual interest' and that Auld and Newman were among the 'most original of the younger British potters' producing 'ceramic sculpture'.⁴⁴⁰

In October 1966 Primavera hosted a joint exhibition of work by Ian Auld and Gillian Lowndes. It was in 1966 that husband and wife Auld and Lowndes began to share a workshop space. Auld's work dominated the exhibition with 135 pieces on show; the prices ranged from £0.15.0 for a rectangular pot with a vertical stripe to £40 for a castle form with an ash glaze. Another of Auld's castle forms priced at £17.10.0 can be seen in figure 28. Lowndes had forty-five pieces for sale with prices ranging from £1.0.0 for what is described as a 'pipe', to £25.0.0 for 'black boxes'. A series of 'forms', each priced at £15.0.0 can be seen in figure 29.⁴⁴¹



Figure 28: Castle form with stepped top, Ian Auld, 1966



Figure 29: Three vertical forms, Gillian Lowndes, 1966

In the exhibition list there are also a number of pieces annotated to say they have been suggested to particular collectors and institutions, including the Paisley Museum.⁴⁴² One piece of Lowndes', simply described as a dish, has 'HR' initialled next to it; the assumption is that Henry Rothschild reserved this piece for himself,

⁴⁴⁰ 'Gallery Guide', *The Observer*, February 1962 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

⁴⁴¹ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Ceramics by Ian Auld and Gillian Lowndes"* (25 October - 5 November 1966). DT.HRA/5/2/32. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁴⁴² Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Ceramics by Ian Auld and Gillian Lowndes"* (1966).

although it is not in the collection at the Shipley.⁴⁴³ Primavera had given Lowndes a solo exhibition previously in 1962 and Rothschild had a great deal of admiration for her work. He notes that Lowndes was an artist who 'worked entirely from her inner world and she does not worry how the [outer] world receives it'.⁴⁴⁴



Figure 30: Abstract form, Peter Simpson, 1974

In October 1973 Primavera held an exhibition of work by Peter Simpson at Kings Parade, Cambridge (figure 30). Simpson trained at Bournemouth College of Art and Design and by the 1970s was becoming well known as an artist, winning what was regarded by Emmanuel Cooper, a 'fully justified prize at Calgary' earlier in 1973.⁴⁴⁵ Looking to nature, the porcelain forms Simpson created at this time were named 'fungi', 'poppy head' and 'conker', all alluding to nature as the source of Simpson's inspiration. Paul Clough, reviewing for *Crafts* magazine, wrote that:

There is a danger implicit in the use of forms from nature as the basis of artistic creation. It is that the artist, craftsman, call him what you will, may not have a strong enough digestion to absorb his material entirely and to present in in the new way which justifies his interference. [...] Peter Simpson's ceramics [...] at first appear to be on the borderline between representation and inspiration [...] Within the groups of similarly titled

⁴⁴³ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Ceramics by Ian Auld and Gillian Lowndes"* (1966).

⁴⁴⁴ Rothschild, *Artist Notes* (2006).

⁴⁴⁵ Emmanuel Cooper, 'Peter Simpson Ceramics - Primavera, 10 Kings Parade, Cambridge, November 1973', *Ceramic Review*, No.25 1974, p.18.

works the differences between individual pieces tend to be delicate rather than obvious and need to be considered quietly rather than rushed at. [...] Rather than being an examination of a theme they are expression of a conclusion. This very appearance of uniformity, the reduction of differences to important nuances, shows how thoroughly Peter Simpson has digested his material.⁴⁴⁶

Of note in this review is the author's uncertainty of how to describe Simpson, or those operating in the same sphere as him – 'artist, craftsman, call him what you will'. This statement draws us back to the crux, that the blurring of lines between art and craft were not only explored by the makers themselves but also examined by the consumers and the critics, some of whom found difficulty in finding the words to define and thereby understand these changes. Writing for *Crafts* it would be an accurate assumption that the writer may have felt more comfortable with the term 'craftsman' but recognises that the sculptural quality of Simpson's work can also be considered 'fine art'. At this time *Crafts* was in its infancy, this review featuring in its second issue. The Crafts Advisory Committee, who published *Crafts*, was equally aware of these debates and sought to define their position on the subject in their first Committee report in 1974:

From the outset the CAC has taken the view that the crafts form part of the broad spectrum of the visual arts and it has continued in its efforts to break down some of the prejudices and quite illogical divisions that have grown up. Too often in Britain there would appear to be a compelling desire to isolate creative work into watertight compartments yet, not surprisingly, many, including young art graduates, do not accept these boundaries and find them offensive. However, there are positive advantages in having defined areas of responsibility at a national level, as the wants of the artist craftsman are not necessarily the same as those of the fine artist.⁴⁴⁷

The closing remarks to this statement refer to the financial wants; as examined earlier in relation to Ian Auld, creating one-off sculptural pieces could not sustain a career but rather they had to subsidise by either creating large orders of domestic ware or by teaching. More importantly this statement indicates that the CAC were attempting to keep all types of craftsman and artists working in traditional craft medium on side, recognising the limitations of such definitions but arguing that they

⁴⁴⁶ Paul Clough, 'Notes and Reviews: Peter Simpson', *Crafts*, No. 6, 1974, p.41.

⁴⁴⁷ Crafts Advisory Committee, *The Work of the Crafts Advisory Committee, 1971 – 1974*, (London: The Crafts Advisory Committee, 1974), p.2.

remain useful terminology. I would argue that in choosing which exhibitions to review, the venue is as important as the work; in this case Primavera is a renowned craft establishment and so the exhibition comfortably fits into the magazine's remit. It is also important to note that Rothschild was a key figure in the CAC from 1971 to 1974, sitting on the exhibition committee.⁴⁴⁸

A key example of Rothschild's engagement with the art schools and the debate on craft and art can be seen in the 1961 group exhibition in London which centred on the pottery coming out of Goldsmith's College. As Gordon Baldwin recalls, it was difficult for those who were blurring the boundary between art and craft to find a suitable outlet for their work:

Well Primavera I suppose was the only one apart from the Berkeley Galleries that showed Hans Coper and Lucie Rie, and as I remember they were shown in really an old fashioned way. [...] James Tower rather impressed me because he showed in Gimpel Fils which was a proper art gallery but the majority of people making pots, there was nowhere and you didn't have an entree into art galleries and Henry's Primavera was the place [...] But there weren't many, I mean very few. Then there was the Craft Centre of Great Britain, you know Hay Hill [...] and outside of London, well I'm not really qualified to say but I dare say there were hardly none, hardly any.⁴⁴⁹

Baldwin was one of the four teachers and leading lights of the Goldsmith's show alongside Kenneth Bright, James Cranmer and David Garbett. Eight of their pupils also contributed to the exhibition. Rothschild had been drawn to Goldsmith's following an exhibition the staff had curated called "Prehistory to Picasso", which consisted of borrowed items from museums interspersed with the work of local children but without any chronological markers. The invitation to exhibit at Primavera seems to have come following that show.⁴⁵⁰ The aim of the Primavera exhibition was to showcase not only the talent of Goldsmith's, but to demonstrate the ethos of the pottery department at the College. As the exhibition notes state:

The concern of the staff has been, and is more and more, to give their students an imaginative understanding of the potentialities of the materials at their disposal. Great stress is put on imaginative exploration within essentially limited areas of activity

⁴⁴⁸ This role is discussed in further detail in chapter four.

⁴⁴⁹ Baldwin, interview, 2012.

⁴⁵⁰ Baldwin, interview, 2012.

[...] A pot is not judged necessarily as good or relevant if it looks like a pot. It is judged by its reality as a clay thing and, if it is a functional object, whether it works in its entirety [...] The staff believe that the sort of imaginative exploration they encourage is the essential basis on which pottery with personal reality can grow.⁴⁵¹

This ties in, partly, with Rothschild's own understanding of pottery, that there was an innate beauty to it which came through the act of making and that quality of work was just as important as form. That Rothschild showed twelve potters in one space, all working with clay but with different approaches and created an 'exciting and stimulating' show, is telling of his ability as a curator.⁴⁵² As Conroy Maddox wrote for the *Art News and Review*:

Each potter has his own approach, Baldwin feels himself to be a sculptor working in ceramics and modelled and carved concrete [...] Bright, more interested in structure and organic expansion, achieves some striking effects [...] The fusion of clay and glass, organic effects and structure can be seen in Cranmer [...] While the architectural element in Garbett is highly sophisticated in its formal language [...] The eight pupils also on show are well worth your attention.⁴⁵³

Gordon Baldwin showed a total of fifteen pieces, with prices ranging from £7.7.0 for a blue and white maquette for a garden pot, to £42 for a tall red and white form. A maquette is a preliminary model for a final work, essentially a way of trying out techniques and ideas of form, similar to the sketches an artist would make when composing a painting. Their inclusion in an exhibition is therefore unusual but could be explained as a desire, either on the makers or on Rothschild's part, to make some work more 'affordable', especially when we consider the prices for the top pieces. Dependent on the subsequent success of the makers, these maquette's would have proven to be a valuable investment. There were also pieces labelled as pots in Baldwin's selection but more often the word 'form' is used to describe his work, positioning him as a sculptor rather than a potter. Kenneth Bright was represented with thirteen pieces, with prices ranging from £2.2.0 for maquettes to £33.12.0 for what is described as a 'two-part image (hexahedronic)'. Among his other work is a 'half-seed', 'pebble-seed' and 'structural effigy', again demonstrating the freedom in

⁴⁵¹ Primavera, *Exhibition notes for "Handbuilt Pottery from Goldsmith's College, London"* (18-30 September 1961). DT.HRA/5/2/11. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁴⁵² Conroy Maddox, 'Four Potters and some of their Pupils', *Art News and Review*, October 1961 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

⁴⁵³ Maddox, 'Four Potters', 1961.

expression that Goldsmith's encouraged.⁴⁵⁴ James Cranmer exhibited seventeen pieces, including maquettes. One such maquette was a sketch for a larger piece which was also exhibited and priced at £44.2.0 (figure 31).



Figure 31: Maquette for 'Fountain', James Cranmer, 1961

Out of the four teachers shown, David Garbett's work, judged solely by the descriptions provided, is the most like pottery in its traditional sense. There is a slab pot for £4.4.0 and a tile panel for £21.0.0. Overall these makers were producing one-off pieces which were more sculptural than functional and that is reflected in the prices attached to them as well as by their descriptions.⁴⁵⁵

In terms of Rothschild's exhibition programme, the intersection between craft and art is shown in full force when Rothschild begins his association with Kettle's Yard in the 1970s. Under the ownership of Jim Ede, previously a curator at the Tate Gallery in London, Kettle's Yard was firstly a private collection of art and craft collected by Ede. In 1957 he began opening to the public in the afternoons. In 1970 an extension was built for the sole purpose of exhibitions and performances and in June 1971 Henry Rothschild began his association with Ede and Kettle's Yard with a large

⁴⁵⁴ It is assumed that the artists would have provided the descriptions of their work as there is no consistency across the different makers.

⁴⁵⁵ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Handbuilt Pottery from Goldsmith's College, London"* (1961).

exhibition simply called "Twenty British Potters". Rothschild first proposed this exhibition to Ede in late 1970. In his reply to Rothschild, Ede writes:

The committee laid great stress on the need for it to be an exhibition of "importance" - as you yourself said... such an exhibition draws attention to the work and the possibility of obtaining it [...]⁴⁵⁶

As the exhibition space at Kettle's Yard had only been established the year before, it is likely that Ede wanted this exhibition to set a high standard in order to showcase Kettle's Yard as an important space for craft and art. The number of potters taking part certainly would have drawn attention to it. Although called "Twenty British Potters" the exhibition list indicates there were actually twenty-one potters on show; perhaps there was a last minute addition after the promotional material had already been compiled. The potters displayed were: David Batterham, Michael Cardew, Svend Bayer, Alan Caiger Smith, Hans Coper, Derek Davis, Ian Godfrey, Alan Spencer Green, Henry Hammond, Gwyn Hanssen, Bernard Leach, David Leach, Janet Leach, William Marshall, Eric Mellon, Bryan Newman, Helen Pincombe, Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, John Reeve, Lucie Rie, and Robin Welch. These potters are a mix of the established and the new and, more significantly with regard to this research, domestic makers and art school makers. All in all there were over 300 pieces on display, requiring a great deal of curatorial skill to arrange, particularly with a mix of sculptural and standard form work.⁴⁵⁷ Writing for *Varsity*, Tony Birks wrote:

Fine modern ceramics are rarely gathered together in mixed exhibitions. Only occasionally is the choice of a discerning collection on view. An historic event in Kettle's Yard is the display of the work of twenty British potters in an exhibition from June 12th to 30th. The organisation and arrangement by Henry Rothschild himself associated with studio pottery for twenty five years, is a personal one, and reflects strongly his intimate and emotional involvement with ceramics.⁴⁵⁸

As stated here, by this time Rothschild had worked in the craft market for quarter of a century, building up both professional and personal friendships with makers, collectors and consumers. Given Rothschild's standing in the craft world, it is fair to say that many of these relationships were built on the foundation that

⁴⁵⁶ Jim Ede, *Letter to Henry Rothschild* (22 November 1970). DT.HRA/2/9. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁴⁵⁷ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Twenty British Potters", Kettle's Yard, Cambridge* (12 – 30 June 1971). DT.HRA/5/3/6. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁴⁵⁸ Tony Birks, 'Fine Potters at Kettle's Yard', *Varsity*, 1971 [DT.HRA/3/1/24. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].

Rothschild was in a position of power. This is not to suggest he used his influence in a negative way, but it was a power that was recognised, particularly by the new artists he championed. As Robin Welch recalls:

A pretty frightening sort of guy. He never held back in terms of criticism. But he was a genuine man; in fact he really got me on the road to selling, producing [...] [criticisms] just things like if you made these jars a little bit taller, they'd be more useful, things like that. I daren't think he criticised aesthetics really it was just mundane things like that. But he was a pretty powerful person, Henry.⁴⁵⁹

This 1971 exhibition is highly significant due to size and scale and is rightly acknowledged as 'historic' as it brought together a range of styles; Rothschild's curatorial skills would have come to the fore in creating a coherent exhibition. Birks' reference to Rothschild's 'intimate and emotional involvement with ceramics' is an astute observation; Rothschild's instinct towards objects, regardless of their position within the art/craft debate, is particularly in evidence with this show of potters. In one way the Leach pottery dominates as Cardew, Marshall, and Pleydell-Bouverie all had association with the pottery at one time or another. Overall the exhibition leans heavily toward this tradition although Coper, Newman, Welch and Godfrey's more sculptural work also feature strongly. Of Coper, Birks writes:

The finest work is that of Hans Coper, who never allows an imperfect pot to leave his workshop. His tense and cool ceramics seem to belong to a different stratum, and are displayed apart on a glass unit, aloof from the general orchestrations.⁴⁶⁰

Although part of a large exhibition, it is of note that Rothschild chose to display Coper apart from the others in this way. There is little photographic evidence of this exhibition and therefore it is not clear if the other makers' works were interspersed to some degree, but Birks' comment suggests they were. In response to Rothschild's invitation to exhibit, Coper wrote that it was 'obviously to be a unique and glamorous affair'.⁴⁶¹ Again, that Coper regarded it as such along with the reviews of its 'historic'

⁴⁵⁹ Robin Welch, interviewed by Hawksmoor Hughes for NLSC: Craft Lives (29 January – 26 February 2008). C960/85. Sound Archive, The British Library, London.

⁴⁶⁰ Birks, 'Fine Potters at Kettle's Yard', 1971.

⁴⁶¹ Hans Coper, *Letter to Henry Rothschild* (13 December 1970). DT.HRA/2/8. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

nature, suggests that this was a highly significant exhibition. There were only nine pieces displayed by Coper; he explains this in a letter to Rothschild:

What I have here now has all been shown before. Some pieces are promised and some I want to keep - which leaves very little with which to commit myself to for that Cambridge exhibition [...] I hope that we shall see you soon here in spite of this negative situation.⁴⁶²

That Rothschild managed to take even a small number of pots from Coper then is a testament to him and demonstrates the importance of these personal relationships. Coper also had the most expensive piece for sale, a large shouldered bottle for £118.⁴⁶³ Robin Welch displayed three pieces that were to be sold as a set for £200 but were also for purchase separately.

Further evidence of Rothschild's advantageous position in the network of established potters can be seen in other correspondence relating to this exhibition. In a letter to Rothschild Pleydell-Bouverie writes that she had sent twenty-five pots from which he could choose what to exhibit and to 'turf out what you didn't like'; all twenty-five pieces were included in the exhibition, the largest number of any of the potters.⁴⁶⁴ All of Pleydell-Bouverie's work for this show is small and conservatively priced, ranging from £1 for a small bowl to £10.50 for a mottled white and buff pot. In an earlier letter Pleydell-Bouverie explains this by saying:

[...] they are rather on the small side, because like an idiot I came back from Gwyn's into a flu epidemic, had a rather frantic go of it and I am now more or less laid off for a fortnight. As I'd already cut it a bit fine it doesn't allow for much slack. But I rather think the "smalls" are quite nice.⁴⁶⁵

While Pleydell-Bouverie had exhibited work with Rothschild regularly since the 1950s, her contemporary Michael Cardew had been absent since the 1953 Amsterdam show. His inclusion in the 1971 Kettle's Yard show is therefore of note. Cardew and Rothschild did have a professional relationship: Cardew is well represented in the Henry Rothschild Collection with five pieces and Primavera

⁴⁶² Coper, *Letter to Rothschild*, 1970.

⁴⁶³ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Twenty British Potters"*, 1971.

⁴⁶⁴ Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, *Letter to Henry Rothschild* (22 May 1971). DT.HRA/2/10. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁴⁶⁵ Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, *Letter to Henry Rothschild* (10 May 1971). DT.HRA/2/11. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

stocked his work from 1949 until Rothschild retired in 1980.⁴⁶⁶ In 1971 Cardew was involved in teaching and touring, on the back of the success of his book *Pioneer Pottery* (1970). Whilst this exhibition of work was taking place in Cambridge, Cardew, aged 70, was touring the US, lecturing on his work in Nigeria and Australia and attempting to make connections with black America. I would argue that making and teaching was of greater importance to Cardew than the type of exhibition at Kettle's Yard and goes some way to explain his relative absence in Rothschild's exhibition programme.⁴⁶⁷

Birks also makes reference to the three newly emerging potters: Eric Mellon, Ian Godfrey and Bryan Newman. Of Mellon he writes of his ability to draw on pots, calling him a 'discriminate artist'.⁴⁶⁸ Mellon worked in stoneware with an elm ash glaze, and painted depictions of 'flower people' and 'horse and rider'. Birks appreciated Godfrey's work for his 'personal style, firmly attached to an oriental precedent'.⁴⁶⁹ He was most pleased with Bryan Newman:

The deft conjuror in the exhibition is Bryan Newman, who never ceases to produce imaginative shapes using hand-built as well as wheel made techniques. There are boxes decorated with spiky shapes and panels of squashed clay, but most appealing is a series of gondolas with speckled, rusty surfaces which, like all good ceramics, cry out to be touched. They are not expensive, and like many of the pots in the show they would be a fine start to a collection.

Due to the success of "Twenty British Potters", along with a developing friendship with Ede, Rothschild followed this exhibition with another the next year, entitled "More British Potters" in June 1972. Unlike the "Twenty British Potters" exhibition which was weighted more towards the functional, this exhibition was more balanced. The show consisted of over 400 pieces with some last minute additions by some of the makers. The makers on show were: Paul Astbury, Svend Bayer, Michael Cardew, Hans Coper, Derek Davis, Ruth Duckworth, Ray Finch, Annette Fuchs, Tessa Fuchs, Gwyn Hanssen, Mo Jupp, Bernard Leach, David Leach, Jeremy Leach, Janet Leach, Bryan Newman, W.S Parker, Colin Pearson, Helen Pincombe,

⁴⁶⁶ Summarised from the Michael Cardew Archive at the Crafts Study Centre, Farnham.

⁴⁶⁷ Tanya Harrod, *The Last Sane Man Michael Cardew: Modern Pots, Colonialism and the Counterculture* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), pp.344-352.

⁴⁶⁸ Birks, *'Fine Potters at Kettle's Yard'*, 1971.

⁴⁶⁹ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Twenty British Potters"*, 1971.

Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, Colin Prince, Lucie Rie, Mary Rogers, Marie Claire Seviers, Marianne de Trey, Denise Wren and Peter Simpson.⁴⁷⁰ Joanna Constantinidis and Henry Hammond appear on the notated copy of the exhibition list, presumably as last minute additions as neither features in the accompanying catalogue.⁴⁷¹

For the catalogue Rothschild invited each maker to provide a statement. This was a new development; other catalogues and exhibition lists prior to this may have had a few brief biographical words but an 'artist statement' was something new and is associated with fine art practice. The application of this exercise to a craft exhibition can be seen as an attempt to raise the status of the exhibition and appeal to the fine art collectors who perhaps felt craft was too domestic and too dry. The responses by the makers themselves to this request are very revealing. Denise Wren provides a biography, written from a distance in the third person. She details her early education at Kingston School of Art and her association with Archibald Knox and the Knox Guild of Design and Craft. She concludes with a description of her current work which is a series of variations on the form of an elephant (figure 32) stating that: 'the variety, vitality and starkness of these creations are shown in the small number [five] of pieces included here'.⁴⁷²



⁴⁷⁰ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "More British Potters", Kettle's Yard, Cambridge (7 – 23 June 1972)*. DT.HRA/5/3/10. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁴⁷¹ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "More British Potters", 1972*.

⁴⁷² Henry Rothschild, *More British Potters* (Cambridge: Cambridge Aids to Learning Ltd, 1972). [DT.HRA/5/3/11, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.].

Figure 32: Elephant Form, Denise Wren, 1972

Bryan Newman, who created ceramic landscapes and forms, and Ray Finch, who worked out of Winchcombe producing domestic ware, both wrote about the lifestyle of the potter. For Newman the attraction 'to the potter's life was its very complexity', referring to both the physical and mental skills required to run a workshop. Finch writes that he 'became a potter because it offered an alternative way of working in an industrial world'.⁴⁷³ That these two makers offer differing views on what pulled them towards the craft can be attributed in part to their age and when they became established. Newman, born in 1935, came through the art schools of the 1960s whereas Finch, born in 1913, worked with Cardew at Winchcombe before taking it over in 1939, and thereby facing immediate crisis with the advent of the Second World War.

Others offer a simple description of their work and their practice. There are only two entries in the catalogue that have no text at all: Lucie Rie and Hans Coper. This is not surprising as neither Rie nor Coper, unlike Leach and Cardew, felt it necessary to analyse or intellectualise their work in any way, and would have refrained from making a written statement:

With her sharp intelligence [Rie] would deflect questions about her attitude to the craft of pottery, and avoid intellectual discussions: 'I close my eyes and make pots'. Hans Coper, whose intellectual stature in spite of his modesty was obvious to all who met him, carefully avoided making statements about ceramics, and the single paragraph that he wrote for the catalogue of the Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition in 1969 was the extent of his published writing.⁴⁷⁴

Of his own work, Colin Prince, whose work consists of ceramic robots, battery packs and generators (figure 33), writes that: 'on one hand they demonstrate the flexibility and exactitude of the medium; on the other hand they echo the mystery and the menace of modern machine culture'.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷³ Rothschild, *More British Potters*, 1972.

⁴⁷⁴ Tony Birks, 'Lucie Rie and her work with Hans Coper', in *Pioneers of Modern Craft*, ed. by Margot Coatts (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p.97.

⁴⁷⁵ Rothschild, *More British Potters*, 1972.



Figure 33: Sighting Machine, Colin Prince, 1972

Prince's work is comparable to that of Paul Astbury's who also produced work recognisable as machine but created with moulded clay. In a review of a later exhibition in 1974, the artist John Catleugh writes that Rothschild had:

[...] ventured off course and included potters like Colin Prince and Paul Astbury but he felt uneasy about the result and they too were conscious of being fish in the wrong waters.⁴⁷⁶

Certainly Astbury and Prince were more 'art' than 'craft' with their use of mixed media, methods of building and abstract or sculptural forms but further research shows that this uneasiness on the part of Rothschild may be down more to personality than to the work itself. William Ismay, who himself built up an extensive collection of ceramics and can be seen as a contemporary of Rothschild's, wrote a review of the 1972 exhibition. In this review he begins by praising Primavera for its 'willingness to embark on adventurous forays into new territory' throughout its history; however he disputes Rothschild's claim that this exhibition was 'divergent and provocative':

Ironically in the context, I felt that this claim had lost some its bite when the catalogued pieces by Paul Astbury were reduced in number and Colin Prince's withdrawn [...]⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁶ J.D.H Catleugh, 'Potters at Kettle Yard - Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, June 1974', *Ceramic Review*, No.29, 1974, p.19.

⁴⁷⁷ William Ismay, 'More British Potters - Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, June 1972', *Ceramic Review*, No.17,1972 p.18.

As is evident in the next issue of *Ceramic Review*, Ismay's original review had been subject to severe edits and in a letter to the periodical he writes of his dismay that the resulting piece came across as 'adversely critical' when his overall impression of the exhibitions was that it was a 'distinguished, complex and enjoyable one'.⁴⁷⁸ Ismay and Rothschild exchanged personal letters with regard to this review and it is in these letters that Rothschild reveals why Prince was in actuality excluded from the 1972 show.

[Prince] refused to allow me to choose the items to be shown, he came with them in a great van three days before the exhibition and there [sic] were far too large to be shown with the other work. He insisted on them being all shown and on them being shown as a complete group together. This was impossible in Kettle's Yard Gallery and he withdrew the pieces. I go to a very great deal of trouble, not only to choose all the pieces, but to make my exhibitions a harmonious whole and it was absolutely impossible to have the whole exhibition thrown off gear in this way. I should very much like to see your article as I feel that the published review must have distorted what you intended.⁴⁷⁹

This account of Rothschild's difficulty with Prince is of course Rothschild's account and Prince, if queried, may offer a different view of the exchange. What it does reveal is Rothschild's belief in his own aesthetic visions and that would not be wavered. However, we can compare this with the limited options given to Rothschild by Coper in 1971 and draw a conclusion that had Prince been more established, better known and therefore more likely to sell, then perhaps Rothschild would have approached this differently. This private exchange along with Ismay's published letter about his review being edited demonstrates the difficulty in using these types of sources on which to build a narrative, as further evidence can reveal contradictions or alternate narratives.

In his introductory notes to the exhibition catalogue, Rothschild laments at the division between craft and art, commenting that 'we may have to appeal to Editors to create the special job of crafts critic to write on the Arts page'.⁴⁸⁰ As we have already seen in this chapter, the craft shows Rothschild held were actually well-reviewed across a range of publications dedicated to fine art. Perhaps Rothschild's position on

⁴⁷⁸ William Ismay, 'Letters: More British Potters', *Ceramic Review*, No.18, 1972, p.20.

⁴⁷⁹ Henry Rothschild, *Letter from Henry Rothschild to William Ismay* (30 September 1972). 2686. William Ismay Archive, York Art Gallery, York.

⁴⁸⁰ Rothschild, *More British Potters*, 1972.

the exhibition subcommittee of the CAC may have highlighted to him that there was still a discrepancy in the coverage received about a range of crafts. Certainly, Rothschild goes on to write about the ever present differences between craft and art:

This lack of sounding board for crafts is not an English phenomenon, I gather it exists in most parts of Northern Europe where crafts are most plentiful. The definition of the artist craftsman has been the subject of violent dispute for a very long time and it cannot easily be resolved since craftsmen range from those making beautiful things for use to those who make useless things that may, or may not be, beautiful. The latter group tends to attract the most vocal elements. [...] This Exhibition is more divergent and provocative than the first, but its underlying principle has been a fundamental respect for form.⁴⁸¹

Here Rothschild articulates the limitations in defining makers as 'craftsmen', 'artists', or 'artist craftsmen'. As shown in the literature review, and throughout this research, this debate is central to understanding craft in the twentieth-century. By commenting upon it in these exhibition notes, Rothschild is making a contribution to a much larger concern.

In June 1974, Rothschild returned to Kettle's Yard for the third year running, stating: 'We have gathered another mammoth show at Kettle's Yard and I crave indulgence for the variety and possible clash of techniques, materials, shapes and personalities brought together'.⁴⁸² This show was called simply "Potters at Kettle's Yard" with work representing twenty-two makers: Janet Allen, Ian Auld, Richard Batterham, Barbara Cass, Walter Cole, Emmanuel Cooper, Hans Coper, Geoffrey Doonan, Ray Finch, Sheila Fournier, Glynn Hugo, Janet Leach, Eilleen Lewenstein, Gillian Lowndes, John Maltby, Colin Pearson, Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, Lucie Rie, Mary Rogers, Bob Rogers and Marianne de Trey and Robin Welch. John Maltby dominated the show with thirty-two pieces. Maltby studied sculpture at Leicester College of Art and at Goldsmiths College. He worked with David Leach in the early 1960s before setting up his own workshop in Stoneshill, Devon in 1964. Although in later years he began to create more sculptural, one off work, at this time he was still well known for his domestic ware. The work included for display at this exhibition demonstrates this transitional period well with pots and bottles displayed alongside

⁴⁸¹ Rothschild, *More British Potters*, 1972.

⁴⁸² Henry Rothschild, *Potters at Kettle's Yard, Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, 9 – 26 June (1974)* [DT.HRA/5/3/20, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].

more figurative and sculptural work.⁴⁸³ Maltby's work could be viewed as a microcosm for the whole show as once more Rothschild attempted to unify a number of 'techniques, materials, shapes and personalities' to create a cohesive exhibition:

The exhibition is assembled to do homage to well-trying and always outstanding artists but also to provide a platform for artists not yet recognised and shown in a large exhibition. The Cambridge Primavera exhibitions enjoy great popularity with a wide range of people – those who feel pots and those who think them only; those who want a star piece for a famous collection or Museum, and those who want a really good pot for flowers.⁴⁸⁴

This statement reveals that Rothschild was not only concerned with promoting the makers on display, but also understood the potential for sales. He recognised the diverse needs of his customers and sought to fulfil them, although arguably his selection of artists, particularly those lesser known, was dictated by his personal choice. This balance between what he wanted to show and what he thought people would like is key to understanding the longevity of Primavera; he proved himself able to judge which new makers would be popular with the public but remained in control of his own vision.

The catalogue for "Potters at Kettle's Yard" in the Henry Rothschild Archive has a number of notations showing the pieces sold and to whom. Henry Rothschild purchased a stoneware disc by Doonan, a decorated off-white bowl by Fournier, a garden urn with a lid by Maltby, a porcelain winged form by Pearson, a bowl by Pleydell-Bouverie, a pink flushed bowl by Mary Rogers and a large raku dish by Welch. He also bought to sell through Primavera a number of pieces including an orange glaze footed bowl by Allen, a slab form by Auld, and a raku clay bowl by Cooper. It is not clear through the notes whether these pieces were bought at cost, although it can be assumed some discount was applied in order to then sell them at profit through Primavera. William Ismay was also in attendance and bought a pieces by Hans Coper, one by Janet Leach and one by Robin Welch. Other notable purchases were made by George Wingfield-Digby, Keeper of Textiles at the Victoria and Albert Museum and author of *The Work of the Modern Potter in England* (1952), and the artist, architect and designer John Catleugh. Catleugh also reviewed the exhibition for *Ceramics Review*, writing:

⁴⁸³ Rothschild, *Potters at Kettle's Yard*, 1974.

⁴⁸⁴ Rothschild, *Potters at Kettle's Yard*, 1974.

It must be admitted, I suppose, that the summer exhibition at Kettle's Yard is the event in the year that is most looked forward to by potters and pottery collectors [...] At first sight the list of potters to be included in the exhibition this year looked a bit like the old predictable mixture. But that impression must have been made without thought of Henry – the old magician must have something up his sleeve.⁴⁸⁵

As discussed in relation to the first Kettle's Yard show in 1971, Rothschild certainly seems to have established these shows as 'events' in the crafts calendar, although Catleugh seems loathe to admit it in this review. Catleugh goes on to praise the work of Rie, Auld and Lowndes. However Catleugh goes on to remark that Rothschild's exhibitions are not the place to see 'mind-stretching experimental work' and that Rothschild 'steers a safe middle course'.⁴⁸⁶ This statement may seem in opposition to the stance of this research which argues that Rothschild did bring together work that was usually separated. To best put this in context it is important to understand that Catleugh was professionally influenced by modern artists such as Pablo Picasso and Jackson Pollock, and so we can see why he would think that Rothschild could go further in his representation of sculptural and abstract art. Rothschild in a way answers this criticism in his introductory notes:

[...] maybe we are getting a little too much driven in to the pure Art field and forget the origins of the subject. [...] They share the one outstanding merit of living lives requiring both physical and mental exertion and thus being enviable in this era when so many people have to do jobs which do not give them enjoyment.⁴⁸⁷

In the 1975 Kettle's Yard show "Ceramic Form", these concerns over art and craft are absent. In his opening statement to the catalogue, Rothschild appears less enthusiastic:

The shapes are, on the whole, thrown but include two or three artists who shape their work by other means. The material ranges from Raku via stoneware to porcelain. The kilns range from wood fired to electric and the glazes from selected ashglazes to standard glazes, some openly divulged, others kept by the potters. We asked for comments which varied in detail and attitude. The exhibition provides an interesting spectrum of glaze, decoration and shape.

⁴⁸⁵ Catleugh, 'Potters at Kettle Yard - Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, June 1974', 1974, p.19.

⁴⁸⁶ Catleugh, 'Potters at Kettle Yard - Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, June 1974', 1974, p.19.

⁴⁸⁷ Rothschild, *Potters at Kettle's Yard*, 1974.

There is no comment here on trends, on the nature of craft, or on the role of the craftsmen as there is in the other catalogue introductions. It is difficult to state why this change in mood, suddenly understated. It is of note that Rothschild had left the Crafts Advisory Committee in 1974 under something of a dark cloud and in the month preceding this 1975 show Rothschild had written a letter to *Crafts* magazine, lamenting the poor investment into the craft market and the resulting effect on makers:

The craft workshops which have been established here over the last few years have varied history: some are successful, but others are struggling with financial and marketing problems which they cannot solve without expert advice. The CAC should investigate whether such workshops would be helped by the establishment of a regular trade fair [...] Unless the pound stabilises and interest rates come down, the costs of labour and raw materials could make the price of some products so high as to be unsaleable. Let us hope that with export drives and a continuing tourist boom, British craftsmen can weather the coming economic storm.⁴⁸⁸

It may be that Rothschild's concern over the health of the British craft scene, together with a growing frustration with the Crafts Advisory Committee, resulted in his enthusiasm waning, albeit briefly. As with the other Kettle's Yard exhibitions, there were large number of works on show represented by twenty-five potters: Clive Bowen, Michael Cardew, Michael O'Brien, Svend Bayer, Seth Cardew, Michael Casson, Hans Coper, Ruth Duckworth, Ray Finch, Elizabeth Fritsch, Alan Spencer Green, Ian Gregory, Anita Hoy, Colin Kellam, Jennifer Welch, David Leach, Jeremy Leach, Janet Leach, John Maltby, Eric Mellon, Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, Thomas Plowman, Lucie Rie, Robert Tinnyunt and Robin Welch. These potters were accompanied by woodwork by Richard Raffan and engravings by Albert Flacon. In his review for *Ceramic Review*, William Ismay wrote:

The ceramic scene as surveyed by *Ceramic Review* is now so complex that no one exhibition can represent the whole of it. One felt however on looking round here that Primavera still anthologises the better-charted areas and adds some adumbrations of newer territory with exceptional authority, and that it is not without reason that enthusiasts tend to husband some of their resources for this occasion when each invited potter's work forms for the most part a skilfully-arranged exhibition within an exhibition, with intriguing juxtapositions.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁸ Henry Rothschild, 'Letters', *Crafts*, No.13, 1975, p.45.

⁴⁸⁹ William Ismay, 'Ceramic Form - An Exhibition of Pottery arranged by Henry Rothschild - Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, June 1975', *Ceramic Review*, No.35, 1975, p.17.

Ismay here is perhaps more sure of the importance of these exhibitions than Rothschild is at this time, or, given the misleading edits with his previous review, Ismay wishes to make it clear he is supportive of Rothschild and Primavera.

The exhibitions discussed here show firstly the range of styles that Rothschild engaged with through his exhibition programme, with examples of domestic ware by makers such as Pleydell-Bouverie and Pincombe, to the traditional studio work of Janet and Bernard Leach, to the sculptural work of Lowndes, Auld and Baldwin. This diversity in his exhibition programme further points to Rothschild as a tastemaker, responding to but also directing current trends. It is understandable that the above discussion is dominated by ceramics when we consider the exhibition programme itself contained more pottery than any other craft. However, in order to appreciate Rothschild's broad interests, the following will examine the presence of traditional craft and folk art in his exhibition programme.

Presenting Traditional Craft and Folk Art

As detailed in chapter four, the retail side of Primavera engaged with traditional and rural crafts from its early days, facilitated in part by Rothschild's association with the Rural Industries Bureau and Rothschild's travels around the UK, visiting rural craftsmen. In an editorial for *Crafts* in 1976, Rothschild comments:

My continuing interest in folk art has always quarrelled with my interest in the major works of craft made by individuals. I have never understood why we should concentrate on the artist craftsman to the detriment of the craftsman as a producer of well-made goods.⁴⁹⁰

As previously demonstrated with regard to the differentiation of art and craft, here Rothschild is further extending his appreciation of craft to be inclusive of folk art, or traditional craft. As with craft in its broadest sense, 'folk art' has been a difficult term to define: in the opening paragraph of the survey *European Folk Art*, it is stated that:

Let us, for convenience, accept the definition implied, rightly or wrongly, in the majority of instances of its use: articles decorated in traditional styles, associated with specific communities.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁹⁰ Henry Rothschild, 'Primavera', *Crafts*, No.18, 1976, p.10.

⁴⁹¹ Robert Wildhaber, 'European Folk Art: An Introduction', in *European Folk Art*, ed. by H.J Hansen (London: Thames & Hudson, 1968), p.7.

This definition acknowledges immediately its own limitations. As with discussions on the concept of craft itself, complicated by the idea of 'handmade' and 'machine made', 'folk art' can be understood in a variety of ways. This can be dependent on the country of origin, the materials used and how the object is consumed. As Martin Myrone writes:

Crudely, on the one hand, there are the collectors, curators and scholars who view 'folk art' as *art*, which can be subjected to an aestheticized gaze attentive to the peculiar qualities of form and decoration; on the other, those scholars, particularly anthropologists and material culture specialists, who object to the de-contextualizing effect of this aestheticization, and insist instead that material classed as 'folk art' should be analysed only in relation to their practical, ritual or symbolic functions, as these take shape in the context of specific communities.⁴⁹²

Due in part to these difficulties in defining what is meant by 'folk art', the more negative connotations of the term are allowed to surface. As one commentator, writing on Primavera's "International One" exhibition in 1963, states: 'It's not long since the very word "folk" sent a chill down the spines of all except earnest left-wingers and the dustier intellectuals'.⁴⁹³ This was echoed in 2005 by the art critic Waldemar Januszczak who remarked: 'The very thought of folk art makes me queasy'.⁴⁹⁴ Such remarks can be attributed to fashion; as with any type of aesthetic product, folk art has fallen in and out of vogue. Considering that the majority of Rothschild's 'folk art' exhibitions occurred from 1957 until the late 1960s, it can be viewed as being in vogue at that time.

With these issues in mind, it is of note that Rothschild embraced the term 'folk art' when he first began exhibiting this type of work in 1957. He was likely unburdened by the semantics, driven more by a genuine interest for the traditional work, aware that it was becoming a sought after commodity, and eager to show it to his already established consumer base. His motivation was to show the variance of craft in comparison with the uniform nature of mass-produced items for the Western

⁴⁹² Martin Myrone, 'Instituting English Folk Art', *Visual Culture in Britain*, Vol.10, No.1 (2009), p.28.

⁴⁹³ T. S. Ferguson, 'Folk – but not folksy', *Sunday Telegraph*, 2 June 1963 [DT.HRA/3/1/4, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].

⁴⁹⁴ Waldemar Januszczak, 'Power to the People', *The Sunday Times*, 15 May, 2005.

market.⁴⁹⁵ Rothschild's first entry into exhibiting traditional folk art came in 1957 with two separate exhibitions of Sicilian cart carvings. The carvings were reportedly brought over from Sicily by Rothschild 'while "grubbing about" in a carpenter's shop'.⁴⁹⁶ The first exhibition ran in April and consisted of fifteen cart carvings along with seven Sardinian weavings. The cart carvings were inspired by religion and included a design of St George and the Dragon for £9.9.0 and a design of an Angel for £2.12.6. The weavings were concerned with nature and included a carpet with a goat design for £70. Although there were only a small number of weavings on display, a note on the exhibition list states there are 'several available'.⁴⁹⁷ The second exhibition focused solely on the carvings, opening in late October. It is not clear if some of the carvings from the earlier exhibition that were unsold became part of the second exhibition as the descriptions given in the lists are vague at best, or whether the carts sold out at the first exhibition and so Rothschild decided to host another while the market was still there. As one reviewer stated:

The current vogue for things Italian, from jewellery to interior decoration, together with numerous exhibitions of glass, pottery and other ornaments, suggests that Italy's production of arts and crafts is being stepped up to catch foreign markets. This is, of course, true only in a restricted sphere, but one begins to inquire where the lines drawn between art and industry [...] There is today a note of sophistication in much that was until recently considered folk or popular art [...] Yet Italian popular art remains almost as inexhaustible and intriguing as ever it was, most of it still related to the environment of the people and reflecting their temperament and taste.[...] These carts, ranging from two-wheelers to horse drawn wagons, are not only to be found in Sicily, where they are still carved and painted in cramped outdoor workshops. The subjects are Biblical and historical, scenes from opera and ballet, or of peasant life [...] Their intricate carving and flamboyant colour have the same appeal as those of canal barges and gypsy caravans and are equally an expression of peasant art.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁵ Janine Barker & Cheryl Buckley, 'The Primavera Story, 1946 – 1967', in *British Design: Tradition and Modernity after 1948*, ed. by Christopher Breward, Fiona Fisher & Ghislaine Wood (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p.54.

⁴⁹⁶ Julia Bastian, 'Stores of Ideas', *Ideal Home*, November 1957 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

⁴⁹⁷ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Old Sicilian Cart Carvings and Sardinian Weaving"*, (10-22 April 1957). DT.HRA/5/1/6. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁴⁹⁸ Tudor Edwards, 'Italian Popular Art' *The Lady*, 12 December 1957 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

There are a number of interesting phrases present here. Firstly, there is an attempt to define 'folk' or 'popular' art, linking it specifically to the place of production as well as the people producing it. This is a fair definition of folk art but also demonstrates how the term lacks inclusivity – with each country and its people producing their own type of folk art, it can be difficult to bring them all under one heading. Secondly, the reviewer uses the word 'peasant' to refer to a rural working-class. As with the earlier discussion on Rothschild's exhibition of baskets in 1953 (an exhibition that could easily be included here) traditional folk art is tied up with an understanding of class. The objects made by the working-class cannot easily be defined as 'high art', usually because they perform a more practical function, with their aestheticism secondary to that purpose. Furthermore, the maker of folk art is either absent or allegorical and therefore the value of the object must be calculated by other means. I would argue that their transformation into 'folk art' occurs when their aesthetic value is recognised by the urban middle and upper-classes. In his discussion on 'primitive' art, Fred Myers writes:

Objects do not exist as 'primitive art'. This is a category created for their circulation, exhibitions and consumption outside their original habitats.⁴⁹⁹

As Tudor Edward comments above the late 1950s and 1960s saw a 'vogue' for this type of work, thus creating a market that Rothschild was able to tap in to. If Rothschild was trying to take advantage of this 'current vogue' then the short interval of six months between the Sicilian cart exhibitions is understandable. It seems doubtful given the size of the Sloane Street premises that he would have been able to have the carvings out for general retail in between. At the second exhibition there were twenty-nine carvings on display including a complete cart axle for sale at £21. Again, the scenes were largely religious in theme with a representation of the Holy Family for £3.3.0. In his notes on the exhibition Rothschild writes:

This exhibition [...] is a living example of an artistic folk art. [...] Execution varies from finest carving in the classical manner to flat relief, and colours are often vivid. Dating of the carts is difficult as these have been made over a long period and the collection of pieces of cart which are no longer serviceable. They would be anything up to 150 years old. The simplicity, directness and force of their carving is closely bound up with the cart – often the sole valuable belonging of the poorer peasant and it gives great pleasure especially to those

⁴⁹⁹ Fred Myers, "Primitivism", Anthropology, and the Category of "Primitive Art" in *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. by Chris Tilley et al. (London: Sage, 2006), p.267.

who have seen the complete cart with horse and the leather gear and proud plumage.⁵⁰⁰

As with the reviewer, Rothschild evokes a sense of the people and the places from which these carts have come from. Here Rothschild demonstrates his understanding of folk art, that the carvings are not only aesthetically pleasing but they are inextricably linked to their function and place of production.

In April 1960, Primavera hosted an exhibition of old Dutch pastry moulds. In a similar spirit to the exhibitions of Sicilian cart carvings, this exhibition appears to have developed out of Rothschild's own travel, this time to Holland, where he came across these wooden carvings. As is stated in the open invitation:

We are extremely pleased to invite you to this amusing and entrancing exhibition of old Wooden Dutch Pastry Boards. They are throughout collected for their outstanding beauty and this is an instance of Folk Art being of great beauty and attractive to collectors. Mr. Rothschild had fun collecting these, as some were actually weaned from a baker in old Dutch Zuidersea [sic] towns.⁵⁰¹

Again Rothschild defines these items as 'folk art', suggesting they have a life beyond their usefulness. That he has acquired some of these pieces direct from a baker suggests they were still being used. These moulds were specifically for the creation of special cakes made for the St. Nicholas Day feast on 5 December. It would be of interest to know how the baker reacted to this, someone wanting to buy the moulds he used and viewed as a tool, in order to place them in an exhibition in London. The premise of the exhibition seems to be to sell them on as art objects rather than as useable moulds, which differs from the retail of other craft items which were sold to use, such as the domestic pottery, glassware and basketry. There were thirty-five of these pieces on view, including a mould of birds and pigs for £1.10.0, a mould of a man with a top hat, and on the reverse a steamship, for £10.10.0, and a pair of figures, a hunter and his wife, for £52.10.0 for both or £30 for one. One piece, is marked as being from 'Mr. Rothschild's private collection' which shows the Virgin and Child on one side, and St. Nicholas on the other (figure 34).⁵⁰²

⁵⁰⁰ Primavera, *Exhibition notes for "Sicilian Exhibition"* (10 October 1957). DT.HRA/5/1/9. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁵⁰¹ Primavera, *Letter invitation to exhibition of "Old Dutch Pastry Moulds"* (26 April-6 May 1960). DT.HRA/5/2/3. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁵⁰² Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Old Dutch Pastry Moulds"* (24 April – 6 May 1960). DT.HRA/5/2/4. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.



Figure 34: Dutch pastry mould showing St. Nicholas

As Rothschild writes: 'Most of the moulds are over 100 years old, some celebrate new inventions of the day, such as the steam ship, locomotive and the balloon'.⁵⁰³ This blending of themes, religious and secular, demonstrates this type of craft is not fixed in the past but can evolve to comment on the events of the day. For example, the makers that carved their boards with the new inventions they saw around them in the late nineteenth-century, were engaging with the contemporary world just as fine artists would do.

Following on from this exhibition, in November 1960, Primavera hosted "Crafts from Thailand". If we consider the show on Sicilian cart carvings and Dutch pastry moulds to be Rothschild's first moves into exhibiting international folk art, this exhibition was the first to incorporate work from outside Europe. There is no exhibition list available for this show, but it was very well reviewed in a range of publications. Through these reviews it can be noted that amongst the objects on display were pierced parchment shadow puppets, rubbings made from relief carvings in Bangkok temples, stone and bronze heads, some of which were dated to the seventeenth-century, a variety of silks, cutlery, paper kites, painted palm leaf mobiles, baskets and temple bells. All together this must have presented an inspiring image of Thai craft; one reviewer remarked that there was an atmosphere of an 'Eastern bazaar'.⁵⁰⁴ The main element of the exhibition seems to be its focus on colour:

⁵⁰³ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Old Dutch Pastry Moulds"*, 1960.

⁵⁰⁴ Malcolm Logan, 'Craft and Sculpture from Thailand', *Art News and Review*, November 1960 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

statement appears to be directed towards a fear that globalisation could be equated with the homogenous production and consumption of traditional products.⁵⁰⁸ Rothschild's has again demonstrated is awareness for current trends, but I would argue these shows of traditional crafts arise from a genuine want to provide his customers with something 'fantastic, individual and unique'. Of course, the irony of this is that a fascination with any national product opens the door to a flood of objects created for both tourists and those looking to appear fashionable, thereby creating issues of authenticity.

This issue of authenticity is commented upon with regard to a rising interest in African crafts, represented by Primavera's next exhibition, "African Contemporary Crafts", which ran in February 1961.

Two words of warning on buying from Africa. Some of the fabrics can only be bought in frustratingly oddly shaped pieces and not by the yard. A certain percentage of the imports are on the tourist souvenir level and, as such, no better than any other standard souvenir item. The best plan is to buy things the Africans make to use themselves.⁵⁰⁹

The writer's first warning in a way contradicts the second: the frustration is that textiles are not available by the yard, which is standard practice to the European buyer, and yet the consumer is being encouraged to 'buy things the Africans make to use themselves'. As with the timely show of Sicilian craft in 1957, Rothschild's exhibition of African craft at this time appears as part of a larger trend, which is the consumption of the 'Other'. The show consisted of some 110 items, the most expensive of which was an Esu figure – a Yoruba god - from Nigeria for £30. The majority of items were more affordable under £10.⁵¹⁰ Their authenticity is highlighted in an article featured in *Architectural Design*, which mentions figures made for 'local witch doctors' and masks used for 'initiation rites'.⁵¹¹ The emphasis placed on the 'real use' of these objects is there to further enhance their value as desirable objects for the largely Western collector.

⁵⁰⁸ Rothschild comments on this shift in production with regard to baskets. See *Beginnings*.

⁵⁰⁹ 'Africa Dances into the Shop', *The Queen*, November 1961 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

⁵¹⁰ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "African Contemporary Crafts"* (14-25 February 1961). DT.HRA/5/2/9. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁵¹¹ 'Central African Handicrafts', *Architectural Design*, March 1961 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

In May 1963, Rothschild staged “Folk Art from Many Countries: Primavera International One” which consisted of 423 practical and ornamental pieces for the home – paintings, pottery, textiles and carvings – from Brazil, Holland, Japan, Mexico, Venezuela, Greece, Madagascar, Peru, Russia, Italy, Crete, Nigeria, Morocco, India, Egypt, Sardinia and Poland. As he put it:

To find these treasures of today and yesterday, we have to travel on wayward paths and listen to many people. We have to love what the simple and the complex people make for everyday use, for religion, for their children or for adornment.⁵¹²

This language of this statement speaks of Rothschild's passion for 'folk' art but also reveals a typical Western attitude towards the 'Other' as outlined by Said, that of sentimentality and nostalgia for the output of 'simple' people. This is also evident in the reviews of the exhibition, with one commentator stating: 'At first blink they might all come out of the same box - direct, bright, fantastic and honest, the humble (and very humbly priced) are both beautiful and moving'.⁵¹³ This sentimentality is acknowledged by Eric Newton, writing for *The Guardian*. He comments that 'we are apt to become sentimental when we hear that a simple, uneducated peasant-craftsman [...] has taught himself how to carve a child's doll'. However Newton goes on to state that this sentimentality can become dangerous as the desire for the authentic handmade object can quickly become a commercial venture in which 'decadence and mass-production follow' and the 'simple peasant loses his simplicity and spontaneity'.⁵¹⁴ As with the display of African work in 1961, this balance between the authentic and the commercial is hard to achieve. From a collector's point of view, understanding the difference between work that is 'authentic' and work that has been produced for commercial purposes (such as tourism) is crucial; the authentic object – whatever its aesthetic attributes – has a higher value, which in turn elevates the status of the collector. As Nelson Graburn writes:

One gains prestige by association with these objects, whether they are souvenirs or expensive imports; there is a cachet connected with international travel, exploration, multiculturalism, etc. that these arts

⁵¹² Primavera, *Exhibition notes for "Primavera International One"* (22 May - 1 June 1963). DT.HRA/5/2/17. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁵¹³ 'Two Off the Track', *The Observer*, 2 June 1963 [DT.HRA/3/1/3, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].

⁵¹⁴ Eric Newton, 'International Folk Art', *The Guardian*, May 1963 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

symbolise [...] But for many items of commercial art, this very demand often leads to a proliferation and a mass production that vitiates the prestige and usefulness in the very snob market for which the new arts were invented [...]⁵¹⁵

With the “International One” exhibition Rothschild demonstrates an awareness of this difference and he reported to have ‘chosen from the village or bought from the peasant before aesthetics and good taste had begun to tamper with his innocence’.⁵¹⁶ Again, although Rothschild is right to be praised for buying direct and ensuring as much as one could authenticity, the colonial language used about the maker’s ‘innocence’ is patronising to contemporary sensibilities.

Rothschild was not only drawn to international folk art, but also to that of home, as demonstrated in the 1953 basket exhibition. The work of Sam (also known as Alan) Smith does not sit comfortably in the broader narrative of folk art, but that is part in due to the vague definitions of folk art. He was graphic designer and toy maker, but the presentation and subject matter of his work was, as Rothschild described it, ‘uniquely English’, a sentiment that was echoed in the many reviews of his work.⁵¹⁷ It is this characterisation of his work that allows him a place in this discussion on folk art.

Smith had originally worked for Muriel Rose at The Little Gallery, a craft shop similar to Primavera that closed due to the Second World War. In an interview Rothschild could not recall how he came to meet with Smith, only that he was sure Rose would not have introduced him, as ‘she was far too anxious to avoid introducing anybody to me’, due, Rothschild believed, to the fact she was ‘resentful’ at having to close her own shop.⁵¹⁸ In a collection of handwritten notes, Rothschild writes that he met Smith during one of his ‘early pilgrimages touring the country in 1945/6’ and that in the early days of Primavera Smith designed advertisements and invitation cards (figure 36).⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁵ Nelson H. H. Graburn, ‘Introduction: The Arts of the Fourth World’, in *Ethnic and Tourist Arts: Cultural Expressions from the Fourth World*, ed. by Nelson H. H. Graburn (California: California University Press, 1976), pp.2-3.

⁵¹⁶ Newton, ‘International Folk Art’, 1963.

⁵¹⁷ Rothschild, *Artist Notes*, 2006.

⁵¹⁸ Rothschild, interview, 2003.

⁵¹⁹ Rothschild, *Artist Notes*, 2006.

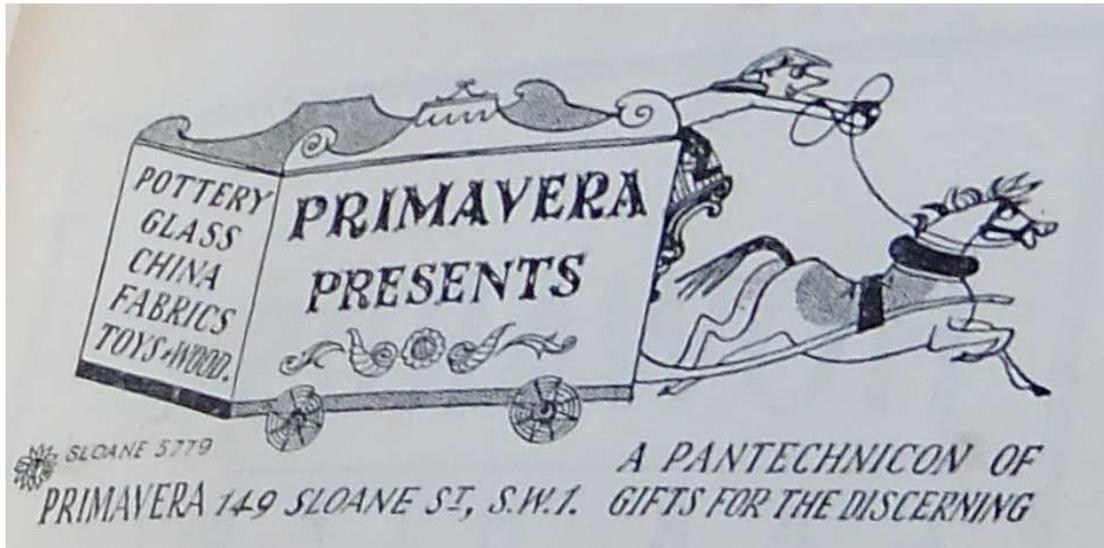


Figure 36: Advertisement for Primavera, Alan (Sam) Smith, c.1947

In November 1955, Rothschild held the first of three exhibitions by Smith called “Microcosm” alluding to Smith’s ability to create in miniature the everyday of human life through what were referred to as ‘grown up toys’. The decision to hold this exhibition the month before Christmas cannot be seen as coincidental – the type of work Smith produced would have made an appropriate gift. A review in *House Beautiful*’s emphasises the decorative nature of Smith’s work stating that it ‘would go well with either period of modern décor’.⁵²⁰ It is of note that these reviews give serious consideration to how work might translate into the home, positioning the consumer as the central concern.

⁵²⁰ 'Microcosm', *House Beautiful*, November 1955 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

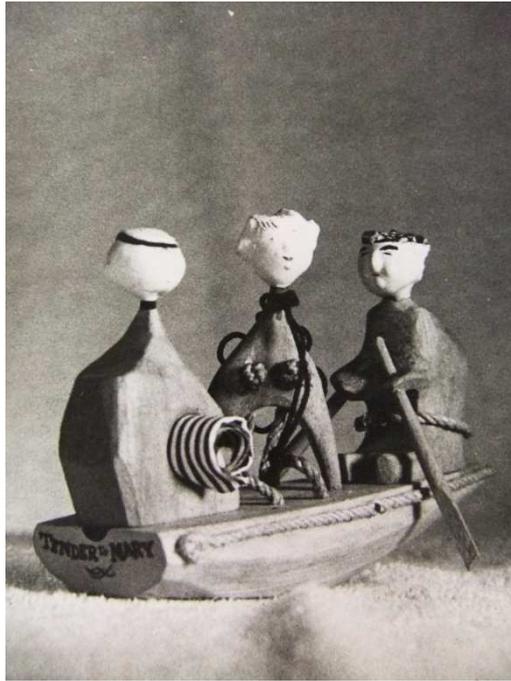


Figure 37: 'Three Men in a Boat', Alan Smith, 1956

Primavera gave Smith an exhibition called “Coastal Water” the following year. Although there are no stock lists or catalogues available for “Coastal Waters”, a private view invitation card states it was an ‘exhibition of boats, scenes, objects and small carvings’.⁵²¹ As figure 37 shows, Smith was continuing to work in this playful style, demonstrating skill as both an artist and a commentator. In June 1958, Primavera hosted what would be the final show of Alan Smith’s toys, although Rothschild and Smith remained friends until Smith’s death in 1983. “Contemporary Distractions”, as Rothschild wrote in the exhibition notes:

[...] made of everyday materials [...] Some show his great skill as a turner, others illustrate his gifts as a mechanic [...] They are skilful, decorative and amusing in a satirical manner which expresses aspects of modern life with sensibility.⁵²²

The show consisted of twenty-eight pieces with titles such as ‘Honeymoon Tiff Set’ for £3.3.0, ‘Low Tide Harbour with Glass Dome’ for £10.10.0 and ‘Con Brio and Lentamente’ for £30.⁵²³ The sale of at least one of the pieces, the ‘Round-a-bout

⁵²¹ Primavera, *Private View Invitation Card “Coastal Waters”* (November 1956). DT.HRA/5/5. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁵²² Primavera *Exhibition notes for “Contemporary Distractions by Alan Smith”* (11-24 June 1958). DT.HRA/5/1/14. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁵²³ Primavera, *Exhibition list for “Contemporary Distractions by Alan Smith”*, (11-24 June 1958). DT.HRA/5/1/13. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

Awaiter', can be attributed to Rothschild. Of the 'Round-a-bout Awaiter', Rothschild wrote:

[...] the figure of a woman standing on the pavement – expresses uneasiness and rather a haunting sense of guilt. She is constructed of different woods, each beautifully worked and chosen for its graining, wears an immense hat and is enveloped in a 1958 sack overcoat. The slightest breath of wind endows her with hardly perceptible movement which is just enough to express the anxiety with which she views life.⁵²⁴

Here Rothschild praises both Smith's technical skill and the sentiment that he conveys in his work. This piece was later lent by Rothschild to the 1972 retrospective of Smith's work at Bristol City Art Gallery.⁵²⁵ By adopting an inclusive approach to craft that incorporated folk art, Rothschild was able, through his exhibition programme, to offer an exciting and unique display of work to his audience.

The Influence of Europeans

Rothschild's exhibition programme was further enhanced by providing a platform for European makers, particularly those who had come to Britain under the same circumstances in the 1930s as well as the younger generation working in a divided post-war Germany. As detailed in chapter three, Rothschild's own background as an émigré can be seen as motivation for making these connections with non-British makers.

Given Rothschild's interest in art and design from a young age, alongside his middle-class upbringing, he would have had an awareness and understanding of German modernism, in particular that espoused by the Bauhaus. Founded in 1919 by Walter Gropius, the Bauhaus sought to unify the artist and the craftsman, the 'monumental and decorative art'.⁵²⁶ As commented upon in chapter two, the Bauhaus extended on the principles of the Werkbund. Gropius argued that craft, art and industry were equally important in the development of modernist architecture and

⁵²⁴ Primavera, *Exhibition Notes for "Contemporary Distractions by Alan Smith"*, 1958.

⁵²⁵ Bristol City Art Gallery, *Sam Smith* (Bristol: Bristol City Art Gallery, 1972). DT.HRA/5/7/9, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].

⁵²⁶ Walter Gropius, 'Programme of the Staatliche Bauhaus in Weimar', in *Bauhaus: Art as Life*, ed. by Barbican Art Gallery (London: Barbican Art Gallery, 2012), p.15.

design.⁵²⁷ This position can be seen in Rothschild's own broad tastes with regard to craft. Such influences can also be seen in the work of three most prolific émigré makers Rothschild exhibited (and collected) in the post-war era.

Hans Coper, Ruth Duckworth and, to a lesser degree, Lucie Rie, all feature in Rothschild's exhibition programme.⁵²⁸ All three of these potters could be discussed under different themes: Hans Coper had a great impact on the art schools of the 1950s and 1960s, Ruth Duckworth can be viewed more as a sculptor than as a craftsperson, and Lucie Rie's delicate domestic ware can be discussed in terms of gender. However, discussing them together here allows for a narrative to emerge concerning Rothschild's own understanding of the possibilities of craft.

In May 1958 Rothschild held his first exhibition of work by Hans Coper. This exhibition came after an exhibition of Bernard Leach's work, which is very revealing. Although both potters are held in high regard, they are often viewed in opposition to each other: Leach as an English traditionalist, Coper as exemplifying the particular strand of modernism championed by the Bauhaus. By showing them consecutively Rothschild was appealing to a broad range of consumers, as well as demonstrating the faith he had in his own diverse tastes. As already discussed in relation to the 1951 Festival of Britain, Rothschild also took delight in opposition and this juxtaposition of two distinct makers may have appealed to him.⁵²⁹ Indeed, by examining Rothschild's entire exhibition programme, this pattern appears multiple times: Dan Arbeid and William Marshall in 1959, Leach and Ruth Duckworth in 1960 (discussed below), and Gillian Lowndes and Gwyn Hanssen in 1966.

Although his experiences of relocation were different to Rothschild's, like Rothschild, Coper was a German-Jewish émigré. During the 1930s Coper had trained as a textile engineer in Germany; on his eventual settlement in London after the war, he worked as an apprentice to Lucie Rie, who, like Coper, had left Europe to escape National Socialism. By Rie's own assertion compared to Coper she 'was just a potter', a craftsperson, whereas Coper was an artist.⁵³⁰ Thereby Coper and Rie became less master and apprentice and instead worked harmoniously together, drawing out each

⁵²⁷ Michael Johnson, 'Modernist architecture and design in Europe', in *The Modernist World*, ed. by Stephen Ross & Allana C. Lindgren (Oxford: Routledge, 2015), pp.315-316.

⁵²⁸ The role of the émigré maker will also be discussed in relation to Rothschild's collection at the Shipley in chapter six.

⁵³⁰ Tony Birks, 'Lucie Rie and her work with Hans Coper', in *Pioneers of Modern Craft*, ed. by Margot Coatts (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p.96.

other's talents. Coper's detachment from the English ceramic tradition, which in this period was synonymous with Leach, coupled with an understanding and engagement with **German** modernism, is reflected not only in his work but in his working process: experimental with form and deliberate with decoration. One review of the 1958 exhibition states:

It is difficult to decide at which point pottery ceases to be entirely utilitarian and becomes sculpture. Hans Coper's pottery is a combination of both these aspects [...] On seeing his latest exhibition, which contains about 100 stoneware pots, one can understand why his work has created such an impact and why it has been so consistently admired.⁵³¹

Although sculptural in style and in technique, Coper's work at this stage did include domestic ware, such as small bowls and vases. In her assessment of ceramic art, Breen comments on Coper's 'obsessive engagement with form'; I would argue that form remains a central consideration to Coper's work throughout his career and that echoes of these earlier structures can be seen in his later work.⁵³² The prices for the smaller pieces were reflective of the market they were aimed at, that is the professional middle-classes, starting at £1.1.0 for a bowl.⁵³³ The pieces in figure 38 were advertised as 'attractive and unusual flower and plant pots' and were priced from £3.⁵³⁴ This description from *House Beautiful* confirms the domestic associations with at least some of Coper's work at the time. The most expensive pieces were a large pot and large bottle, both at £36.15.0.⁵³⁵

⁵³¹Sebastian Mark, 'Stoneware Art', *Art News and Review*, May 1958 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

⁵³² Breen, 2014, p.2.

⁵³³ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Stoneware by Hans Coper"* (6-19 May, 1958). DT.HRA/5/1/11. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁵³⁴ 'Stoneware pots by Hans Coper', *House Beautiful*, May 1958 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

⁵³⁵ Primavera, *Exhibition list for 'Stoneware by Hans Coper'*, 1958.



Figure 38: A selection of stoneware pots, Hans Coper, 1958

In May 1960, Rothschild gave the German émigré Ruth Duckworth her first ever solo exhibition. The inclusion of Duckworth in his exhibition programme again demonstrates Rothschild's eclectic tastes, ungoverned by a propensity to one style over another. With Duckworth he further established his position as someone who could both recognise and help emerging artists, without focusing on the potential economic return. This sentiment is echoed by Tony Birks in his biographical essay on Duckworth:

[...] for her first exhibition Ruth produced a mixture of craggy, highly textured, and massive coiled pots with small organic and sculptural porcelains. "I like them, but you won't sell them", said Henry Rothschild. What was and is so wonderful about this man is that he was prepared to sponsor and help artists he liked even if they did not have immediate commercial potential.⁵³⁶

As was the case with Coper in 1958, Ruth Duckworth also followed a Bernard Leach exhibition. Again this indicates that Rothschild's tastes were far reaching while he was also aware that he needed the support of the 'Leachian' customer base and would continue to provide them with something safe alongside something more new and modern. The Duckworth show consisted of over 150 pieces, including small pinched pots which were more sculptural than practical, as well as more conventional and domestic bowls and dishes. Evident in all pieces was Duckworth's handling of the

⁵³⁶ Tony Birks, 'The Early Years', in *Ruth Duckworth: Modernist Sculptor*, (London: Lund Humphries, 2005), pp.26-7.

clay, suggesting that the process of making each pot was of more significance than the end product itself.

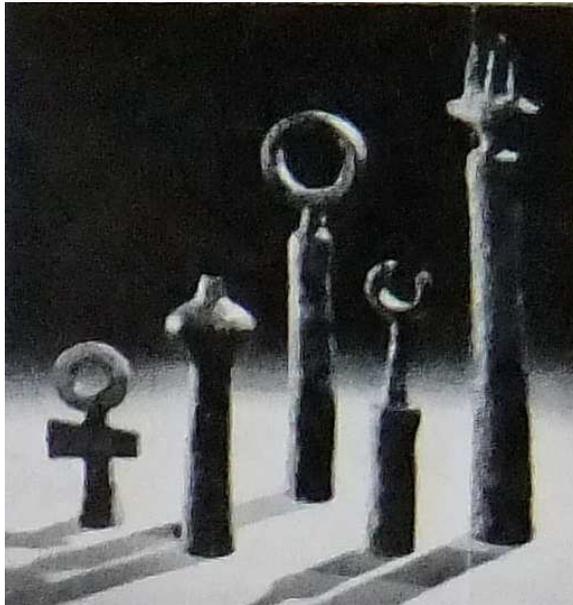


Figure 39: Selection of ceramic forms, Ruth Duckworth, *Architectural Review*, 1960

The five pieces shown in figure 39 are all similar in that they have a cylindrical body with a shaped headpiece, and yet their size and their shaping is without uniformity. As Malcolm Logan writes:

The boundary between potting and the moulding of clay in abstract forms has, for some ceramists, ceased to exist. There are critics who condemn this trespass and it is true that many potters would do well to stick to their traditional ground. This cannot, however, be said of Ruth Duckworth who moves between these two forms of expression with the sureness of one who knows both, and whose experience and feeling as a sculptor are reflected in all her working of clay. In this, her first one-man exhibition, a wide range of thrown, coiled and pinched ware and abstract sculptured forms show, perhaps above all else, her strong feeling for texture.⁵³⁷

By this time the émigré Duckworth was becoming well established, teaching at the Central School of Arts and working from her studio in Kew. Coper also taught at Central. The influence of these European potters on the makers emerging through the art schools in the 1950s and 1960s is profound, largely because it offered them with an alternative to the Leachian traditions. As Birks recollected:

⁵³⁷ Malcolm Logan, 'Ruth Duckworth', *Art News and Review*, June 1960 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

Her ceramics did not need to be useful, did not need to be glazed, did not even need to be hollow. They baffled Leach and made Lucie Rie shake her head and frown. They made us students in the 1960s jump up and down with excitement.⁵³⁸

The Duckworth exhibition, along with *Arbeid's* in 1959, marks the beginning of Rothschild's interest in the 'art school' potters, those working within a more sculptural language. The traditional studio potters did not disappear from Primavera's exhibition programme, and they certainly continued to play a part in Rothschild's retail activity, but Rothschild, as an advocate of 'good design' and craftsmanship, increasingly championed the emerging talent that began to come through the major art schools. His early interactions with the figurative and sculptural work of Del Pierre and Diato, alongside the atypical craftsmanship of Smith, predicted this to some extent, but Rothschild was part of the larger shift towards abstraction and more challenging forms of ceramics which were catching up to the developments that had occurred in fine art during the early twentieth-century.

In late 1962 Rothschild again showed Duckworth's work at Sloane Street, though this time in a joint exhibition with her husband, Aidron Duckworth. Aidron worked in welded metal and there were only seven pieces of his on display with prices ranging from £30 to £200.⁵³⁹ The prices would indicate that they were an impressive size but one reviewer describes one piece as being only a few inches tall.⁵⁴⁰ Ruth had 154 objects including a small bowl for £0.15.0 and a tall pot for £35. There was also a piece described as 'pottery sculpture' on sale for £200, an impressive sum for this time period and a description marking them as 'art'.⁵⁴¹ As one reviewer commented:

Why should sculptors, painters and architects be regarded as artists: potters, carpenters and weavers as mere craftsmen? Primavera [...] are putting this question with an exhibition of sculpture, pottery and furniture by Ruth and Aidron Duckworth. 'In this country', they say, 'a sensitive blotch on a piece of canvas may fetch a hundred pounds, but the same blotch on a dish or tapestry would be lucky to fetch ten'. The subject is good for plenty of debate yet, and no

⁵³⁸ Birks, 2005, p.28.

⁵³⁹ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Ruth and Aidron Duckworth"* (24 September – 6 October 1962). DT.HRA/5/2/14. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁵⁴⁰ Ann Philipp, 'Ruth and Aidron Duckworth', *Art News and Review*, September 1962 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

⁵⁴¹ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Ruth and Aidron Duckworth"*, 1962.

doubt the Duckworths' exhibitions will furnish ammunition for both sides.⁵⁴²

In a similar way to Coper, Duckworth had little connection or affiliation with English studio pottery traditions. This can of course be attributed to both her and Coper's émigré status. During the 1950s and 1960s other makers, such as Gillian Lowndes and Ian Auld, also took what Birk terms an 'anti-Leach position. However, Duckworth differed in that she did not make pots 'deliberately in reaction to Leach. She made them as though Leach did not exist. He was no ceramic millstone around her neck'.⁵⁴³ In considering the diversity of pieces on display in both the Coper and Duckworth exhibitions – bowls and pots, alongside 'pottery sculpture' - it could be argued that these non-British makers working in Britain enjoyed a greater deal of flexibility in pursuing their own artistic interests, content to let the consumer navigate their own way through. I would argue that Rothschild also practised this approach, exhibiting (and selling) makers he had a belief in and an instinct for, and thereby providing his customer base with a wide choice.

Unlike Coper and Duckworth, who through their use of shape and construction demonstrated their separation from traditional English pottery, Lucie Rie's positioning is arguably more subtle. However, there is a tendency to draw a distinction between Leach and Rie, Rie being viewed as a potter very much of the post-war era and Leach never straying from his early twentieth-century aesthetic. However, despite Leach famously telling Rie the walls of her pots were too thin, they were very close friends. With regard to Rie, from whom Rothschild purchased a great deal of stock, it is curious that he never gave her a solo exhibition.⁵⁴⁴ The writing on Rie suggests that she did not feel comfortable occupying the limelight on her own, preferring to share it with others.⁵⁴⁵

In June 1968 Rothschild held a joint exhibition of stoneware and porcelain by Bernard Leach, Janet Leach and Lucie Rie at Walton Street, London. Bernard Leach had twenty-three pieces on display including an olive-blue lidded pot at £10 and a tall

⁵⁴² 'A Sensitive Blotch', *House and Garden*, October 1962 [private papers, Liz Rothschild].

⁵⁴³ Tony Birks, 'The Early Years', in *Ruth Duckworth: Modernist Sculptor*, (London: Lund Humphries, 2005), pp.27-8.

⁵⁴⁴ In Cooper's biography of Rie he writes that Primavera hosted two solo exhibitions of Rie's work. Although she featured in a number of group shows, particularly in the Kettle's Yard exhibitions, there is no evidence of one, let alone two, solo exhibitions. See Cooper, 2012, p.218.

⁵⁴⁵ See: Tony Birks, 'Lucie Rie and her work with Hans Coper', in *Pioneers of Modern Craft*, ed. by Margot Coatts (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp.95 - 106.

indented vase with a white slip decoration at £60. Janet Leach had twenty-two pieces on display, with prices ranging from £3 for a lidded pot with a white glaze decoration to £30 for a tall slab vase with an ash glaze. Lucie Rie dominated with thirty pieces with prices ranging from £9 for a turquoise porcelain bowl to £66 for a stoneware bowl, in grey-pink glaze with white spiral decoration. Although the records do not exist to make a definite identification, there is a yellow bowl in the Henry Rothschild Collection which could be attributed to one for sale by Lucie Rie at this exhibition for £29 (figure 40).



Figure 40: Porcelain Bowl, Lucie Rie, 1968

As will be discussed in further detail in chapter six, Rie, despite her relative absence from the exhibition programme, dominates the collection at the Shipley Art Gallery, as do a number of European makers, including Ruth Duckworth and Hans Coper. I would argue that their position in the collection and exhibition programme demonstrates not only their importance to Rothschild, due in part to their shared émigré background, but also their significance in the broader craft narrative.

All occupying the same urban geographical space, it is of little surprise that Rothschild built close professional links with Rie, Coper and Duckworth. However, they were not his only link to Europe. From the late 1960s, Rothschild began to work with a group of potters based in Germany, exhibiting their work through Primavera, and later at Kettle's Yard, and thereby giving these Continental makers exposure in Britain. There are obvious personal links between Rothschild and Germany and so he may have felt obligated in some way to support these makers in any way he could.

More broadly, Britain itself was looking towards Europe at this time, joining the European Economic Community in 1973.

The first of these exhibitions was held in October 1968 at Primavera Walton Street. The exhibition focused on the work of: Beate Kuhn, who worked as both a studio and industrial potter; husband and wife Gotlind and Gerald Weigel; husband and wife Karl and Ursula Scheid; and Margarethe Schott, art school trained and who, like Karl Scheid, had worked for a time with Harry Davis at the Crowan Pottery in the UK.



Figure 41: “Ceramics from Germany”, interior of Walton Street, 1968

The exhibition catalogue gives an idea of the layout of the Walton Street premises, which does not seem to differ too much from Sloane Street (figure 41). The shelves are adjustable to the height of the pots but now in matt white as opposed to the dark wood from the Hanssen exhibition (see figure 26). The effect of the white is a cleaner, more modern look which also compliments the pots. Kuhn and the Scheids worked sculpturally (figure 42) while the Weigels and Schott created more recognisable forms (figure 43) – all were informed by a **German** sense of modernism that set them apart from their British counterparts. In his introductory notes for the exhibition, Dr. Erich Kollman writes:

They quietly work in spite of industrial competition, the call for rationalisation, the trend of fashion [...] The diversity of shape and technique of their work is inspired by something they hold in common. None of them

expects to get results which materials and techniques cannot yield.⁵⁴⁶



Figure 42: Examples of Karl and Ursula Scheid's work, 1968

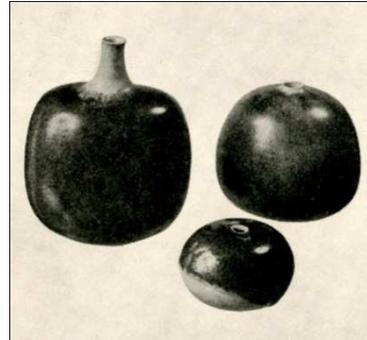


Figure 43: Examples of Margarete Schott's work, 1968

In his *Artist Notes*, Rothschild combines his thoughts on this group of potters with his thoughts on Germany, stating 'this has to do with Germany' - the way this statement is presented suggests that, for him, his engagement with these potters is tied up with his personal engagement with his German homeland, that their work allowed Rothschild reconciliation with his past. He writes of the emotional difficulty he felt in returning to Frankfurt after the war, and of his visiting his old home which was 'lost'. He goes on to write about each potter's qualities – Karl Scheid's 'refinement and clarity', Schott's 'very exciting glazes'.⁵⁴⁷ These feelings of reconciliation with his home country are very clearly connected with the work of this group of potters.

Five years after the "Ceramics from Germany" show at Primavera Cambridge, Rothschild organised "Leading German Craftsmen" at Kettle's Yard in May 1973. The remit of the show included crafts other than ceramics, specifically glass, embroidery, jewellery and engravings. In his opening introduction to the catalogue Rothschild stated:

To select an exhibition of this kind is not an easy task but a very pleasant one. The choice in Western Germany is so enormous that I am fully aware that well-known and renowned craftsmen have not been invited

⁵⁴⁶ Primavera, *Ceramics from Germany, 4 – 12 October* (1968) [private papers, Beate Kuhn and Karl Scheid].

⁵⁴⁷ Rothschild, *Artist Notes*, 2006.

because of the lack of space and my intention of uniting the work into a whole.⁵⁴⁸

This statement provides further clarity that Rothschild saw himself very much in the role of curator and that his motivation was to create a unified exhibition where the objects worked in relation to each other. By bringing together a range of craft objects, and not just ceramics, Rothschild was able to achieve his aim of presenting a German craft in the broadest sense. His efforts were supported by a favourable review in *Crafts*:

Opportunities for British craftsmen to see what is being done abroad are fairly few, so the forthcoming exhibition of work by German craftsmen at Kettle's Yard in Cambridge is particularly welcome.⁵⁴⁹

Ultimately ceramicists dominated the show with around 200 pieces by sixteen artists: the partnership of Bruno and Ingeborg Asshoff, Antje Bruggemann, Johannes Gebhardt, Toni Henson, Gorge Hohlt, Willi Hornberger, Gerhard Knapper, Beate Kuhn, Klaus Lehmann, Lotte Reimers, Karl Scheid, Ursula Scheid, Margarethe Schott, and the partnership of Gerald and Gotlind Weigel. Rothschild acknowledges the emphasis on pottery, stating:

Their number is largest among the craftsmen [...] They divide quite naturally into two distinct groups. Those who produce work of mainly expressed form ranging into abstract sculpture and those who seek perfection in harmonious and interesting shape. In the latter group the glaze is of first importance [...] In addition to the well-known names we have followed the usual Primavera maxim of inviting some less well-known ones to show.⁵⁵⁰

It is difficult to get a sense of who the lesser known artists were that Rothschild refers to here; certainly he had exhibited the Scheids, Schott, Kuhn and the Weigels at the 1968 show. Judging from their biographies in the catalogue, Reimers, Knapper and Bruggemann had only begun to establish themselves in the later 1960s.⁵⁵¹ All of the artists were given a section of the catalogue except the Asshoffs, despite having nineteen pieces on display. This could be attributed to a last minute inclusion, though they do appear listed on the exhibition flyer. The Weigels had the most pieces on

⁵⁴⁸ Henry Rothschild, *Leading German Craftsmen* (1973) [DT.HRA/5/3/15, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].

⁵⁴⁹ 'German Crafts in Cambridge', *Crafts*, No.2, 1973, p.47.

⁵⁵⁰ Rothschild, *Leading German Craftsmen*, 1973.

⁵⁵¹ Rothschild, *Leading German Craftsmen*, 1973.

display with twenty-five, among them a spherical vase for £11 and an oval handbuilt stoneware form for £61. Toni Henson, working in very sculptural terms had a 'Turtle Tower' originally priced at £400 but reduced drastically to £275, still the most expensive ceramic work. Knapper had a series of rice wine cups available for £4.

The exhibition list in the archive is heavily notated with some details of the sales. Henry Rothschild himself purchased a flat bottle from Karl Scheid and two vases and a small beaker from his wife, Ursula. He also had a piece of Kuhn's work bought for him by 'Gwen'. Rothschild's brother, Hermann, also purchased from Ursula Scheid, a drop shaped form for £49 and a small dish priced at £54. Bradford City Art Gallery acquired two pieces by Karl Scheid along with a vase from the Weigels. The collector William Ismay was also in attendance at this exhibition, purchasing from both Karl and Ursula Scheid.⁵⁵² The collector Anthony Shaw recollects purchasing one of his first ceramic pieces at this exhibition which started him on his collection, now housed along with Ismay's at York Art Gallery:

He had an exhibition in '73 at Kettles Yard of German craft and I liked a wall hanging and he couldn't sell anything that was hanging on a wall so he said well if you like that, and I liked a pot, he said well if you have the hanging I will throw in the pot as discount. So that was my first, almost my first purchase I think [...] it was by a couple, Karl Scheid and [...] Ursula Scheid. And it had a very tall neck, a long neck, which got broken, it got separated. Luckily it was separated very cleanly so it's been restored. But he [...] made me interested in the fact that you could buy, you could create your own, you could have art in the house, you know, you didn't necessarily have to go to a gallery to see art. So he was the beginning of my collection to an enormous extent really [...] the sort of collecting bug started due to Henry.⁵⁵³

According to the notation on the exhibition list, the piece Shaw refers to was actually by Gerald and Gotlind Weigel, a porcelain flask priced at £24. There is no reference to the kind of discount Rothschild offered but Shaw did also purchase a piece of Lotte Hofmann's embroidery which was priced at £144.

Other than Hofmann's work, other crafts were represented with glass by Erwin Eisch, and Klaus and Isgard Moje, and engravings by Wolfgang Klee. The jewellers

⁵⁵² Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Leading German Craftsmen", Kettle's Yard, Cambridge* (13 – 30 May 1973). DT.HRA/5/3/16. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁵⁵³ Shaw, interview, 2012.

Eva Chowanietz, Christa Luhtje, and Walter Mersmann also exhibited. Of their inclusion, Rothschild said:

The jewellery was chosen for the interest in the use and treatment of the stone and simple form by Marsmann and Lutje and for the texture and generosity of form of Chowanietz. In glass Eisch and Moje stand out, the former in his flowing impetuous shapes and the latter in the surface treatment. The work of Lotte Hofmann, her compelling interest in texture and the use of the machine in applique and embroidery is unique. I have added a few pencil drawings and engravings of Klee because they fit into the frame and outlook of the exhibition and because his execution is that of a fine craftsman. I hope that the skill and variety of techniques in this exhibition will interest both craftsmen and the many other interested people in this country.⁵⁵⁴

In conversation with the reviewer in *Crafts*, Rothschild stated that he would like to see an exhibition similar to that of the Frankfurt Fair set up in Britain. Although acknowledging that the Frankfurt Fair, a craft trade show, was not what it once was, he argues that the 'juxtaposition of the displays and the resulting competition stimulated craftsmen to have an annual or biennial assessment of their production'.⁵⁵⁵ This reveals Rothschild's belief that craftsmen should look out from their own work to that of others, to learn or to challenge. It is of note that Rothschild made this comment during his time with the Crafts Advisory Committee. As discussed in the previous chapter, his reasons for leaving the CAC can be attributed to what he perceived as their lack of involvement in supporting craftsman in this way. Rothschild's inclusion of European makers in his exhibition programme can be viewed as a way of invigorating existing approaches to craft in post-war Britain. Given Rothschild's own émigré background, his relationship with European makers takes on a different meaning. I would argue that despite his removal from Europe in 1933, his insistence on working with European makers, particularly those from Germany, demonstrates a passion for a **particular European aesthetic**, which he felt important enough to bring to the UK.

Summary

Whereas overall there was a move towards craft as art in the late 1960s and 1970s, the group exhibitions at Kettle's Yard demonstrate Rothschild's insistence that one

⁵⁵⁴ Rothschild, *Leading German Craftsmen*, 1973.

⁵⁵⁵ 'German Crafts in Cambridge', *Crafts*, 1973.

did not have to make a choice between the two fields but that they could be shown together. The largely positive reviews demonstrate his ability at curating shows, again particularly for those exhibitions that brought together traditional and domestic ware, and more sculptural work. I would argue that for Rothschild, liking what he liked, he would have given little thought to the difficulties such juxtapositions might have presented to his customer. To paraphrase the opening remarks to this chapter, if people did not like what they saw they could leave. Although this may have been Rothschild's personal position, he found himself in the centre of an emerging debate on craft and art. Although he claimed not to be drawn one way or the other, he did contribute to the debate in the way he framed his exhibitions.

If focus were to rest solely on Rothschild's collection at the Shipley Art Gallery it would be easy to assume that ceramics were his only interest. These exhibitions of traditional craft or folk art demonstrate Rothschild's broad interest in the crafts. The success of these exhibitions can be attributed to two factors: firstly, they offered the audience something novel and niche to both admire and purchase for the home. Secondly, Rothschild hosted these exhibitions during a period of interest in these items. This demonstrates his knowledge of trends and fashion. With regard to both his retail and exhibition activities, Rothschild had to consider the wants and needs of the consumer, even if he actively tried to direct those needs and wants. When it comes to the following examination of his collection, it becomes possible to see fully Rothschild's very personal tastes.

Chapter Six: Rothschild as Collector and the Henry Rothschild Collection

I have always felt that those who collect only for the pleasure of surrounding themselves with harmonious and beautiful objects without regard to fame or personal gain may also be considered artists in a different way, even if the actual making of things has been denied them.⁵⁵⁶

Here, Rothschild reflects on the nature of collecting, which he saw as an active creative process. For Rothschild the activity of the collector is not limited to the act itself, but also in the arrangement and presentation of the collection as a whole. This chapter will explore Rothschild as a collector and his relationship to his collection. Building on the research outlined in previous chapters, this exploration will take into account the impact of Rothschild's retail and exhibition activities on the formation of his collection. In considering the collection itself, it is important to reflect on the presentation of the collection in its current location at the Shipley Art Gallery and how this compares to its use and presentation within Rothschild's home. Through this exploration of Rothschild as collector and the collection, key narratives will emerge concerning the 'life' of the objects and the makers themselves, how these objects inform the narrative of Rothschild, particularly with regard to his role as a non-maker, and what the collection as a whole reveals about the broader narrative of craft.⁵⁵⁷

There are 333 pieces in the Shipley collection, predominantly ceramics interspersed with some carvings, glass, textiles and an automaton.⁵⁵⁸ The most natural way to 'group' the objects would be to consider their similarities with each other; not so much the date of production but the mode of production, and shared cultural markers born from a shared national identity. This is a common curatorial practice and reflects how the collection is presented in the Henry Rothschild Study Centre at the Shipley. The current configuration consists of four cases: a case of domestic ware, a case of abstract and figurative work, a case of European based

⁵⁵⁶ Henry Rothschild, *More British Potters* (Cambridge: Cambridge Aids to Learning Ltd, 1972). [DT.HRA/5/3/11, Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle].

⁵⁵⁷ Rothschild also gifted and donated pieces to other institutions including York Art Gallery and Museum, the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge and Aberystwyth University. A number of pieces still remain in the possession of the family. During the course of this research it has not been possible to ascertain why pieces were donated elsewhere. The Shipley Art Gallery was the largest recipient and therefore will be central to this examination.

⁵⁵⁸ A full list of the pieces in the collection can be found in Appendix B. A breakdown of the collection using the attributes of gender, date of production and nationality can be found in Appendix C. This has acted as a guide in selecting and approaching the objects.

work, and a dedicated case of work by Rie and Coper.⁵⁵⁹ The decision to organise the Centre in this way was informed by the approach to a 1995 retrospective exhibition organised by Rothschild and Andrew Greg, then curator at the Shipley.⁵⁶⁰ Building this chapter around these themes best mirrors the way Rothschild thought about his collection.⁵⁶¹ Therefore, this chapter will consider the influence of Leach and the development of the workshop tradition; the influence of the art schools; and the influence of émigrés working in Britain.

Such groupings have their limitations. There are objects discussed here that do not fit easily into one category or another, and objects that blur boundaries. However these contradictions and nuances are important to acknowledge as they demonstrate the difficulty and complexity in classifying and organising objects in order to build a coherent narrative. Furthermore the difficulty in classifying certain objects reinforces the idea of Rothschild as having eclectic taste. To paraphrase the opening quote, his taste was motivated by the harmony and beauty of craft, rather than by fame or personal gain. The most useful approach to his collection is to position Rothschild its centre, seeing it has a reflection of his personal taste. As Allen Freer states:

[His own collection] has grown like a tree; but like a tree with many grafts bearing different fruit and flowers. Above all it came because Henry liked that jar, this plate or that bowl or jug and together they form a sort of autobiographical comment of the most eloquent kind for Henry and his enthusiasms.⁵⁶²

Rothschild's professional interest and preoccupation with craft is 'materialised' by this personal collection. It is perhaps not so unusual that a retailer of craft would have a personal interest in what he sold, even to the point where he would buy and collect for himself. Looking at this from the other side however provides an alternate narrative. As a collector who was also a retailer, he had a different relationship with the makers that he collected because he also invested in them professionally. This position will be explored further in this chapter.

⁵⁵⁹ Some objects have migrated into the main galleries, contributing to other craft narratives. This will be discussed further at the conclusion of this chapter.

⁵⁶¹ For clarity Rie and Coper will be referred to as émigré makers, with reference made to their perceived higher status.

⁵⁶² Allen Freer, 'A Dedicated Connoisseur', *Crafts*, No.62, 1983, p.48.

The Collector and the Collection

All collections must have a beginning, yet how we define that point of origin is problematic. With the purchase of that first piece, is the collector aware of what will follow, is it a conscious decision? At what point does the collection begin to 'feel' like a collection? In his study of the collector, Russell Belk argues that: 'more often, there is a realization that one has two or three of something and that it is the start of a collection'.⁵⁶³ This assertion seems rather simple: there must be some other factor that drives the person to add onto these few existing pieces and, crucially, begin to see themselves as a collector. With regard to Rothschild, it is difficult to pinpoint a particular moment in which he became a collector. The earliest objects in his collection date from the 1930s, prior to the opening of Primavera, but there are no records of provenance to show if he bought them during his early years in Cambridge, or came to them at some later date. In some cases however tracing provenance is more straightforward, as they match the description of objects in Primavera exhibition lists. These instances are few; Rothschild did not have an exhaustive list of when each object came into his possession, unlike his fellow collector William Ismay who kept a detailed catalogue of his collection.⁵⁶⁴ In an article for *Ceramic Review* in 1983, Rothschild writes that he came to collecting in the 1960s but then contradicts that statement by commenting on two Hans Coper pieces he bought in the 1950s.⁵⁶⁵ I would argue that this discrepancy hints to the difficulty in pin-pointing when a collection begins, a difficulty even Rothschild himself encountered. Building upon the assumption that Rothschild would have collected most objects post-1946 (given his activities through Primavera), evidence suggests Rothschild began to collect seriously in the early 1950s, coinciding with his move into exhibiting work. The majority of his collection comes from the 1970s, which ties in with both the larger exhibitions he was hosting at Kettle's Yard and abroad as well as the time in which he stepped back from the day to day running of Primavera.⁵⁶⁶ Rothschild's association

⁵⁶³ Russell Belk, 'Collectors and Collecting', in *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. by Christopher Tilley, Webb Keane, Susanne Kuchler, Mike Rowlands & Patricia Spyer (London: Sage, 2006), p.540.

⁵⁶⁴ Helen Walsh, 'W.A Ismay: Collector, Connoisseur and Potaholic' [essay]. Available at: http://ripasetseu.s3.amazonaws.com/www.hepworthwakefield.org/_files/documents/nov_13/FENT__1383838407_W.A._Ismay_Essay.pdf

⁵⁶⁵ Henry Rothschild, 'Collecting – A Personal View', *Ceramic Review*, No.80, 1983, pp.26-7.

⁵⁶⁶ See Appendix C, Table 4.

with the Shipley Art Gallery began in 1990, with the donation of work by Gordon Baldwin, James Tower, Lucie Rie and Kenneth Eastman.⁵⁶⁷ There is no supporting information to say why these particular objects were among the first to be donated, but this slow transition of objects from home to the Shipley increased throughout the 1990s. This was largely due to Rothschild downsizing and looking for a suitable home for his collection. As stated in the opening quotation to this chapter, Rothschild saw collecting as a creative act. While in 1972 he may have claimed he had 'no regard for fame', in later life it emerges that he did start to think about the legacy he would leave. Gordon Baldwin recalls a particularly poignant conversation:

He couldn't collect because he had nowhere to keep them, well he used to give them to Shipley but that's not quite how it used to be. He used to be surrounded with his collection [...] He used to say things to me like "Gordon you're alright, you will always be remembered because you've made your own monuments", i.e. my work, and he said "I've got nothing; nobody will remember what I did." And I said "well Henry I don't think that's true. You'll be remembered for your collection that is your monument."⁵⁶⁸

This indicates a shift in Rothschild's collecting behaviour. Not only does he begin to collect knowing the object will go to the Shipley, he also begins to consider how he is attached to that collection. Having ascertained the development of the collection, we can begin to look at why Rothschild collected. Belk suggests a number of reasons why the collector begins their collection: becoming an expert in a particular area of knowledge; the enjoyment of acquiring rare and coveted objects; the pleasure found in creating and organising a collection; and as a financial investment.⁵⁶⁹ In considering Rothschild as a collector, I would argue that he was held in high regard and, combined with his understanding of the craft market through his retail and exhibition practice, he was considered an expert. There is nothing suggestive in his own commentary that this is a position he actively sought however. I would also argue that he was not motivated by a need to acquire rare or coveted pieces. This is supported by the presence of twelve objects of unknown origin, present in the collection on aesthetic grounds.

⁵⁶⁷ See Appendix B, museum numbers R202 through to R206, all donated in June 1990.

⁵⁶⁸ Gordon Baldwin, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (6 December 2012). Uncatalogued.

⁵⁶⁹ Belk, 2013, pp.540-541.

With regard to a collection as an economic investment, I have avoided throughout this dissertation the use of the word 'dealer' in relation to Rothschild's activities, both in terms of his business and his collection. A dealer trades parts of his collection to acquire increasingly valuable items; for the dealer financial worth is key. Rothschild abhorred the idea of those who bought pieces with one eye on the market.⁵⁷⁰ This can seem at odds with his business of buying and selling but that was specifically for retail and by all accounts the profits he made were marginal.⁵⁷¹ Even in exhibiting work that he then sold, the makers themselves benefitted, which is at odds with the activities of an auction.⁵⁷²

Belk also argues that the act of collecting allows for a feeling of 'mastery and competence'. This ties in with the psychology of collecting as argued by Jean Baudrillard in 'The System of Collecting':

For the child, collecting represents the most rudimentary way to exercise control over the outer world: by laying things out, grouping them, handling them [...] Later on, it is men in their forties who seem most prone to the passion.⁵⁷³

Rothschild claimed he began to collect objects as a child and that this stayed with him throughout his life: 'I learned to buy little bargains; I was only given a few pennies to do this, but you get your eye in you know'.⁵⁷⁴ This notion of collecting being a process of 'learning' links to Belk's assertion that collectors take pride in the development of their skills for both acquiring and organising their collection.⁵⁷⁵ As a child, Rothschild not only collected small objects but arranged and curated them, before presenting them to his mother.⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷⁰ Liz Rothschild, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (17 April 2012). Uncatalogued.

⁵⁷¹ Ronald Pile, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (2 October 2012). Uncatalogued.

⁵⁷² In later years Rothschild did sell some of the pieces he had acquired in order to firstly raise funds for he and his wife's assisted living facilities and to downsize. This correlates to when he began to work with the Shipley Art Gallery in the early 1990s as a way of keeping his collection together.

⁵⁷³ Jean Baudrillard, 'The System of Collecting', in *The Cultures of Collecting*, ed. by John Elsner & Roger Cardinal (London: Reaktion Books, 1994), p.9.

⁵⁷⁴ Henry Rothschild, interviewed by Tanya Harrod for NLSC: Craft Lives (9-10 December 2003). F14338-F14342]. Sound Archive, The British Library, London.

⁵⁷⁵ Belk, 2013, p.540.

⁵⁷⁶ Henry Rothschild, *Orange Journal: Notes and Stories on the Family* (no date). Private papers, Liz Rothschild.

Looking towards the collection as a group of objects Baudrillard posits that an object can be either useful, performing a function, or it can be possessed, its status subjective to the possessor; to Baudrillard these two categories are mutually exclusive.⁵⁷⁷ This is echoed by Belk who also argues that a collection is formed of objects removed from ordinary use, leading him to exclude 'common objects' such as:

[...] musical recordings, books, and photographs [...] If these items are freely listen to, read, or act as mementoes of family and experiences, these ordinary uses would disqualify them as a part of a collection. If instead they are valued for their contribution to a set using either aesthetic or 'scientific' criteria, then they are indeed a collection.⁵⁷⁸

Rothschild's collection as it is now, in glass cases in a gallery space, meets this criterion of not being used. However, this collection theory does not stand up when we consider how Rothschild lived with his collection prior to its move into the Shipley Art Gallery. Firstly, his collection as it was in his home consisted of objects that were both used in the practical sense and displayed in the subjective sense.



Figure 44: Henry and Liz, Christmas, 1966



Figure 45: Stoneware plate, Crowan Pottery, c.1950s

⁵⁷⁷ Baudrillard, 1994, p.8.

⁵⁷⁸ Belk, 2013, p.535.

Figure 44 shows Rothschild using a small cereal bowl, possibly from the Leach pottery, and a plate, which is similar to a standard ware plate produced by the Crowan pottery in the 1950s (figure 45). Given the nature of standard ware it is not possible to state emphatically this plate is the exact one Rothschild is using in this photograph, however what is evident is that some of the teapots, cups, plates and bowls that now form the Henry Rothschild Collection, had a functional past life. Returning to Belk's assertion that objects in a collection must be out of use, how does this knowledge change our understanding of Rothschild's collection? I would argue that such knowledge does not declassify the collection as such but rather it provides the collection with another strand of narrative. Furthermore, I would argue that this study of Rothschild as a collector undermines the rigid definitions of both Belk and Baudrillard as it highlights the freedom of movement an individual object can have during its own personal life history.

Writing in 1986, Igor Kopytoff argues that one should approach the biography of an object in the same way that one would approach the biography of a person by asking:

What, sociologically, are the biographical possibilities inherent in its "status" and in the period and culture, and how are these possibilities realized? Where does the thing come from and who made it? What has been its career so far, and what do people consider to be an ideal career for such things? What are the recognized "ages" or periods in the thing's "life" and what are the cultural markers for them? How does the thing's use change with its age, and what happens to it when it reaches the end of its usefulness?⁵⁷⁹

The obvious limitation of an object is that it does not lend itself well to interrogation. To understand an object as comprehensively as possible there needs to be some supporting material. This may be a subjective reading or analysis of the object by other individuals, or more concrete and objective documentation such as receipts, invoices, or catalogue entries in order to evaluate provenance. For the objects in this collection it is possible to answer the questions of who, when and where with relative ease.⁵⁸⁰ With regard to an object's 'career' the overall assumption is that the majority of the 'life' of the objects has been spent with Henry Rothschild in his

⁵⁷⁹ Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p.66.

⁵⁸⁰ Such information is drawn from the Shipley Art Gallery catalogue. In some instances the 'when' may be an estimate but can usually be attributed to a decade.

personal collection at home before moving to the Shipley Art Gallery. Some objects may have spent time between production and life with Rothschild elsewhere, most likely at an exhibition but possibly in another's (the producer's) possession. Returning to Belk, an object's usefulness and its change in use is of particular interest to this collection. As discussed, the more domestic objects – cups and saucers, bowls and plates – were used by Rothschild for the purpose they were created for. Those objects that are regarded more as an artwork to be consumed visually would have occupied Rothschild's interior space in a different way. That these objects are now combined in one collection and on public display in an art gallery gives them a different type of 'life' and purpose with which they began.

Whereas these objects once formed a private collection, with a personal and emotional connection to Rothschild, they are now on public display, as objects of study. Anthony Shelton comments on the differences and often difficult relationships between museum collections and personal collections:

Museums portray themselves as economically disinterested, with public and intellectual obligations that far transcend narrow social or financial concerns and commitments. Collectors on the other hand, acknowledge participation in the market to acquire material from auction houses, galleries, dealers, and sometimes associates in foreign lands. They buy, barter, and exchange, sometimes blurring the boundaries between suppliers, sellers and purchasers. They operate in a complex liminal terrain that museums abhor.⁵⁸¹

Given this dichotomy, it is of interest that large personal collections such as Rothschild's are taken on by museums. This can be attributed in part to the increasing financial restraints placed on museums which cannot afford to reject the generosity of the collector's donation.⁵⁸² This relationship is further complicated by what Shelton regard as the museum's attempt to remove the collector from the narratives of the collection, usually by enforcing re-classification so the objects are subsumed into the larger museum collection. I would argue there has actually been a move away from this practice, with a greater interest on the part of the museums (informed by the museum audience) on placing the collector at the centre of the narrative. This can be seen not only in the case of Rothschild but also with the Anthony Shaw and William

⁵⁸¹ Anthony Shelton, 'Introduction: The return of the subject', in *Collectors: Expression of Self and Other*, ed. by Anthony Shelton (London: The Horniman Museum and Gardens, 2001), pp.11-12.

⁵⁸² Shelton, 2001, p.12.

Ismay collections at York City Art Gallery. The appeal of keeping the collector 'visible' in the narrative can be attributed to what Susan Pearce calls the 'real thing'.

Objects, we have noted, have lives which, though finite, can be very much longer than our own. They alone have the power, in some sense, to carry the past into the present by virtue of their 'real' relationship to past events [...] This 'reality' is fundamental to the impulses which we know as the collecting process, and equally fundamental to both the process of curatorial effort and of exhibition. The point of collections and museums, it is no exaggeration to say, revolves around the possession of 'real things' and, as we have seen, it is essentially this which gives museums their unique role.⁵⁸³

Having considered the ways in which collecting can be defined, it becomes clear that Rothschild could be viewed as atypical, particularly in the way he lived with and used his collection as well as the effect his role as a retailer and exhibitor had on his collection. This position as collector, albeit an 'atypical' collector, will be explored further as a selection of the collection itself is examined.

Presenting Leach and the Workshop Tradition

As has been argued throughout this research, the Leach tradition of studio pottery dominates not only writing on craft history but also, due to its influence, many of the makers of the twentieth-century, both directly and indirectly. Bernard Leach, through his writing and practice, has become mythic to both makers and collectors.

Leach was born in 1887 to British parents in Hong Kong and spent much of childhood both there and in Japan. He returned to the UK and studied at the Slade School of Art and the London School of Art before returning to Japan. As Edmund de Waal writes:

Japan was synonymous with the mysterious, with the 'highly refined taste' of a very particular late Victorian milieu. However it also meant, for an ambitious young man, unbounded possibility for as with other young men of his class and circumstance 'The East is a career'.⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸³ Susan Pearce, *Museums Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), p.24.

⁵⁸⁴ Edmund de Waal, *Bernard Leach* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1997). p.8.

Leach immersed himself in Japanese life and found himself as part of the *Shirakaba* – or White Birch – movement, joining intellectual, poets and artists. The *Shirakaba* saw its aim to 'bring together the best parts of western artistic life and the best parts of an increasingly threatened Japanese culture'.⁵⁸⁵ Leach's introduction to pottery came when attending a party where the entertainment was decorating small earthenware pots and firing them in a small kiln. This process, known as raku, was linked to the tea-ceremonies of Japan with the focus on the decoration rather than the making of the pot itself. Leach's participation at this party led to his lifetime's fascination work with pottery and merging Eastern and Western traditions.⁵⁸⁶

Leach returned to the UK in 1920 and set up a pottery at St Ives. He had little technical knowledge and found the local clay lacking in quality. Shoji Hamada, his friend and skilled potter, helped him get the pottery established. Born in 1894, Hamada studied ceramics at Tokyo Technical College and met Leach in 1918. The two exchanged ideas both intellectual and technical and during his time in the UK, Hamada was as much an influence on British studio ceramics as Leach.



Figure 46: Stoneware Jug, Shoji Hamada, c.1965

When Hamada returned to Japan in 1923 he established a pottery centre in Mashiko along with Soetsu Yangagi, another friend of Leach's who had been involved in the *Shirakaba* movement. This stoneware jug (figure 46) along with the only other piece

⁵⁸⁵ De Waal, 1997, p.9.

⁵⁸⁶ Alongside de Waal's biography of Leach see Oliver Watson, 'Bernard Leach: rewriting a life', in *Pioneers of Modern Craft*, ed. by Margot Coatts (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp.22 - 36.

of Hamada's work in the collection, was made in Mashiko. The split line is created through dipping the top in yellow ochre slip and the bottom in an iron slip. It is glazed in a wood-ash glaze with a wax resist pattern. Hamada's Eastern influence can be seen in Leach's work (figures 47 and 48).



Figure 47: Stoneware Dish, Bernard Leach, c.1967



Figure 48: Stoneware Jug, Bernard Leach, 1966

There are nine pieces attributed to Leach in the Henry Rothschild Collection, all of which date from the 1960s and 1970s. Given that Rothschild had sold and exhibited Leach in the 1950s, it is unusual that he is represented in the collection only by his later work. It may be, as Rothschild used his collection, some earlier Leach examples did not survive their day-to-day use or it may be that Rothschild preferred the later work. The examples are on the whole not as decorative as Leach's early output rather they are solid in form, as demonstrated in figures 47 and 48. I would also argue that the absence of early Leach pots is further evidence that Rothschild was an atypical collector. Given his connections in the craft world, Rothschild would have been able to acquire an earlier Leach in order to make his collection more valuable. Furthermore, in considering the longevity of Leach's career, nine pieces is a small number for a collector motivated by value or prestige, thereby suggesting that Rothschild was atypical in approach.

The Leach Pottery was the training ground for many potters discussed here including Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, William Marshall, Gwyn Hanssen, and Michael Cardew. That some of his apprentices went onto establish their own potteries,

employing staff of their own, positions Leach at the centre of a network of influence, his aesthetic sense and philosophical approach filtering down through a generation of potters. The network could be seen to expand further when considering the importance of his 1940 publication *A Potter's Book*. In it he covers the topics of different clays, throwing and building, decoration, glazes and kilns. The opening chapter, 'Towards a Standard', sets out his philosophy and approach to pottery, which praises the Eastern forms and glazes, laments the effects of mass production and promotes a workshop tradition over school based learning, as, according to Leach, only workshop apprenticeships over a long period of time could result in a skilled potter.⁵⁸⁷ This is despite Leach's own initial art school training, which becomes absent from the popular Leach narrative. Oliver Watson argues that the studio pottery tradition that Leach espoused can be traced only to the early twentieth-century and it was a term which became more popular in the inter-war years in an effort to distinguish this mode of making from the industrial 'art' pottery.

Studio pottery was distinguished as a definite and particular enterprise by virtue of the fact that the designer was also the maker of the objects. This was not the case in the art potteries, where work was generally carried out by professional throwers and decorators, not by the designers. It took a number of years for critics, exhibition organisers and the general public to appreciate fully this difference in attitude; studio potters and art potteries tended to be mixed together well into the 1930s.⁵⁸⁸

This coincides with Leach's own return to Britain from Japan, which explains why studio pottery and Leach have become synonymous, strengthened by Leach's intellectualisation of the practice. Watson's assertion that the maker is present throughout the process is also supported in Leach's philosophical writings. However, this was not always carried out in practice. Leach did throw but it became more commonplace for other potters at St Ives to throw to Leach's designs and for him to apply the decoration.⁵⁸⁹ This further confuses the issue of authorship, blurring the characteristics of a 'Leach style'.

⁵⁸⁷ Bernard Leach, *A Potters Book*, 2nd Edition (London: Faber, 1976), pp.1 – 27.

⁵⁸⁸ Oliver Watson, *Studio Pottery: Twentieth Century British Ceramics in the Victoria and Albert Museum Collection* (London: Phiadon Press Ltd, 1993), p.12.

⁵⁸⁹ This is comparable to the role of William Morris in the Arts and Crafts movement of the late nineteenth-century, a figure who expounded the importance of maker but who worked within a group, actually making very little himself.

The issue of Leach's influence was articulated at the Dartington Conference in 1952 when a delegate was heard to say 'to Leach or not to Leach'.⁵⁹⁰ The conference had been organised by Leach and Muriel Rose with the aim of exhibiting the best of pottery and textiles from the inter-war period and to influence, through a series of talks, the growing number of craft practitioners so they understood and appreciated their cultural heritage.⁵⁹¹ Leach, along with Cardew, used the conference as a platform to discuss ceramics and craft in terms of intellectualism and spiritualism and to promote the ideal of a workshop education. Rothschild, who attended the conference, stated that:

It was a bit pompous but there was a lot of interesting statements being made, particularly by Michael Cardew, rather than Bernard. There were so many who submitted to Bernard, and adored Bernard. I loved Bernard but I didn't ever feel like he had got everything right [...]⁵⁹²

That Rothschild saw the conference as 'pompous' suggests that he was against the over-intellectualism of craft, preferring his own instinctual approach. This could be attributed to his 'outsider' émigré status as it was certainly echoed by Rie and Coper, also in attendance. As already commented upon, Rie and Coper were uninterested in making intellectual statements on their art and Coper in particular was uncomfortable with the proclamations being made at Dartington.⁵⁹³ Rothschild's comments on Leach's position as a figure of adoration ties in with the popular image of Leach as the grandfather of studio ceramics. Again, Rothschild's refusal to bow down to Leach because of his status is typical of the way he ran Primavera, believing absolutely in his own taste and conviction. In an oft-repeated story, Rothschild recalls making a selection of Leach's work that he wished to sell through Primavera, and Leach refused him each one, asking that he choose again, to which Rothschild replied: 'No Mr Leach, you have your taste and I have mine too'.⁵⁹⁴ As has already been established and will be further elucidated here, Rothschild's approach to his

⁵⁹⁰ Rothschild, interview, 2003.

⁵⁹¹ Tanya Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century* (London: Yale University Press, 1999), p.221.

⁵⁹² Rothschild, interview, 2003.

⁵⁹³ Tony Birks, *Hans Coper* (London: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1983), p.27.

⁵⁹⁴ Henry Rothschild, interviewed by Corinne Julius for Shipley Art Gallery (unknown date). Uncatalogued. Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead. See also: Rothschild, interview, 2001; Rothschild, interview, 2003.

collection was rooted largely in instinct and not governed by a certain style or maker. This sets him apart from collector William Ismay, who had a policy of collecting at least one piece from a Craft Potters Association member, or Anthony Shaw, who focused on a core group of makers. The prominence of Leach's individual work in the collection along with the eight pieces attributed to the Leach pottery, shows that Rothschild did admire his work despite these difficulties and opposing views. Furthermore, the influence of Leach can be seen in a number of other works in the collection, particularly in those makers he employed at the pottery. As Edmund de Waal writes:

The question of a 'Leach style' led to an increasing perception that Leach's own work and his influence were becoming difficult to differentiate. There were by the late 1950s so many potters who had trained in his workshop [...]⁵⁹⁵

This 'Leach style' can be seen throughout this section of the Henry Rothschild Collection and as such it can be difficult to discern Leach's own work from his apprentices in some instances. However it is important to examine those makers as individuals in order to appreciate that while they may be part of the Leach network, they have an important role in the history of studio pottery.

Of particular note is the aristocratic Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, born in 1895. Her background allowed her a degree of financial freedom unusual for a woman of the time when she decided in the early 1920s to pursue a career in ceramics, studying at the Central School of Art and Crafts (later known as the Central School of Art and Design). She apprenticed at the Leach Pottery in 1924, drawn to Leach's 'quiet-coloured, gentle-surfaced' pots.⁵⁹⁶ In 1925 on her family estate in Coleshill, Berkshire, she set up her own workshop. For three years she ran this pottery alongside Ada Mason, with whom she had studied and trained. When Mason left for the United States in 1928, Norah Braden stepped in and worked alongside Pleydell-Bouverie until 1936. As Moria Vincentelli states:

[Pleydell-Bouverie and Braden] worked together to develop a kind of pottery that seem to be a harmonious synthesis of aspects of modernism and spaces of oriental ceramics [...] Their work never attempts to reproduce particular oriental forms or glazes directly.

⁵⁹⁵ De Waal, 1997, p.61.

⁵⁹⁶ Crafts Council, *Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie: A Potter's Life, 1895 – 1985* (London: Crafts Council, 1986), p.8.

The strong uncomplicated shapes are subtly accented with light ribs or facets or, in the case of Norah Braden, simple abstract brush decoration.⁵⁹⁷

This functional stoneware bowl by Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie (figure 49) is impressed with moulded panels and covered with a crackled ash glaze made from trees and shrubs. The panelling effect, along with the pale crackled glaze invokes timelessness, influenced by Asian ceramic traditions. Rothschild wrote of her work 'the form is stable and firm', with 'heavily thrown shapes' and she created 'particularly happy bowls'.⁵⁹⁸

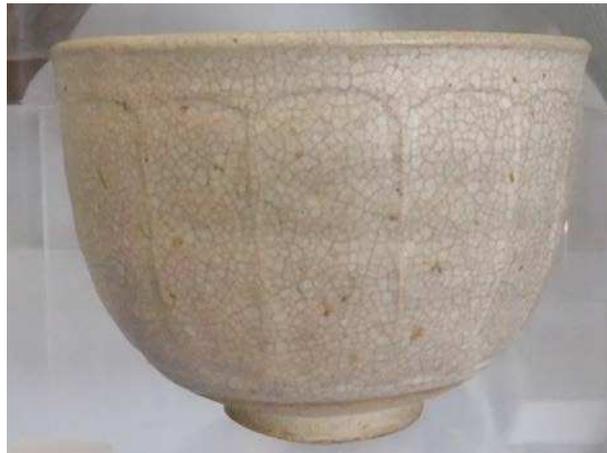


Figure 49: Stoneware Bowl, Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, c.1930s

Rothschild's use of the term 'happy' to describe her bowls is telling of the way he saw parts of his collection. It can be imagined that this was for Rothschild a practical bowl, one that was used in his domestic life, something which was both every-day and extraordinary, bringing him a sense of joy to use it. The 'happiness' that is felt in Pleydell-Bouverie's work can also be attributed to his own personal relationship with her. He comments that 'she was a dear and interesting hostess [...] much loved by me'.⁵⁹⁹ Pleydell-Bouverie is particularly well represented in the collection with seven works, although this work stands out not only for its age, being one of the earliest pieces in the collection, but for the lightness of colour, Pleydell-Bouverie's other work being heavier and darker in tone.

In 1958 Rothschild exhibited work by Pleydell-Bouverie and Helen Pincombe. Pincombe had been brought up in colonial India before moving to Australia. In 1925, at seventeen years old, Pincombe came to England and studied at Camberwell and

⁵⁹⁷ Moira Vincentelli, *Women and Ceramics: Gendered Vessels* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.146.

⁵⁹⁸ Henry Rothschild, *Artist Notes* (2006). Private papers, Liz Rothschild.

⁵⁹⁹ Rothschild, *Artist Notes*, 2006.

the Central School. In 1936 she spent a summer working with Bernard Leach before enrolling in 1937 at the Royal College of Art, taught by William Staite Murray. As will be discussed in the next section, Murray and Leach, although once friends, had become increasingly opposed to one another in terms of their outlook on art and craft. Pincombe's work reflects more of Leach than Murray. In 1939 she took over Murray's position as teacher, staying at the RCA until 1949, when she set up her own pottery in Oxshott.



Figure 50: Stoneware Bowl, Helen Pincombe, c.1960s

Pincombe was accomplished at both hand-building and throwing at the wheel, as demonstrated by this thrown stoneware bowl (figure 50). The arches on the exterior of the bowl have been made by slicing the wet clay and the speckled glaze has been achieved by using iron in the clay.

Rothschild met Pincombe when she was teaching at the RCA and she became 'almost immediately a close and permanent friend'.⁶⁰⁰ Pincombe sat on the Board of Trustees for Primavera and was known to help out in the shop; Anthony Shaw recalls his mother buying pots by Pincombe, unaware that the woman serving her was the maker herself.⁶⁰¹ This friendship continued until Pincombe's death in 2004 and she is represented in the collection by five pieces. As Liz Rothschild recalls:

⁶⁰⁰ Rothschild, *Artist Notes*, 2006.

⁶⁰¹Anthony Shaw, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (21 November 2012). Uncatalogued.

[Helen Pincombe] was absolutely a beloved in terms of personal connection as well as art, she's the one. [...] he loved her very simple pottery, she is an example of somebody that Dad championed, because she didn't champion herself, she absolutely kept saying, 'nothing was perfect, nothing was good enough' and, I know she had exhibitions elsewhere but there's no doubt Dad championed her, and just believed in her.⁶⁰²

The Australian Gwyn Hanssen came to England in 1958 and began working at the Leach Pottery until 1960, moving on to Michael Cardew's Wenford Bridge before setting up her own studio in London before returning to Australia in 1973. As evidenced in her 1966 exhibition for Primavera, Hanssen produced a wide range of domestic ware, of which this earlier stoneware bowl (figure 51) is a good example.



Figure 51: Stoneware Bowl, Gwyn Hanssen, c.1959

Moving into the 1960s, Hanssen's association with Rie and Coper led to her work taking a sculptural bent. In 1970, while working in France, she wrote to Rothschild of her future plans:

As it is I'm bringing over some pots with me this time [...] to put by for an exhibition I will have later (May I think) at the Crafts Centre; and also to take down to show Bernard L who hasn't seen my pots since I've come to France, and I feel just about ready to brave his remarks!

⁶⁰³

This is telling of the relationship many had with Leach, as a figure for whom one looked to for approval, despite in Hanssen's case having achieved modest success since leaving her apprenticeship with him in the 1950s.

⁶⁰² L. Rothschild, interview, 2012.

⁶⁰³ Gwyn Hanssen, *Letter to Henry Rothschild* (22 December 1970). DT.HRA/2/5. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

The most prolific apprentice of Leach's was Michael Cardew. Born in 1901 into a privileged middle-class family, Cardew was to become one of the first apprentices of Leach, later becoming an equal. Cardew began his training in August 1923, having impressed Leach with his knowledge of slipware traditions and Devonshire pottery, along with his ability to throw at the wheel.⁶⁰⁴ In 1925, the Cheltenham Museum and Art Gallery put on a show of St Ives artists, including work from the Leach pottery. It was around this time that the wider world began to take notice of studio pottery, viewing it as an honest and pure alternative to modern sculpture.⁶⁰⁵

By the early 1920s a small group of critics, collectors and artists were taking serious interest. Unlike the more elaborate and eclectic 'Art Pottery' of the late nineteenth century, studio ceramics embodied various modernist interests – in the 'early' and the 'primitive' and in direct engagement with materials. There was also an avant-garde interest in wheel-thrown ceramics, which as a category appeared to embody qualities such as vitality and spontaneity.⁶⁰⁶

In 1926 Cardew decided to leave St Ives and set up on his own. Cardew established Winchcombe Pottery, where he stayed until 1939, when he set up Wenford Bridge in Cornwall. Although his relationship with Leach never waned, whereas Leach looked to the East, Cardew began to look to Africa for inspiration.

⁶⁰⁴ Tanya Harrod, *The Last Sane Man Michael Cardew: Modern Pots, Colonialism and the Counterculture* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), p.45-6.

⁶⁰⁵ Harrod, 2012, p.52-3.

⁶⁰⁶ Harrod, 2012, p.54.



Figure 52: Stoneware Bowl, Michael Cardew, c.1954

During the 1950s Michael Cardew spent time in West Africa, training local potters and establishing a Training Centre in Ajuba. He did return to Wenford Bridge 'on leave' during this time, most notably to attend the 1952 Dartington Hall Conference.⁶⁰⁷ It was likely on one of these return trips home that he made this stoneware bowl, which bears a Wenford Bridge stamp (figure 52). The green glaze has been thinly applied leading to a shimmering mottled effect. The decorative line that intersects the bowl has been made by drawing through the slip, a characteristic technique of Cardew's. An invoice in the Michael Cardew archives at Farnham indicates that Rothschild placed an order in October 1956, and one of the items listed is described as a 'crackle bowl, with combed decoration M.C'. Purchased for £1.17.6, it is possible this is the bowl described.⁶⁰⁸ It is one of five pieces of Cardew's in the Henry Rothschild Collection and was gifted to the Shipley in 1993. If this is the bowl from the invoice, then it follows that Rothschild had this object in his possession for thirty-seven years.

Whereas Cardew stayed with Leach for only a brief time before setting out on his own, some of Leach's apprentices stayed for the majority of their career. William Marshall trained at the Leach Pottery from the age of fourteen in 1938, staying there until 1977. He was a key figure at the pottery, especially after Bernard's son, David,

⁶⁰⁷ Harrod, 2012, p.249-68.

⁶⁰⁸ Wenford Bridge Pottery, *Invoice Book: 701-800 (1953-1968)*. Uncatalogued. Michael Cardew Archive, Craft Study Centre, Farnham.

left in 1955. Regarded as an excellent thrower, he trained a number of the apprentices that came through the pottery.



Figure 53: Stoneware Bowl, William Marshall, c.1955

Like Leach, he was influenced by Asian ceramics, particularly Korean styles. This is evident in the burnished ash glaze and the simple plant decoration (figure 53). This is the only example of Marshall's work in the collection though it is likely that some of the pots attributed to the Leach pottery were thrown by him, as indeed were some of Bernard Leach's own pots. As previously discussed, Rothschild hosted a show of Marshall's work, alongside Janet Leach's, in 1959. Janet, through her marriage to Bernard, was also to become a key figure in St Ives; unlike Marshall however, she attempted to rebel against the Eastern aesthetic that pervaded.

The American Janet Leach began her career as a sculptor, taking classes in New York in 1938. Her interest in pottery began in 1947 and, after meeting with Bernard Leach and Shoji Hamada at the Black Mountain College, North Carolina in 1952, she began studying it with earnest. In 1954 she travelled to Japan, becoming the first Western woman to study pottery there, under the tutelage of Shoji Hamada. In 1956 she came to the UK with her now husband, Bernard Leach, and alongside him ran the St Ives pottery. Janet Leach is a prime example of female maker whose work is often discussed in relation to men.⁶⁰⁹ The relationship between Janet and

⁶⁰⁹ Cheryl Buckley, *Potters and Paintresses: Women Designers in the Pottery Industry, 1870 – 1955* (London: The Women's Press, 1990), p.2.

Bernard was complex both personally and professionally; Janet was not as subservient and domestic as Bernard had hoped, and nor was she willing to abandon her own artistic vision in favour of Leach's. In Emmanuel Cooper's biography of Janet Leach, much is made of this relationship and, although Cooper attempts to counter the idea of Janet as a lesser talent, successful only through her associations, the emphasis on her character in relation to Bernard's overshadows her work.⁶¹⁰



Figure 54: Porcelain Vase, Janet Leach, c.1960

This porcelain vase is an example of Janet Leach's individual work (figure 54). The influence of Eastern pottery is evident in the brown glaze lines representative of bamboo, but the sharp contrast between the glaze and the porcelain is clean and modern. Rothschild exhibited Janet Leach's work a number of times in both solo and group exhibitions, particularly those held at Kettle's Yard in the 1970s. This vase is one of seven pieces attributed to Janet Leach in the collection. His apparent enjoyment of her work then is contradicted in a statement he makes regarding her involvement in the Leach Pottery, saying that the 'Leach pottery standard ware was dominated by Janet Leach and declined' and the relationship between Primavera and the Leach Pottery reportedly 'cooled' from this point until Bernard Leach's death in 1979.⁶¹¹ Indeed her arrival in St Ives in 1956 was quickly followed by her taking over

⁶¹⁰ Emmanuel Cooper, *Janet Leach: A Potter's Life* (London: Ceramic Review Publishing Ltd, 2006).

⁶¹¹ Rothschild, *Artist Notes*, 2006.

the day-to-day running of the Leach Pottery and she admittedly had little interest in the production of standard ware although she understood the financial gains. Her desire was to make individual pieces and she encouraged other potters, including Bernard, to do the same, not only as a complement to the standard ware, but so they could develop their own ability as makers.⁶¹²



Figure 55: Bernard and Janet Leach, c.1970s

Both Janet and Bernard continued to exhibit with Primavera and Rothschild still maintained contact with them as demonstrated in this personal photograph of the couple (figure 55). Therefore Rothschild's statement about his relationship with the Leach Pottery 'cooling off' has more to do with the retail of the standard-ware rather than his association with the Leachs themselves.

Both Marshall and Cardew had direct links to Bernard Leach through his pottery at St. Ives. Moving on to the next degree are those makers who had indirect influence from Leach. If Cardew was one of Leach's most prominent apprentices, then Ray Finch was Cardew's. While Cardew concentrated on Wenford, Ray Finch took over at Winchcombe. Born in 1914, Finch was a student of Central School of Art and Crafts before taking on an apprenticeship with Cardew at Winchcombe in 1937. Cardew recognised in Finch the ability to manage and in just two short years, left Winchcombe in Finch's charge. Cardew's new set up at Wenford Bridge and Finch's promising start at Winchcombe was interrupted by the start of the Second World War.

⁶¹² Cooper, 2006, pp.65 – 70.

Both ventures struggled on and in 1945 Finch began the process of buying Winchcombe from Cardew.



Figure 56: Stoneware Dish, Ray Finch, 1974

Cardew remained a figure of influence in Finch's work as can be seen in this stoneware dish (figure 56), which bears a similar decoration to that in figure 52. As with Cardew and Leach, Finch's children followed the family business and learned their trade at Winchcombe. Finch also attracted a number of apprentices, including Colin Pearson and Jim Malone. With regard to Finch and Winchcombe, Rothschild commented:

Under Cardew, slipware of bold and splendid quality was made but the pottery never flourished. Ray Finch went in for excellent stoneware and his standard ware particularly with tenmoku glaze was impressive, hard wearing, well-shaped and was one of Primavera's steady selling key products. Ray Finch made a number of individual pieces particularly fine large bowls and cider jars, well and boldly decorated.⁶¹³

As with the Leach Pottery and Cardew's Wenford Bridge, Winchcombe balanced the production of standard ware - which effectively kept this type of workshop in business - with select individual pieces. The Crowan pottery, established in Cornwall in 1946 by Harry and May Davies (both apprentices of Leach) took a different view in that individual names were not attached to work: 'Harry Davis was

⁶¹³ Rothschild, *Artist Notes*, 2006.

adamant that he wished to avoid what he called 'the ignominious scramble for status' and prices were always modest'.⁶¹⁴ It would be unfair to state that by attaching a name to a work it somehow diminishes its purity as a craft object, as it alludes to the ego of the maker. However, this position taken by Crowan does illuminate the tensions between the intellectual ideal of the co-operative potteries, and the individual potter who can increase an objects value because of their status.

The examples discussed above largely follow the Leach model of a pottery workshop. Not all potters adopted this approach and certainly not all potters followed the Leach style to the letter. Michael Casson regarded himself as a self-taught potter, despite having spent time at Hornsey College of Art in the late 1940s. Hornsey was more geared towards industrial design and so Casson, like many other potters of the period, turned to Leach's *A Potter's Book* and spent time at the Victoria and Albert Museum, exploring the decorative art collection.⁶¹⁵ In 1952, he set up his own studio in Bloomsbury, London.

Here he made tin-glaze earthenware pots, many with figurative elements in the form of animals and birds and these he sold from his workshop and through exclusive department stores such as Liberty's and Heal's in London.⁶¹⁶

These 'figurative elements' elude to Casson's other influence, modern art, in particular Picasso; as will be examined with regard to James Tower, Picasso's sculptural work and use of decoration allowed potters to think beyond the Leach tradition. Situating Casson in terms of workshop or art school influence is difficult in many ways. His understanding of pottery, although beginning in an art school, was really completed through the act of making and through reading Leach and Cardew; however, he himself became a great educator, developing the Harrow School of Art Diploma in Studio Pottery in 1963. He was also instrumental in the development of the Craft Potters Association in 1957 and wrote extensively on the subject. The craft revival of the 1970s owes much to his groundbreaking television series, *The Craft of the Potter: A Practical Guide to Making Pottery*.⁶¹⁷ The show featured Casson, along with help from potters Walter Keeler and Alan Caiger Smith, demonstrating the skills

⁶¹⁴ Vincentelli, 2000, p.152.

⁶¹⁵ Simon Ford, 'Function and Expression: The Writings of Michael Casson', *Ceramics: Art and Perception*, No.82, 2010, p.50.

⁶¹⁶ Ford, 2010, p.51.

⁶¹⁷ *The Craft of the Potter: A Practical Guide to Making Pottery* (1976) BBC Two, April.

and techniques of making, including how to glaze and fire, and how to decorate. By moving into the medium of television, Casson continued the teaching tradition of Leach, complete with what Ian Auld referred to as the look of a 'medieval monk'.⁶¹⁸



Figure 57: Stoneware Dish, Michael Casson, c.1975

This stoneware dish (figure 57) has a tenmoku glaze which has been applied in a circular motion, giving a sense of movement. At this time Casson had left Harrow and was dedicated to being a potter full-time. He restricted his work to a few forms, looking to understand their 'essence':

This approach still left room for an appreciation of chance events, particularly in relation to decoration and its ability to enliven form. When decorating, Casson often worked quickly in the belief that making and designing should be fully integrated, with neither taking precedence.⁶¹⁹

Despite Casson's position in the craft world from the 1950s until his death in 2003, there seems to have been little professional interaction between him and Rothschild. He featured in the 1975 show at Kettle's Yard but does not seem to have sold much through Primavera itself. However, as shown in figure 58, the two did have some connection with each other. Rothschild often visited potters in their studios on his travels across the country and this did not slow down after leaving Primavera in 1980.

⁶¹⁸ Ford, 2010, p.50.

⁶¹⁹ Ford, 2010, p.51.



Figure 58: Henry Rothschild visiting Michael Casson and his wife Sheila Wilmott, c.1990s

Sandy Brown's move into pottery in the 1960s echoes the journey of Leach in the 1920s, although the end result is strikingly different. Born in 1946 in Hampshire, Brown travelled to Japan in her early 20s. Whilst there she became interested in pottery and began working in the Daisei pottery in Mashiko, a village of potters where Shoji Hamada had trained in the 1920s. In this way she was subject to the influence of Hamada, as the Daisei pottery itself had responded to Hamada's use of glaze and production of form.⁶²⁰ Brown recalls that:

The Daisei pottery was a very free place because the family, it was one of those potteries where it didn't have the master potter at the top of the tree with lots of people working for him. Most potteries have. This was, in fact none of the family actually made pots. They'd inherited the kiln and the business like farmers inherited land but they didn't make pots, they got their various nephews and sons-in-law and cousins and people to come in and make pots to fill the kilns so much more relaxed open atmosphere which was how they were able to incorporate me and they were much freer, they were very free in what they made and very fresh and they would chuck glazes on pots and play around and be experimental not actually doing many glaze tests but they were experimental in the way they used the traditional language and so it was a great place for me to be. It was a wonderful place for me to be. I love that sort of relationship, that healthy balance of a strong

⁶²⁰ Sandy Brown, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (23 January 2013). Uncatalogued.

tradition with an open exploratory imaginative freshening approach that they had.⁶²¹

This early idea that there was not a right or wrong way of approaching the clay is against the Leach tradition where forms were to be mastered and wilful experimentation was not encouraged. It is of course of note that Brown learned this in Japan, which demonstrates the changes in the Japanese tradition from Leach's time there in the 1920s to Brown's experiences in the 1960s and 1970s. Brown continued experimenting on her return to the UK in 1973 and, instead of exploring the option of art school, she set up a workshop in her mother's home in Hampshire, along with the potter Takeshi Yasuda who had travelled back with her. In the same year she and Yasuda were awarded the New Craftsman Grant from the Crafts Advisory Committee which helped in the early years of the workshop. Henry Rothschild sat on the Committee at this time but he would have had no input on her award as he was focused on exhibitions and commissions and buying. It is likely that he became aware of her through this award and Brown recalls that he was the first 'gallerist' that she met.

[...] he came to visit us and he [...] was absolutely charming and delightful and it was great to meet him [...] and he bought quite a few pieces for Primavera and it was a really good experience to be part moving out into the wider world. That was an introduction to it and he was very charming, very encouraging, very interested. [...] I think probably that we weren't very good at keeping in touch with him really. I think we just were a bit, I suppose, ignorant about how life works and just thought that well we'll just carry on making it and people will turn up and of course you have to be a bit more proactive than that and so we didn't really – we were a bit lazy I think in not really keeping in touch with him and letting him know what we were doing. He kept in touch with us. He did come and visit but we didn't actually - we were a bit, I don't know, ignorant really about how to – and I think there was a period that also, I have to say this, that I was a bit bolshie and a bit 'anti' the whole exhibition world. This took about probably seven or eight years for me to grow out of when I first came back from Japan.⁶²²

Brown attributes the position she took on exhibitions at the start of her career to the situation for ceramics in Japan. She states that Japan at this time had no gallery system and that shows of work took place instead in the equivalent of departments

⁶²¹ Brown, interview, 2013.

⁶²² Brown, interview, 2013.

stores, such as Takashimaya in Tokyo. The maker was responsible for putting the exhibition together, arranging marketing and photography and so: 'we didn't realise I think the significance of Henry Rothschild until quite a bit later'.⁶²³ Rothschild was clearly struck by Brown's work as he continued his visits beyond the life of Primavera. Brown recalls him purchasing the earthenware basket in figure 59 as 'it was one of my favourites and it's quite a robust piece and I was really pleased that he liked it too'.⁶²⁴ This is one of two examples of Brown's work in the collection.



Figure 59: Earthenware Form, Sandy Brown, 1993

There is a sense through the interview with Brown that her lack of connection to both the workshop tradition in Britain and to the art schools partly informed her success. Her single minded approach and reluctance to become part of the system, gave her a creative freedom. Interestingly her partner, Takeshi Yasuda, also outside of the art school and British workshop tradition, opened up to the possibilities of becoming part of the craft world with greater ease than she did, despite some initial setbacks. His application to become part of the Craftsman Potter's Association was initially rejected but he was championed by John Maltby who encouraged him to reapply successfully.

⁶²³ Brown, interview, 2013.

⁶²⁴ Brown, interview, 2013.



Figure 60: Stoneware Yunomi, Takeshi Yasuda, c.1980s

This stoneware yunomi, a Japanese tea bowl, is the only example of Yasuda's work in the collection (figure 60). The use of the pale blue and white glaze gives the impression of a delicate piece but the walls are thick with a solid base. The throw lines can be felt on the surface along with the thickness of the white glaze.

Moving into the 1970s, when Rothschild's collecting activity was at its pinnacle, craft experienced a 'revival'. Andrea Peach attributes this 'resurgence of interest' to three factors: the role of infrastructure and the state, craft and fine art ideologies, and as a response to socio-economic factors.⁶²⁵ With regard to the socio-economic factors, Peach argues that the economic crisis of the 1970s resulted in people turning to craft and making as a way of regaining a sense of control.⁶²⁶ Interestingly, Peach also comments on the rise of second wave feminism and the 'subversive reclamation of 'feminine pastimes' including sewing, embroidery, knitting and weaving'.⁶²⁷ Although pottery, perhaps because of its physicality and the science of glazing and firing, has somehow managed to avoid being regarded as a 'feminine' craft, it is of note that the 1970s also brings more female makers into Rothschild's collection. The women working during this period seem to turn away from creating in the style of their male counterparts and become more independent. Responding to

⁶²⁵ Andrea Peach, 'What goes around comes around? Craft revival, the 1970s and today', *Craft Research*, Vol.4, No.4 (2013), p.162.

⁶²⁶ Peach, 2013, p.168.

⁶²⁷ Peach, 2013, p.168.

natural forms becomes a key theme of this development and is well illustrated in the work of Mary Rogers and Elspeth Owen. Mary Roger's initial training at St Martin's School of Art had been in calligraphy and graphic design but her husband introduced her to ceramics. She worked in stoneware before moving onto porcelain in the 1970s, and hand-building small bowls.



Figure 61: Porcelain Bowl, Mary Rogers, 1974

Her work takes inspiration from nature. This porcelain bowl, with a soft pink colour, is reminiscent of a shell or pearl (figure 61). Rogers attributes this echoing of the natural world to the very nature of hand building:

Making pottery by hand without a wheel usually leads to a heightened awareness of natural forms, since the method inevitably gives organic and somewhat asymmetrical effects similar to those of naturally growing forms. This may be why so many handbuilders, including myself, find themselves turning to natural forms as a source of inspiration. One becomes more and more observant of the infinite subtleties, refinements and varieties of form and colour that there are in the natural world. This expanding awareness is probably its own justification, whatever the effects may be on the work.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁸ Mary Rogers, *On Pottery and Porcelain: A Handbuilder's Approach* (New York: Watson-Guptil, 1979), pp.9-10.

This bowl is likely to be the bowl purchased by Rothschild at the 1974 exhibition, "Potters at Kettle's Yard", listed for £17.60.⁶²⁹ It was deposited at the Shipley Art Gallery in 2001 and therefore was in Rothschild's possession for twenty-seven years. Rothschild exhibited Rogers in a number of the large Kettle's Yard exhibitions although this is the only example of her work in the collection.

Equally inspired by forms found in nature is Elspeth Owen. Owen came to pottery through evening classes, taught by Zoe Ellison at Cambridgeshire College of Arts in the 1970s. In 1988, Owen wrote of her approach:

My own experience of work is much more as expression or therapy or play than as craft and I have had no formal training as a potter. This means that working is closely related to my emotional state [...] I have lived alone and without regular employment for three years and for long stretches within that without a clock or a diary. I have stopped using scales to weigh ingredients. What measuring I do, apart from gauging the heat of the kiln, must be according to some not fully conscious yardsticks, which grow out of a combination of experience and innovation.⁶³⁰

This porcelain pot (figure 62) has typically thin walls with an imperceptible base, making it balance precariously. Owen's experimental nature includes adding various found elements including sawdust, cow dung, seaweed and cobwebs to the kiln to impress upon the pots, creating an unexpected texture and colouring.

⁶²⁹ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Potters at Kettle's Yard", Kettle's Yard, Cambridge* (9 – 26 June 1974). DT.HRA/5/3/21. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁶³⁰ Elspeth Owen, 'On Being a Potter', *Ceramic Review*, No.114, 1988, p.8



Figure 62: Porcelain Pot, Elspeth Owen, 1986

Based in Cambridge at the start of her career, Owen approached Rothschild while he was still operating Primavera in the 1970s. She recalls that he took an instant liking to her work, selling it through Primavera and also inviting her to show at Kettle's Yard. This would have been the "Selected for Cambridge, Collected in India" exhibition in June 1977. For Owen this was 'the kind of early success that seemed almost too good to be true'.⁶³¹ This is one of two of Owen's pots in the collection. Both Owen and Roger's work in the 1970s can be seen to represent a shift in studio ceramics. I would argue that these potters, situated in urban rather than rural settings, are increasingly exposed to a wider range of styles through magazines such as *Crafts* and *Ceramic Review*. Whereas they continue to create traditional forms, they are moving away from the prescriptive Leach style.

Jane Hamlyn also came to ceramics through evening classes. Originally trained as a nurse, Hamlyn started to take adult education classes in 1968 at the age of 28, choosing pottery over home wine making or soft furnishing. In 1972 she was accepted as a mature student on the two year pottery course at Harrow.⁶³² Following her course at Harrow, Hamlyn was awarded a grant through the Craft Advisory Committee in 1975 and became a member of the Craft Potters Association. She had

⁶³¹ Owen, 1988, p.11.

⁶³² Jane Hamlyn, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (10 October 2012). Uncatalogued.

a solo exhibition at David Canter's Craftwork gallery in Guildford which was 'enthusiastically reviewed' in *Crafts*, by Rosemary Wren.⁶³³ Wren's review, co-written with Peter Crotty, emphasises the functionality of Hamlyn's domestic ware commenting that it 'is such as to make you take delight in cooking – a woman's pots which other women will feel the rightness of'.⁶³⁴ This gendering of objects can be attributed in part to the objects being for the domestic space which, in the 1970s, was still regarded as a woman's space. Such a notion can be quickly dismantled as we have seen a number of male potters making for the home with as great a success.

It is Hamlyn's feeling that this review led to Rothschild approaching Hamlyn for work to sell through Primavera in Cambridge, though at this point her communication was more with Ronald Pile, Rothschild's assistant, than Rothschild himself. She considers her relationship with Rothschild to have been 'lukewarm' and comments upon the power relationship that exists between maker and retailer:

The people say - I say 'they' meaning not just Henry but all people who come and buy from you – they know their shop, they know their customers' taste and of course they have their own taste and so that relationship is never entirely comfortable because they have the power and you need the money.⁶³⁵

Articulated here, this relationship between buyer and maker would have been fairly typical. The relationship discussed earlier between Rothschild and Helen Pincombe, one based on friendship as much as business would be less common. Interestingly, Hamlyn enjoyed a close friendship with the collector William Ismay and discusses this at length; however given that Ismay bought strictly for his personal collection rather than to sell on through a shop marks a difference between the two men.

As I say I didn't know Henry very well but Bill's life, he was bachelor and his life was greatly enhanced and enriched by his love of pots and his affection for some potters, and the great affection that many potters held him in not just because he bought their work. He and I used to exchange books, novels. He was just a really nice guy. Shy, self-effacing, obviously an intelligent man and well educated. He did classics I think at Leeds and a very different background and a very different

⁶³³ Hamlyn, interview, 2012.

⁶³⁴ Peter Crotty & Rosemary Wren, 'Notes and Reviews: Jane Hamlyn: salt-glazed pottery, Craftwork, Guildford', *Crafts*, No.20, 1976, p.42.

⁶³⁵ Hamlyn, interview, 2012.

character and a very different motivation and a very different relationship with the potters [...] that must be very different from someone who on the one hand was running a shop and on the other hand had his own taste [...]⁶³⁶

Hamlyn has only one work in the collection, a stoneware colander (figure 63). It is typical of what she terms her 'bread and butter' production in the 1970s and '80s.⁶³⁷ Hamlyn's use of saltglaze – whereby salt is thrown into the kiln, leading it to vaporise and leave a distinct texture on the work – gives an earthiness to her work. The draining holes in the colander are precise and even. As Crotty and Wren write in their review: 'Each piece [...] is given careful individual attention [...] The sense of one person seeing the whole job through is very strong'.⁶³⁸



Figure 63: Stoneware Colander, Jane Hamlyn, c.1984

Interestingly, Hamlyn considers this to be a 'nice little colander' but an 'inconsequential piece' compared to her work on the whole. This raises some questions when considering other makers in the collection who are only represented by one work – it may be very typical of their work or it may be unusual and therefore not give a visitor a fair account. However the motivation behind Rothschild's collection is personal and the inclusion of this colander, despite what the maker thinks of it, is personal to Rothschild. Returning to Belk's definitions of a collector, this highlights

⁶³⁶ Hamlyn, interview, 2012.

⁶³⁷ Hamlyn, interview, 2012.

⁶³⁸ Crotty & Wren, 1976, p.42.

Rothschild as atypical, as he appears interested only in collecting work that appeals to him, without concerning himself with how his collection may impress or appeal to others.

The majority of Rothschild's collection is ceramics based but there are also a number of textiles, glassware and woodwork. Again, this is suggestive of Rothschild as an atypical collector, given that the focus of the collection goes beyond ceramics. The weaver Ethel Mairet, born in 1872 in Devon, was initially involved with the Arts and Crafts Movement and, with her first husband, lived for a time in a home restored and extended by C.R Ashbee, founder of the Guild of Handicraft. It was at this time, in 1907, she began weaving and by 1915 she established her first studio in Stratford-upon-Avon with her second husband. By 1918 she had exhibited in London and published her first book on the use of vegetable dyes. She moved to Ditchling in Sussex, setting up the 'Gospels' studio and it was here she trained a number of weavers including Marianne Straub and Peter Collingwood. Ditchling had attracted a number of leading figures in craft and design, including the calligrapher Edward Johnston and artist Eric Gill. This studio continued until her death in 1952.

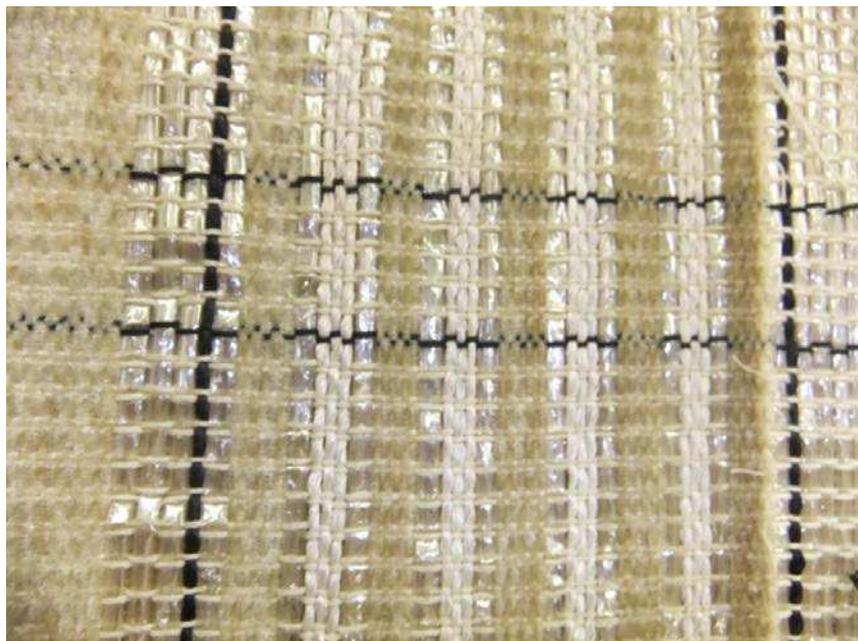


Figure 64: Close up of Cotton, Cellophane and Linen Textile, Ethel Mairet, c.1940s

This mixed media weaving uses the traditional materials of cotton and linen with the cellophane strips as shown in figure 64. The cellophane gives the weaving a sturdiness, not unlike raffia. Rothschild wrote of Mairet:

A very special person who produced woven textiles in wool and linen and experimented with other materials [...] She had a fashionable shop in East Street,

Brighton, and I only met her occasionally and bought lovely textured scarves and some dress lengths.⁶³⁹

As well as textiles, Rothschild was also drawn to objects made from wood. Born in 1914, David Pye trained as an architect but was drawn to the capability of wood rather than new materials, such as concrete. After the Second World War the likelihood of building in wood was reduced due to material restriction and so Pye turned to crafting wooden bowls and boxes. As with Leach and Cardew, Pye was not only a maker but a writer. He was directly influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement – his grandfather had links to William Morris – but his writing acknowledged the importance of machinery and technology which he saw as furthering the capability of the craftsman rather than undermining it. In his 1968 work *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*, Pye argued that:

If I must ascribe a meaning to the word of craftsmanship, I shall say as a first approximation that it means simply workmanship using any kind of technique or apparatus, in which the quality of the result is not predetermined, but depends on the judgement, dexterity and care which the maker exercises as he works.⁶⁴⁰

Pye described this type of workmanship, the ‘workmanship of risk’ whereby the skills and ability were central to the outcome of the object as opposed to the ‘workmanship of certainty’ which, although resulting in consistency, is governed by a machine which can be operated by anyone, regardless of skill.



Figure 65: Yew Bowl, David Pye, c.1970s

⁶³⁹ Rothschild, *Artist Notes*, 2006.

⁶⁴⁰ David Pye, *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*, 2nd Edition (London: The Herbert Press, 1995), p.20.

Pye was of the 'risk' camp. He developed a number of hand tools which enhanced his making rather than taking it over. The 'risk' element still exists as the guidance of the maker is still required. One such tool was the 'fluting engine' with which he created characteristic flutes in the interior of the bowl as seen here in figure 65. Rothschild, who described Pye as a man of 'great modesty and brilliance', commented that these bowls were 'extremely fine and strong'.⁶⁴¹ There are two examples of Pye's work in the collection.

Also working in wood and within a workshop tradition is the maker Jim Partridge. Partridge highlights a difficulty referenced by Pye in determining when something is considered to be 'made by hand'. Pye argues that excluding certain types of technologies leads to the exclusion of certain crafts, for example a 'machine' can mean a potter's wheel or a hand-loom.⁶⁴² Partridge works in wood and could be considered a maker of 'risk' but the tools he uses to guide his hand include chain saw and blow torches.



Figure 66: Oak Form, Jim Partridge, c.1990s

In this oak form (figure 66) Partridge has shaped the wood with a chainsaw, leaving striation marks in the wood. The oak has been burnt and scorched, adding to its physical density. The hollow turns the object into a vessel. Writing on Partridge, Rothschild stated: 'We are dealing with a powerful and honest inspiration'.⁶⁴³ This is one of two examples of Partridge's work in the collection.

By examining the more functional objects in the collection, it is possible to see the development of craft in post-war Britain. Furthermore, I would argue that within

⁶⁴¹ Rothschild, *Artist Notes*, 2006.

⁶⁴² Pye, 1995, pp.25 – 29.

⁶⁴³ Rothschild, *Artist Notes*, 2006.

this group of objects, Rothschild's broad appreciation of craft is visible. This is best illustrated through the presence of the early makers such as Bernard Leach and Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, alongside more contemporary work by Sandy Brown, Elspeth Owen and Mary Rogers. This broad appreciation is further articulated by the presence of makers whose output blurs the boundaries between craft and art.

Presenting Makers as Artists

Of those artists discussed so far, there are some who have looked beyond the workshop wall and taken some type of formalised class based training either through evening classes like Jane Hamlyn or at one of the larger art schools like Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie. Bernard Leach even spent time at art school though much of his writing argues that the craft of pottery cannot be adequately taught in such a setting. The output of the potters discussed above tends towards domestic ware and, whatever type of craft education they received, they are associated with making functional craft objects in a studio or workshop setting. Alongside these makers, there are those who have sought to position themselves as artists rather than craftspeople, as well as makers who saw no distinction between the two and moved freely between. Arguably this occurs more often in terms of pottery than in other crafts as the medium of clay is so versatile. It can be sculpted, thrown into vessels, or act as a canvas for painting and decoration. This section examines work in the collection by makers who have blurred the boundary between art and craft, including those who may have come to this position later on their careers.

The forerunner of the 'craft as art' position is William Staite Murray, born in 1881. On the surface Murray can be considered a contemporary of Bernard Leach's; as Malcolm Haslam notes, both specialised in stoneware, worked in the same period and were influenced by Asian traditions.⁶⁴⁴ However, Murray's position on craft was at odds with that of Leach:

[...] Murray aspired to be an artist, admittedly drawing from ceramics of the past, but only in order to make an original and individual contribution to the art of the present. Murray wanted his pottery to be seen and criticised in the context of modern painting and sculpture [...]⁶⁴⁵

⁶⁴⁴ Malcolm Haslam 'William Staite Murray', in *Pioneers of Modern Craft*, ed. by Margot Coatts (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p.48.

⁶⁴⁵ Haslam, 1997, p.48.

Murray attempted to assert his position as artist by making careful choices in where he exhibited and sold his work. He regularly displayed his work at group exhibitions among painters and sculptors, notably in 1928 at the Lefevre Galleries alongside the painters Ben and Winifred Nicholson, and in 1931 at the Bloomsbury Gallery with the sculptor Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson. He also named his work; rather than listing its attributes as Leach did – porcelain bowl, stoneware dish and so on – he gave them titles such as ‘Sonata’ and ‘Wading Birds’, sometimes descriptive, sometimes abstract. The high prices he attached to his work also sought to elevate his work to the level of fine art.⁶⁴⁶



Figure 67: Stoneware Bowl, William Staite Murray, c.1930s

On examining the stoneware bowl in figure 67, Murray’s proclamation that he was an artist and not a craftsman is not all that apparent. That Murray has painted a bowl of flowers within an actual bowl is quite clever and the bowl itself is clean, smooth and even. This bowl is one of two examples of Murray’s work in the collection both made in the 1930s.

Murray’s insistence to be seen as an artist and not a craftsman set the precedence for post-war makers who sought a similar position. James Tower’s studies in painting and illustration were interrupted by the Second World War. Following his period of service he continued his studies at the Slade School of Fine Art before taking classes at the Central School of Art and Craft in 1949 under the

⁶⁴⁶ Haslam, 1997, p.53.

tutelage of Dora Billington. The Central School is key to the development of many of the makers discussed here; Dora Billington, Head of the Pottery department had 'little time for Orientally inspired stoneware', instead encouraging her students to experiment with tin glazes and figurative forms.⁶⁴⁷



Figure 68: Earthenware Bowl, James Tower, 1956

Inspired by the Central School teaching, during the 1950s Tower worked almost exclusively in earthenware with black and white tin glaze decoration, shown here in figure 68. This monochrome technique is startlingly different from the earthy tones more common in the period. Tower's initial training as an artist is apparent here and the abstract sculptural work of Picasso was a major influence; this influence is often repeated with those makers who sought to engage more with fine art. Picasso's sculptural work blurred the lines between traditional craft and fine art practices, and had critics from both groups who felt their work was being diminished in some way.⁶⁴⁸ There was an exhibition of his work in Stoke in 1950 which was met with derision from the industrial potters:

[...] Picasso's work caused a local furore. The industrial potters saw it as the antitheses of their heritage of careful workmanship and slow design development. Their attitude towards the 'chaotic mysticism of the Picasso School' meant the artist's name joined terms

⁶⁴⁷ Harrod, 1999, p.235.

⁶⁴⁸ Harrod, 1999, p.266.

like 'Jazz', 'Cinema', and 'Futurist' as terms of general abuse to describe modernist thinking.⁶⁴⁹

Leach felt that Picasso was not a potter and referred to those potter's influenced by him 'Picassiettes'.⁶⁵⁰ This may have been intended as an insult, but these new ceramicists felt as little affinity with Leach as Leach did with Picasso. Tower was among the first of these post-war ceramicists to be inspired by Picasso and, to follow the example of William Staite Murray, sought to place his work within a fine art rather than craft context. In 1951 he began to exhibit with the art gallery Gimpel Fils, in Mayfair, London. This association continued until 1988. The occupation of a space marked out for 'fine art' raised Tower's status and acted as an inspiration to the other makers who sought to achieve the same.⁶⁵¹ This is the only example of Tower's work in the Henry Rothschild Collection and was among the first to be deposited in 1990.

Derek Davis studied at Central alongside Tower. Like Tower, he was inspired by Picasso as well as Matisse, creating recognisable forms but experimenting with glaze and texture. This experimentation can be seen in figure 69. The throw lines can be felt on the surface of the bowl and the glazes have been dripped from the edge into the centre of the bowl, pooling together giving the appearance of an oil spill.

⁶⁴⁹ Graham McLaren, 'Moving forwards but looking backwards: the dynamics of design change in the early postwar pottery industry', in *Design and Cultural Politics in Postwar Britain: The Britain Can Make It Exhibition of 1946*, ed. by Patrick J. Maguire & Jonathan M. Woodham (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), p.93.

⁶⁵⁰ 'Pique assiette' is the term used for a mosaic of broken ceramics and originates in the activities of Raymond Isidore who decorated his home in France in such a way in the 1930s. The original phrase can be translated as 'gatecrasher'. Picassiette is a play on both terms, linking serendipitously to Picasso himself.

⁶⁵¹ Timothy Wilcox, *The Ceramic Art of James Tower* (Farnham: Lund Humphries, 2012), pp.28 – 29.



Figure 69: Stoneware Bowl, Derek Davis, 1972

This is the only example of Davis' work in the collection and matches the description of a bowl from the 1972 Kettle's Yard exhibition "More British Potters", which was on sale for £16.⁶⁵²

Picasso's influence was not only felt in British ceramics; the Italian Guido Gambone lived and work in Florence and was heavily influenced by Picasso and the traditions of Italian ceramics, using thick textured glazes and bright colours.



Figure 70: Stoneware Cup and Saucer, Guido Gambone, c.1950s

This cup and saucer (figure 70) is one of the three sets in the collection, all decorated with colourful fish. They show signs of use and one can imagine they were once a set

⁶⁵² Primavera, *Exhibition list for "More British Potters", Kettle's Yard, Cambridge (7 – 23 June 1972)*. DT.HRA/5/3/10. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

of four. The colourful fish have a childlike and playful appeal. Along with these cups and saucers, there is also a plate of Gambone's in the collection.

Eric James Mellon was another contemporary of Tower and Davis', attending the Central School in the 1940s. In 1952 he set up, along with Davis and John Clarke, the Hillesden art community in Buckinghamshire. During this time Mellon recalls both he and Davis selling work through Primavera while it was situated on Sloane Street.⁶⁵³ In 1957 Mellon moved to West Sussex and began working primarily in stoneware, experimenting with glazes but the relationship with Primavera and Rothschild continued, as Mellon recalls:

Henry Rothschild, he was very, very good. [...] He said that he never felt he supported me as much as he should have, because he didn't exhibit me in Germany as he did other people. But he did have my work in London and of course in his gallery in Cambridge when he opened it.⁶⁵⁴

Rothschild did involve Mellon in two of the 1970s Kettle's Yard exhibitions. For the 1975 "Ceramic Form" exhibition, Mellon exhibited eighteen pieces that centred on the theme of Greek mythology. This stoneware plate (figure 71) is an example of that phase of his work, although it cannot be matched up with any piece from the 1975 exhibition. It may have been purchased through another external exhibition or taken from Primavera's retail stock.



Figure 71: Stoneware Plate, Eric Mellon, 1974

⁶⁵³ Eric James Mellon, interviewed by Frances Cornford for NLSC: Craft Lives (7 January – 4 February 2011). C960/98. Sound Archive, The British Library, London.

⁶⁵⁴ Mellon, interview, 2011.

The themes are antiquarian but the execution is modernist and the influences of Picasso can be seen in the figurative drawing. The plate itself is well made but Mellon is primarily using it as a canvas upon which to paint.

This approach is also taken by Gordon Baldwin, a fellow Central School graduate, although the canvases he creates are sculptural forms and he paints in abstraction. Baldwin was influenced by the presence of sculptors in the ceramics department at the Central School in the 1950s, in particularly William Turnbull and Eduardo Paolozzi.

A painter could find themselves in the textile department, a sculptor working in the pottery and then they shifted around so you were endlessly coming across different outlooks [...] we could go anywhere and we could try anything with the tremendous enthusiasm and support of the staff [...] You didn't think, well I'm in the pottery department, there's a painting department, there's a sculpture, it was all just one big school and it was a very good time, very good, we were very lucky to have been around at that time. The facilities weren't very good. There was still a smell of burning in the place because it had been bombed but it was a very optimistic time in the '60s. We didn't have much but we were going to do miracles.⁶⁵⁵

The optimism and flexibility felt by Baldwin in the 1950s and '60s within the confines of the art school did not always translate into the outside world of selling and exhibiting and there existed a level of unease from both groups about the blurring of art and craft. As Baldwin articulates:

So an artist can do some pottery and that's art but I'm not sure about the other way round. Still, there's still a big divide and of course your collectors, some of the avid collectors of ceramics are not good on painting, and sculpture. They don't seem to quite know what they're looking at but they've got a passion for pottery. So there's the divide again you see. It used to bother me when I was younger but it doesn't really matter now. I know what I'm doing and that's something. [...] the divide seems to be somehow in and around galleries and officialdom and so on rather than those people what I'll just call 'those in the know' you know. [...] I've noticed though that I can be called an artist frequently but there are times when people are not quite sure – "are you an artist or a craftsman?"⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵⁵ Baldwin, interview, 2012.

⁶⁵⁶ Baldwin, interview, 2012.

This stoneware plate demonstrates Baldwin's position as a painter who uses clay as a canvas, though the technical execution of Baldwin's handbuilding of the canvas itself should not be ignored (figure 72).



Figure 72: Stoneware Dish, Gordon Baldwin, 1983

Rothschild exhibited Baldwin in 1961 at Sloane Street as part of the Goldsmith's exhibition but he appears absent from subsequent group exhibitions. Baldwin recalls that shortly after the Goldsmith's exhibition, Rothschild 'wouldn't have anything to do with me' and their personal friendship only developed much later when Baldwin discovered Rothschild was collecting his work. Baldwin does not know the reasons behind this ill feeling but that it resolved itself: 'and then it was a sort of friendship but he was all the time buying my work'.⁶⁵⁷ This echoes back to comments made by Jane Hamlyn on the power relationship between maker and collector and, although Baldwin had a friendship with Rothschild, the monetary transactions would impact that dynamic. As Baldwin comments collectors by nature can be 'quite odd fish' and through collecting a maker's work 'they're not just buying the thing you've made, they're buying a bit into your life [...] they do it by paying you some money and taking some work and then they can come again to the studio'.⁶⁵⁸ Baldwin also recalls Rothschild offering to pay for repairs to his kiln; while Baldwin recognised the

⁶⁵⁷ Baldwin, interview, 2012.

⁶⁵⁸ Baldwin, interview, 2012.

generous nature of this offer, he declined as 'of course my pride wouldn't allow me to ask for it'.⁶⁵⁹ Baldwin is represented by seven pieces in the collection.

Robin Welch studied under Gordon Baldwin and William Turnbull at the Central School in the late 1950s. Prior to this he had studied at the Penzance School of Art in Cornwall from 1953 to 1959, spending his weekends at the Leach Pottery. Given his connection with Leach, Welch could have been included in the previous section. However pieces made by Welch that are held in the Henry Rothschild collection all come after his time with Leach and, significantly, show little influence of the 'Leach' style. The influence of tutors, such as Baldwin, opened Welch up to a more sculptural approach although the vessel as a form is still present. During the 1960s Welch had his studio opposite Sloane Street and recalls taking his work to Rothschild for the first time:

I used to go to Sloane Street, to Primavera, to see what Henry Rothschild was showing. It was always a trip worth going to see Hans Coper and Lucie Rie and things. I'd taken in a few pots to look at, hoping that he might buy them and he said, 'Oh, I'll come and see you', and I thought that was a rub off and then a knock on the studio door one day and Henry was there. He wandered around spluttering away and eventually he said, 'Right, here's £100, bring me some pots down', and left it to me. And £100 in those days was like £2000 now, and that was my beginnings really.⁶⁶⁰

What is particularly striking about this exchange is Rothschild allowing Welch to dictate the choice of pots. Other accounts maintain that Rothschild insisted on complete control over which pieces made it through the doors of Primavera.⁶⁶¹ Welch fails to provide a date for this exchange other than to hint that occurred at the beginning of his career. That Welch went on to have nine pieces of his in the Henry Rothschild Collection demonstrates that in him Rothschild saw considerable talent and so may have bent his own rules in Welch's favour. A stoneware bowl by Welch, which was made in the 1980s, thrown and decorated with thick glaze leading to a textured surface, figures among the pieces in Rothschild's collection (figure 73).

⁶⁵⁹ Baldwin, interview, 2012.

⁶⁶⁰ Welch, interview, 2008.

⁶⁶¹ This is supported through a number of interviews including: Pile, 2012; L. Rothschild, 2012; Rothschild, 2001; Rothschild, 2003.



Figure 73: Stoneware Bowl, Robin Welch, c.1980s

Rothschild exhibited Welch in the 1967 “Younger Potters” show at Sloane Street and later in three of the large group shows in the 1970s at Kettle’s Yard. Welch recalls Rothschild as being ‘a pretty frightening sort of guy’ but highly influential in his career:

He never held back in terms of criticism. But he was a genuine man; in fact he really got me on the road to selling, producing [...] [criticisms] just things like if you made these jars a little bit taller, they'd be more useful, things like that. I daren't think he criticised aesthetics really it was just mundane things like that. But he was a pretty powerful person, Henry.⁶⁶²

Again, this understanding of Rothschild as a ‘powerful’ figure in the craft world at this time is highly significant. This can be attributed to the position Rothschild held as a retailer, exhibitor and collector – all three of which meant he directly impacted on the careers of the makers, the retail and exhibition side of his activity providing a platform for the wider world to see and purchase new work.

Like Rothschild, the potter Ian Auld also occupied many roles during his career, making him a figure of influence in the post-war craft world. Born in 1926, Auld attended the Slade School of Art as a painter in the late 1940s before moving to the London University Institute of Education to train as a teacher. In 1957, after a period

⁶⁶² Welch, interview, 2008.

of teaching in Baghdad, he set up a studio working primarily in slab building. As Harrod writes:

His work had an architectural feel to it, calling to mind both the concrete austerities of the so-called New Brutalism [...] Auld was also steeped in the ceramic culture of Korean, Persian and Japanese pots. But he achieved Leach's touch and spontaneity by an altogether different route. Auld saw himself, Dan Arbid, Gordon Baldwin, Ruth Duckworth and Bryan Newman, as progressives, 'trying to break down the accepted values of our established predecessors like the Leach family, Hans Coper and Lucie Rie'.⁶⁶³

It is of note that Auld includes Coper as a figure to break away from as Coper's work during this same period had a similar architectural language. However, as with Leach, Coper had become 'of the establishment' in a sense, through his teaching at Central and through the default of belonging to an 'older' generation. David Jewel, manager of Rothschild's short-lived Walton Street Primavera, states Auld's difference from Coper lies with Coper's preference to throw at the wheel as opposed to Auld's slab building.⁶⁶⁴



Figure 74: Stoneware Bottle, Ian Auld, c.1960s

This stoneware bottle (figure 74) has been created through slab building, using sheets of clay to build up the form. The glaze has produced a rough surface, mottled in

⁶⁶³ Harrod, 1999, p.276. Original quote: Fiona Bird 'Potting It Together', *The Times*, 21 August 1969, p.5.

⁶⁶⁴ Fiona Bird, 'Potting It Together', *The Times*, 21 August 1969, p.5.

appearance. Rothschild exhibited Auld twice – with Bryan Newman in 1962 and with his wife, Gillian Lowndes, in 1966. He was also part of the large group show in 1974 at Kettle's Yard. In the same year he became Head of Ceramics at Camberwell; alongside this role he also ran a shop in Islington, which he had opened in 1969, selling a range of folk art, primarily acquired from his trips around Africa, as well as antique furniture and ceramics.⁶⁶⁵ Auld does not feature in Rothschild's *Artist Notes*, nor is he discussed at length in any interviews. Of course, there are many other makers in the collection who are also absent from personal recollection, but considering Auld was also active in buying, selling and collecting objects that had some crossover with Rothschild, it seems unusual that more of a personal connection is not evident. However by the time Auld had set up his business, Rothschild was on his way out of London, concentrating on Cambridge which may explain part of this 'silence'. Rothschild was much more vocal on his support of Gillian Lowndes, Auld's wife, and she is better represented in the collection.

Gillian Lowndes was born in Cheshire in 1936 and trained at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London from 1957 to 1959 and, after a year at the *École des Beaux Arts* in Paris, in 1960 set up a studio on London with Robin Welch. Lowndes recalls this period in an interview with Fiona Bird:

I used to work with Robin Welch and Katie Watts in 1960 making coiled pots which were being shown at Primavera. Up until then I had always been taught to throw at the wheel. The Central School considered it the standard and only way to make pots and I was just floundering making bad teapots for three years. It was only when I started sculpting clay that I realised how limitless the boundaries were. I hate any technical process and I find glazing dull and tedious.⁶⁶⁶

Her account of her time spent at the Central School in the 1950s is at odds with those of other students (Baldwin, Tower, Davis) who had found the teaching to be inspiring. We can see through this statement that practices that were viewed as innovative for one generation soon became standard to the next generation, who then took it upon themselves to push the boundaries out further. During the early 1960s Lowndes created recognisable vessels and plates. Rothschild recalls discovering her 'powerful black and white bowl' at the Central School and he gave her a show at

⁶⁶⁵Obituary: Ian Auld', *The Guardian*, 14 March 2000. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/news/2000/mar/14/guardianobituaries> (Accessed: 13 July 2015).

⁶⁶⁶ Bird, 1969, p.5.

Primavera in 1962.⁶⁶⁷ There is one such bowl in the collection at the Shipley (figure 75); it is illustrated here to show the comparison between Lowndes early and later work (figure 76).



Figure 75: Stoneware Bowl, Gillian Lowndes, 1965

Figure 76: Stoneware Form, Gillian Lowndes, c.1975

A thick flattened rim on the bowl along with the stark decoration on the interior shows the influence of the other Central School affiliates, in particular Baldwin. Lowndes' trip to Nigeria with Auld in the 1970s marked a shift in her output and as Harrod writes: 'After her African visit Lowndes virtually abandoned vessel forms nor could her work be described as domestic or decorative. Context was always to be the problem'.⁶⁶⁸ This 'abandonment' can be seen in figure 76, which consists of coils of stoneware arranged to make a basket of sorts, using small amounts of turquoise glaze. Later works would include wire and found materials such as broken tiles. What is interesting in relation to Rothschild is that he not only maintained an interest in her work after this sharp change in direction, but that he actively championed her by collecting her and exhibiting her at Kettle's Yard. He spoke of taking great enjoyment from her work being in his home.⁶⁶⁹ Figure 77 shows two of her pieces on the table in his Cambridge home, figure 76 on the left and a coiled piece on the right, also in the collection.

⁶⁶⁷ Rothschild, *Artist Notes*, 2006.

⁶⁶⁸ Harrod, 1999, p.276.

⁶⁶⁹ Rothschild, interview, 2003.



Figure 77: Gillian Lowndes on display in the Rothschilds home, Cambridge, c.1990

Anthony Shaw, who focused his collection on particular artists, Lowndes included, comments that Rothschild:

[...] had a very Catholic taste [...] he moved on very easily, he was much more Catholic than I am and so he didn't tie himself to any particular... He was unusual in that sense. [...] He had no divide, he moved across the board and he showed them all together. It was more Catholic in a sense of what he actually collected, than what he necessarily showed.⁶⁷⁰

The inclusion of Lowndes in the Henry Rothschild collection is certainly demonstrable of Rothschild's 'Catholic' taste. The presence of Lowndes, among other sculptural work, could also be seen as problematic for those customers to Primavera who were after domestic ware. Fiona Adamczewski, Rothschild's assistant in the late 1960s, recalls that Rothschild was indifferent to such a problem: 'it didn't bother [Rothschild] that people didn't like certain things. It never seemed to bother him. I think he was confident enough not to worry about that'.⁶⁷¹ Rothschild himself commented that: 'I don't take sides in this question [between functional and non-functional] because I think they both need to be'.⁶⁷² This fluidity in taste explains Primavera's long term success, reacting to changes in the craft world positively, not being restricted by a rigid definition of 'craft'.

⁶⁷⁰ Shaw, interview, 2012.

⁶⁷¹ Fiona Adamczewski, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (21 January 2013). Uncatalogued.

⁶⁷² Rothschild, interview, 2003.

Not all makers coming through the art schools abandoned traditional vessel forms in the way that Lowndes did, but rather they treated them as the foundation from which to question the very properties of clay. Alison Britton trained at both the Central School and the Royal College of Art in the late 1960s and early 1970s under the tutelage of makers such as William Newland, Michael Casson, Gordon Baldwin, and Dan Arbeid. For Britton, these teachers who adopted different modes of practice, alongside her fellow students, gave her a broad understanding of craft. In writing about “A View of Clay”, an exhibition she curated in 1998, she states:

At the beginning of choosing an exhibition you look for key people whose work you trust, and whose creative past you believe in, because the actual works are still to be made [...] My list is a thread that links back to the 1960s, of those who taught me and fellow students, people I have taught, and people who I’ve never worked with, but who reveal bits of the map by which I make sense of ceramic culture. All of them I admire for their understanding of clay.⁶⁷³

The materiality of clay is fundamental to Britton’s practice, which focuses on handbuilding and takes a very intuitive approach.⁶⁷⁴ With regard to Britton’s work in Rothschild’s collection (figure 78), she recalls being surprised and pleased that he had bought it ‘because it’s quite a major, a big large scale thing [58cm tall] and I knew he was so old by then [2005]. I felt that’s so fantastic he’s still gathering these quite substantial things’.⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷³ Alison Britton, *Seeing Things: Collected Writing on Art, Craft and Design* (London: Occasional Papers, 2013), pp.138-9.

⁶⁷⁴ Britton, 2013, p.196.

⁶⁷⁵ Alison Britton, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (22 November 2012). Uncatalogued.



Figure 78: Earthenware Form, Alison Britton, 2005

During the 2000s, Rothschild's collecting practices had changed. He had begun the process of depositing pieces from his collection in 1990, with most of the collection in place by the late 1990s. Therefore the pieces he bought in the 2000s spent little to no time in his possession rather they went almost immediately to the Shipley Art Gallery. Figure 78 is an example of this, made in 2005 and accessioned to the Shipley in 2006. Britton does recall Rothschild as a known figure in the craft world, someone she would talk with at openings, and that he included her in the exhibition "Ceramics from Traditional Form to Sculpture" at the Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh in 1982, but it is unclear whether Britton featured in his collections prior to the acquisition of this piece.⁶⁷⁶ I would argue that his motivation for collecting certain pieces changed and, whereas he had always followed his instinct, he began to consider the 'gaps' and sought to rectify them. This said, it would go against his character to include objects for the sake of inclusion. With regard to Britton, she was a maker he had past associations with and arguably felt more drawn to her work in the 2000s than in earlier periods.

The presence of Edmund de Waal in the collection may also be explained in this way: he features only once in the collection with a piece made made in 1997 and

⁶⁷⁶ Britton, interview, 2012.

sent to the Shipley in 1998 (figure 79). De Waal is an example of a maker who moves between the realm of craft and fine art. The work that de Waal is best known for began in the early 1990s. Instead of stoneware, de Waal began to use porcelain with white and celadon glazes. In 1997 he had an exhibition at London's Galerie Besson. The show received contrary reviews from *Crafts* and *Ceramic Review*. Writing for *Ceramic Review*, David Whiting (incidentally the son of de Waal's mentor, Geoffrey Whiting) praises the arrangement of de Waal's pots, all of which were porcelain, all glazed with celadon, commenting that:

With such a spare language to hand, he has pushed and evolved in other ways, using the wheel to contrive and nurture some inventive forms and with a plasticity and sensuous manipulation of surface [...] Given such brevity of colour, the effect of an exhibition comprising over fifty pieces could well be monotonous, but these highly condensed and thoughtful objects work in dialogue -- pots of interrelated height, breadth and silhouette which engage and move the eye around the room.⁶⁷⁷

Perhaps unsurprisingly given the personal connection, Whiting's account of the show is positive. The same elements praised here are criticised by Malcolm Haslam, writing for *Crafts*. Haslam argues that the celadon glaze 'begins to pal' after a dozen pieces and that the forms themselves are 'all unobjectionable, all unremarkable'.⁶⁷⁸

⁶⁷⁷ David Whiting, 'Edmund de Waal, Galerie Besson, London', *Ceramic Review*, No.168, 1997, p.44.

⁶⁷⁸ Malcolm Haslam, 'Edmund de Waal, Galerie Besson, London', *Crafts*, No.149, 1997, pp.56-7.



Figure 79: Porcelain Bottle, Edmund de Waal, 1997

The porcelain bottle (figure 79) in the Henry Rothschild Collection is likely to be from this exhibition but standing alone it is difficult to fully visualise the point Haslam and Whiting (and perhaps de Waal himself) is trying to make. On its own, the piece is striking in its lack of colour. The inclusion of a de Waal in the Henry Rothschild Collection is interesting considering Rothschild stated that de Waal was a potter who had achieved great success without a great deal of talent.⁶⁷⁹ This again raises the issue of Rothschild's motivation at this point. Whereas with Britton it can be argued that she and Rothschild had previous associations and therefore it is possible to trace his interest in her work, with de Waal this does not seem to be the case. Therefore it would be easy to suggest that he bought this piece in order to fill a gap in his collection, perhaps having an idea of the success de Waal would go on to have. This line of thinking goes against the central argument of this research that Rothschild was a collector driven by an instinct for 'good design' rather than by fashion or famous names. Instead, I would argue that Rothschild felt a certain draw to this example of de Waal's work and bought it for this reason.

The work examined in this section provides further evidence that Rothschild considered craft in a variety of forms. His engagement with craft that blurred boundaries can be attributed in part to his European background and early

⁶⁷⁹ Rothschild, interview, 2003.

engagement with a modern aesthetic. Again, the inclusion of more sculptural work in his exhibition programme highlights that he responded to developments in craft as they happened and was therefore among the first to champion these makers; in doing so he can be regarded as a trailblazer of contemporary taste.

Presenting Émigrés

The makers discussed so far have been British with the exception of the Australian Gwyn Hanssen and the American Janet Leach, although both can be viewed as part of the British studio pottery scene. As has been explored in chapter three, Rothschild's émigré background influenced his relationship with the British craft scene of the post-war; in this he was not alone. The potters Lucie Rie, Hans Coper and Ruth Duckworth, all émigrés, came to the UK and left their mark, and are considered, to varying degrees, to be part of British studio pottery. By referencing their position within the Rothschild collection, the relevance of their émigré status can be explored.

As has been detailed in chapter four, Rothschild's association with the Austrian potter Lucie Rie began in 1945 when he visited her at her London studio prior to the opening of Primavera. Papers belonging to Rie were deposited at the Crafts Study Centre in Farnham and include a comprehensive set of invoices. The earliest invoice relating to Rothschild is dated for March 1946, a month after Primavera opened, and he continued to buy from her regularly until the late 1970s. As Rothschild stated:

I found her white porcelain and black manganese glazes fascinating. As a continental I found her shapes logical and her coffee jugs, bowls and cups and saucers to use very satisfying. So we did a good trade but [there] were no solo exhibitions although she participated in group shows. I had constant difficulties in getting exactly what I wanted; she always wanted to give me her selections and I did from the start ask for the work I could fully support and after her death and her important position in the sale rooms, many pots have been sold which I could never have entertained. [...] I believed her best work was done when Hans Coper was her brilliant assistant. I like her subtle strong stoneware pieces with a variety of glazes but her porcelain, particularly the manganese and sgraffito decoration, stands out.⁶⁸⁰

It is of note that Rothschild's reference to her Continental background implies that her pots themselves were 'Continental' and thereby 'logical'. Certainly Rie's pots

⁶⁸⁰ Rothschild, *Artist Notes*, 2006.

had a lightness and delicacy that she had tried to repress on her arrival in Britain, instead attempting to imitate Leach before returning to her own style. It is difficult to say how they appealed to Rothschild as 'logical' but perhaps it was the even throw and the clean appearance.



Figure 80: Porcelain Bowl, Lucie Rie, c.1959

Rothschild's admiration for her porcelain work with manganese and sgraffito decoration can be seen in figure 80. The alternate pattern of horizontal and vertical squares is visually appealing and, although the shape lacks the narrow foot associated with Rie (which can be seen in figure 40) it has a pleasing balance.

Rothschild's comments on her later work - 'many pots have been sold which I could never have entertained' - and her increasing popularity in the sales room reveals more of his own concerns than of the quality of Rie's work.⁶⁸¹ Rie began to produce work that was 'one-off' rather than the domestic ware that she had earned her living with during the 1950s and '60s. The appeal of it is, as with everything, a question of personal taste and clearly Rothschild regarded some of it as not being to his own taste. That said, Rothschild's comments on quality are supported by other collectors and dealers who felt that by the end of the 1970s the sale of studio pottery in auction houses was inflating the prices of objects which could be considered less than perfect. Writing about a sale of studio pottery in 1979 at Sotheby's, Bennett comments:

⁶⁸¹ Rothschild, *Artist Notes*, 2006.

[...] the Lucie Rie pots [...] showed how easily people can become over-excited in auctions. The best was an admittedly beautiful yellow bowl which, at just under £110, was, inevitably, the second cheapest of the eight! In contrast [...] £234.50 for an equally dull black bowl with bad firing flaws and great big crack, a piece which I would value, I think generously, at about £50 [...] one begins to wonder what someone would pay for a really great example of her work; possibly well over £1000.⁶⁸²

What is interesting here is that Rothschild exhibited Rie in 1979 as part of a group show at Kettle's Yard, and the prices for her work there ranged from £148 to £390. This shows that Rothschild was complicit in this raising of prices, although Rie would have received part of the profit in this instance.⁶⁸³ As it stands now Rie's work, along with that of Hans Coper and Bernard Leach, can demand high prices through being a 'name' regardless of quality. Bennett's premonition more than came true in December 2014 when one of Rie's bowls sold for £57,340.⁶⁸⁴

In Rothschild's notes about Rie, he comments on the beneficial relationship between Rie and Coper; similarly when he writes about Coper, he talks of Rie. This is not uncommon; their relationship and influence on each other's work has been explored at length.⁶⁸⁵ However, unlike Leach and his apprentices, there is little confusion over identifying the Rie's from the Coper's in the collection at the Shipley. Coper, particularly in the 1960s and '70s, is more concerned with form and shape whereas Rie begins to experiment more with glazes.

Coper was not the only apprentice of Rie's; she had employed a number of workers to help her in the immediate post-war era as her main source of income were ceramic buttons made in large quantities.⁶⁸⁶ Rie met Coper through a shared acquaintance, fellow émigré William Ohly who ran the Berkeley Galleries in London. Coper's background was in engineering and, being forced to leave to Germany, he found himself in the UK after the war with little direction. Although Rie remarked she

⁶⁸² Ian Bennett, 'Do I hear £1000?', *Crafts*, No.43, 1980, p.35.

⁶⁸³ Primavera, *Exhibition list for "Chosen by Henry Rothschild", Kettle's Yard, Cambridge (17 – 30 June 1979)*. DT.HRA/5/3/40. Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle.

⁶⁸⁴ Blackmore Vale Magazine, *Dame Lucie Rie pottery bowl makes world record price at auctions: Blackmore Vale Magazine, December 2014*. Available at: <http://www.blackmorevale.co.uk/Dame-Lucie-Rie-pottery-bowl-makes-world-record/story-25459301-detail/story.html> (Accessed: 11 June 2015).

⁶⁸⁵ See: Cooper, 2012; Birks, 1997; Jackson, 1997; Birks, 1983.

⁶⁸⁶ Cooper, 2012, p.146.

learnt more from Coper than he did from her, by employing Coper in this first instance, given that he had no experience in ceramics, Rie was instrumental in his career and he in hers.⁶⁸⁷

In the workshop the two potters worked alongside each other, he to watch and learn, she to demonstrate and make. A year after starting work Coper was able to make pots to a professional standard [...] Without articulating it, they had a common vision in seeing themselves as essentially metropolitan rather than rural, concerned with making pots for the present rather than seeking to recreate a fictional or romanticized past. Although they would have been reluctant to discuss it, they identified themselves as part of the stream of modernism that looked to form rather than decoration, and to objects that reflected the minimalism and strength of architectural design.⁶⁸⁸

Given Rothschild's early and continued associations with Rie, it is likely he would have become aware of Coper, whom he deemed the greatest of all potters, in this same period, commenting that: 'I believe I recognised his greatness from the start'.⁶⁸⁹ As has been discussed in chapter five, Rothschild exhibited Coper throughout the 1950s and at this time, although the sculptural elements of his work were emerging, the forms were recognisable and usable as vessels. In the 1970s Coper's work becomes more sculptural, throwing shapes, splitting and rejoining them. He worked exclusively in monochrome, allowing for all of his attention to be on the form. Coper is represented in the collection by eight pieces, all of which were produced in the 1970s; this suggests that for Rothschild, this was Coper's most 'golden' phase (figure 81).

⁶⁸⁷ Cooper, 2012, p.146.

⁶⁸⁸ Cooper, 2012, p.148.

⁶⁸⁹ Rothschild, *Artist Notes*, 2006.



Figure 81: Stoneware Form, Hans Coper, c.1974

His presence as a lecturer at the Royal College of Art had, as Rothschild states, an 'enormous influence'.⁶⁹⁰ According to Alison Britton, Rie and Coper together were viewed as 'so significant' and as the 'parents' to the new generation of makers emerging out of Camberwell and the RCA in the 1970s.⁶⁹¹ I would argue that these émigré 'parents', removed from the traditions of studio pottery as set out by Leach, were partly responsible for the freedom of expression evident in the work of art school student, for example Robin Welch or Alison Britton. Furthermore, the idea of them as 'parents' connects well with the decision made by Rothschild and the Shipley to display their work in the collection in one case, without the presence of other makers.⁶⁹² This highlights their influence on each other, as well as the elevated status they have in terms of studio pottery.

As a German émigré Ruth Duckworth can be considered within the same context as Rie and Coper. Like Coper, she assisted Rie in her button productions in

⁶⁹⁰ Rothschild, interview, n.d.

⁶⁹¹ Britton, 2013, p.170.

⁶⁹² As of 2015, there are some examples of Coper and Rie from the collection in other exhibitions at the Shipley, but the majority are housed in this one case.

1945 before moving on to study at Hammersmith School of Art and the Central School. However, she sits slightly separate from them, due in part to her move from the UK to America in the mid-1960s, and in part due to her approach to clay as sculpture. As Buckley writes:

Disassociated from traditions of Englishness that were centred on the countryside and dislocated from her German roots, her work was minimalist in approach with elemental, abstract forms that drew from non-Western pottery cultures [...] From [1965] she began to undertake large scale architectural wall murals [...] [and] continued to make smaller vessels and figure that were distorted and totemic; more akin to sculpture than domestic objects.⁶⁹³

The sculptural property of Duckworth's work can be seen in this delicate porcelain form (figure 82). Rothschild considered her as 'one of the most remarkable and outstanding personalities' that he had dealings with. He comments that her free experimentation with clay, with method and with form allowed her to develop in the way that she did.⁶⁹⁴



Figure 82: Porcelain Form, Ruth Duckworth, 1975

⁶⁹³ Cheryl Buckley, 'Authenticity, tradition and modernity: Marguerite Wildenhain and Ruth Duckworth, women émigré studio potters, 1936-1964', in *Entfernt: Frauen des Bauhauses während der NS-Zeit – Verfolgung und Exil, Women in Exile*, Vol.5, ed. by Adriane Feustel, Inge Hansen-Schaberg, Wolfgang Thöner (Munich: text+kritik, 2012).

⁶⁹⁴ Rothschild, *Artist Notes*, 2006.

There are thirty-four objects in the collection attributed to Rie, Coper and Duckworth, which represents just over ten percent of the collection. This alone demonstrates the impact these three émigré makers had on Rothschild's understanding of craft.

Summary

By applying the definitions of a collector as offered by Belk and Baudrillard, Rothschild is revealed as an atypical collector. Looking back at previous chapters on his retail and exhibition practices, this atypical behaviour can be partly attributed to these other roles. His approach to collecting can be seen as informed by the professional relationships he had with makers and his broad understanding of the craft market itself. Although he approached the retail and exhibition of craft with his own aesthetic tastes in mind, this instinctual attitude towards craft was truly allowed to flourish when it came to his own personal collection. This motivation changes when he begins, in the 1990s, to think about where his collection will go and how it will be received. In this way he becomes more typical in his approach to collecting, no longer driven solely by aesthetics but considering what his collection says about both him and post-war craft in Britain.

If we were to view Rothschild's craft collection as it is at the Shipley Art Gallery in the three discrete ways offered above – workshop, craft as art, and émigré makers - it would give a very limited understanding of Rothschild as a collector. By examining each area in turn and considering how Rothschild brings each section together, it is possible to fully appreciate the scope of his collection.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

The main objective of this thesis has been to demonstrate how Rothschild's position as a retailer, exhibitor and collector of craft mark him, and by extension the craft outlet Primavera, as a significant part of craft history and thereby worthy of this thorough examination. As a non-maker, Rothschild has been previously overlooked. By examining the non-maker in the detail normally awarded to makers, it has become apparent such exclusion is detrimental to a more fully rounded understanding of craft history. Furthermore, this research has sought to consider in particular how Rothschild's émigré background gave him a particular understanding of craft and allowed him to act outside the confines of a traditional British standpoint. By exploring his émigré background, it becomes apparent that individual narratives contain both typical and atypical elements. The shared experiences may contribute to a unified understanding of craft history, but the more unique and atypical experiences can illustrate its complex nature. By exploring in full these two main areas, this research has positioned Rothschild's narrative within the context of post-war craft, but has also added to our understanding of post-war craft by considering Rothschild, and by extension the role of the non-maker. The integration of the broader narrative and the individual narrative has effectively created a previously absent account of post-war craft.

As the only other major text on Rothschild, Tanya Harrod's 1995 catalogue essay has provided a foundation to this research. While Harrod covers the major developments in Rothschild's long career, for example the early difficulties with stocking Primavera, Primavera Contracts, and the 1970s exhibitions, the limitations of the essay result in a very brief overview. By using a narrative-based methodology, this research has expanded upon the existing text by Harrod and developed a more in-depth portrayal of Rothschild and considered his place in craft history as a non-maker. This has been achieved through extensive use of the Henry Rothschild Archive, along with papers from other archives including the material in the possessions of Rothschild's daughter.

Narratives and the Archives

In taking a narrative-based approach to this research, Rothschild's contribution to craft history has been brought to the fore and highlighted the significance of the non-maker. This approach has helped to ensure Rothschild, along with Primavera, remains the focal point of the research, complemented rather than overshadowed by

the broader context of craft history. The integration between the personal narrative of Rothschild and the broader narrative of post-war craft has been central to this thesis. Informed by the work of Hatch and Wisniewski, this research has considered Rothschild's narrative as both a product of and a reaction to his place in post-war Britain. Chapter three in particular demonstrates this well. The circumstances that led to Rothschild leaving Germany for Britain in 1933 are not unique to Rothschild. As Fiona Adamczewski comments: 'Well he was lucky to get out. He could have ended in a gas chamber like six million others. But he didn't, thank God'.⁶⁹⁵ By leaving Germany in 1933, with the financial support of this family and with contacts in the UK, Rothschild was able to apply for British citizenship in 1938 (avoiding being labelled an enemy alien), and join the British Army. While I would argue that Rothschild would have always found some way into the craft world, these events led him to Italy and the artisans there where the idea of Primavera came into fruition. Furthermore, the closure of the major London craft retailers during the Second World War meant that when Rothschild opened Primavera in 1946, it was truly a new and exciting venture for a tired consumer base. This is also due in no small part to Rothschild's own personality and drive – to quote Adamczewski again:

So really I don't think he would have failed. I think Henry was always going to make something happen. Powerful personality whether you liked him or not he was very powerful.⁶⁹⁶

Managing aspects of Rothschild's personal life and maintaining the position of this text as a piece of academic writing, has been a balancing act. As Harrod comments: 'Who needs psychological insights into schooldays and love affairs?'⁶⁹⁷ For Harrod the output of the creative life should be central. Therefore within this thesis the narrative of Rothschild, who I would argue led a creative life as a non-maker, has taken a thematic approach taken with each chapter – émigré, retail, exhibition and collection. By structuring the work in this way, I have ensured that this research has not become a typical biography. Although some parts of Rothschild's personal life have been discussed, their inclusion has been to fully understand his professional activities of retailing, exhibiting and collecting. For example, his bipolar diagnosis in

⁶⁹⁵ Fiona Adamczewski, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (21 January 2013). Uncatalogued.

⁶⁹⁶ Adamczewski, interview, 2013.

⁶⁹⁷ Tanya Harrod, 'Why Biography?', in *The Real Thing: Essays on Making in the Modern World*, ed. by Tanya Harrod (London: Hyphen Press, 2015, orig.2003), p.199.

the 1960s that contributed to his move out of London, and the personal letters to his mother in the late 1940s that revealed his intentions with Primavera.

The discipline of craft history itself has benefited from this narrative-based approach. As discussed in the literature review, craft history tends to be incorporated into either art history, and viewed in terms of aesthetics and with an emphasis on the maker, or into design history, and viewed into terms of production, and latterly, consumption. A narrative-based approach, as demonstrated here, with a particular focus on the non-maker, allows an opportunity for an alternative understanding of the significance of craft in post-war Britain.

The Henry Rothschild Archive, although utilised in part for Harrod's essay, has been largely unseen. Most research within the arts and humanities makes use of specific collections and archives. However, this research has allowed a rare opportunity to work extensively with the material over an extended period of time. The in-depth knowledge acquired through this immersion in the material is evident throughout this research. For example, with regard to Rothschild's retail activities, the advertisements detailing stock along with promotional material have been invaluable; and the notated exhibition lists and accompanying catalogues connected Rothschild's exhibition activities to his own collection. These resources have aided the mapping out of Rothschild's narrative. Furthermore, in keeping with the parameters of the AHRC's collaborative doctoral award scheme, the collection and archive at the Shipley Art Gallery have directed this research towards Rothschild's professional activity.

Outside the confines of this thesis, the collaboration with the Shipley Art Gallery has resulted in a pamphlet on the collection, with the aim of encouraging visitors to the site, and the development of two exhibitions. The first exhibition (November 2014) presented five pieces from the collection with additional information gleaned from this research. For example, the Sandy Brown basket (figure 59) was displayed along with a statement in which she recalls Henry Rothschild buying the piece from her. The second exhibition (November 2015) brought together the archival material and collection in order to highlight the significance of this research on Rothschild as a non-maker.



Figure 83: 'Retailing Craft' – Henry Rothschild exhibition at the Shipley Art Gallery, 2015

Figure 83 illustrates the 'Retailing Craft' case from this exhibition.⁶⁹⁸ As can be seen, objects from the collection have been connected with archival material, for example a scrapbook of advertisements at the bottom-right of the case connects with the unusual ware that could be found at Primavera, including the set of three cups and saucers (bottom-right) by Guido Gambone (see figure 70). The objective of this exhibition was to engage the local community with what is a highly significant craft collection; I would argue that the integration of object and archive is a particularly useful tool to engage audiences.

Other archives have also been utilised in order to complete a picture of Rothschild's retail, exhibition and collecting activities. For example, to the middle-left of the case (figure 83) there is a Lucie Rie bowl (figure 7) that connects to an invoice from the Lucie Rie Archive at the Crafts Study Centre. As there is little to no invoice material in the Shipley archive, it was imperative to ascertain what material was held by potters about their business transactions with Primavera and Rothschild. Both the Rie and Cardew archives hold large sets of invoice books, order books and general correspondence. It is important to recognise that these documents only illustrate the specific relationship Rothschild had with these particular potters and therefore are not representative of the bigger picture. However, they give a good indication to the type of stock he was interested in and the regularity at which he was buying. For example there are over 300 invoices for Primavera in Lucie Rie's archives dating from the early days in 1946 to 1977. Again, the nature of this extended collaboration has allowed for

⁶⁹⁸ There was another case for 'Exhibiting Craft' and a smaller case that highlighted the contributions made to Primavera by Sam Smith.

connections to emerge that were previously under-researched. These connections are evident throughout this thesis.

Alongside this archival research, I have carried out ten interviews with associates of Rothschild's. These interviews (see Appendix D) were focused specifically on Rothschild and Primavera, along with commentary on craft in post-war Britain. The content of these interviews has been integral to the development of this research and illustrate an original contribution to our understanding of Rothschild. By interviewing fellow collectors, curators, makers, employees and family of Rothschild's, alongside the existing audio and visual material of Rothschild himself, I have been able to gain a better insight into his activities.

Rothschild's Significance in Craft History

Prior to this research, the texts on Rothschild – Allen Freer's 1983 profile and Tanya Harrod's 1995 catalogue essay – are all too brief. Harrod's essay, despite its limitations, has continually been used as the reference for any other mention of him - for example, in Cooper's biography of Lucie Rie, Harrod's text on craft in Britain, and Birks' biography on Ruth Duckworth. This research, which is more in-depth and offers a more contextual understanding of Rothschild, offers a better resource for future researchers exploring the role of Rothschild and the significance of Primavera. Throughout this research Rothschild's narrative has been interwoven with the broader narrative of crafts in post-war Britain. The main areas explored here have centred on the positioning of craft in relation to art and industrial design, the changing face of craft, from the early workshop traditions to the involvement of the art schools, and the influence of European makers. These themes have been explored by using specific examples of Rothschild's retail, exhibition and collecting practices; for example his collection at the Shipley Art Gallery illustrates the diverse range of craft being produced within this period, and his exhibition programme indicates changes in taste. Significantly, over the thirty-five year period explored here, it is possible to show how the different strands of craft practice evolved, developed and co-existed. Rothschild's engagement with institutions, such as the Crafts Advisory Committee, the Rural Industries Bureau, and the Crafts Centre of Great Britain, further illustrate the importance of his role in craft history.

For the thirty-five year period assessed in this research Rothschild, through his activities at Primavera and beyond, was required to respond and react to a number of social and economic changes in order to survive. In terms of the broader craft

narrative, it is important to recognise that the London location, and more specifically the Kensington and Chelsea area of London, was a key factor in Primavera's success. This is best illustrated by considering Primavera's broad consumer base, including an aspiring middle-class and internationally respected institutions such as the Victoria & Albert Museum. While Rothschild may have in later years called for a more regional approach to craft on the part of the government, and later left his collection to a Northern gallery, I would argue that Primavera in any other part of the UK would not have succeeded in the same way. His move to Cambridge still situated him in the South and, by the time he left London altogether in 1970, Britain was on the verge of a craft revival, resulting in a very different landscape to that of 1946.

The importance of time and place established, I would further argue that this research shows that Rothschild's personality and approach was fundamental to the success of Primavera. Opening in 1946, Primavera was faced with immediate difficulties related to both the limits on stock and small consumer base and it was Rothschild's resourcefulness that navigated through that. His preparation, by developing and maintaining supportive networks, for example with the Rural Industries Bureau, leading up to the opening was also significant in establishing his name and vision with a number of makers and suppliers. The impact of the Second World War on the craft market itself is also important. Not only did the makers have to respond to limited supplies, the inter-war craft outlets in the Kensington and Chelsea area had not survived, creating a gap in which Primavera could sit. Therefore Primavera's narrative could only begin with the ending of others. This positioning of Primavera, a small outlet, in the busy area of London as a place people could see and consume a wide range of craft, has been underplayed in other accounts of craft history. This research has sought to rectify that.

Due to the timeframe this research covers, special attention can be paid to how craft was consumed over a period of time. In using Rothschild and Primavera as a focus, it is possible to see the development of certain trends from the urgency for colour and vitality - and an alternative to Utility - in the late 1940s and '50s, to an explosion of the modern in the 1960s. Due to Rothschild's interest in stocking both hand-made and machine-made goods, Primavera is presented as a unique venture with wide appeal. As a retail outlet it became a place to consume craft, but as an exhibition space, it also became a place to view craft. As discussed in the introduction, the experiences drawn from Primavera should not be viewed as particularly normative of consumption trends across the country but rather this research considers how a particular narrative can enhance and further our

understanding of the broader narrative. The diverse range of stock Rothschild sold through Primavera – ceramics, glass, toys, furniture, and textiles – follow into his exhibition programme and, to a lesser degree, his collection activities. The objects he brought into Primavera, into exhibition spaces or into his home, were governed by his own personal taste. With regard to retail and exhibition, this was balanced with an eye on the consumer, as demonstrated with his focus on Leach-style domestic ware in the 1950s and 1960s, or the folk art exhibitions during the late 1950s and 1960s. No such balance was required in the formation of his own collection and, entirely unmotivated by issues of value or rarity, his collection fully reflects his taste and instinct.⁶⁹⁹

Rothschild's upbringing within an affluent German-Jewish family encouraged his engagement with visual culture from an early age. Rothschild brought this understanding with him to Britain in 1933 and, during his time in Italy as part of the British Army, this was allowed to develop further, resulting in a clear view of what 'good design' was. Rothschild's daughter Liz comments that:

Dad I think believed in the notion of absolute beauty, there is you know philosophically there is such a thing as beauty and that you can, you can begin to describe what makes something beautiful and what doesn't. We tend to have a very relativistic notion of beauty, we think beauty is entirely shaped by our culture and our time and our experiences and therefore beauty is relative. I don't think Dad believed that [...] He's looking for a quality that I think I would describe as classical, so that it exists outside time, it's not subject to fashion [...]⁷⁰⁰

This clear understanding of aesthetic beauty, irrespective of fashion, can be attributed in part to Rothschild's early engagement with visual culture. As explored in throughout, Rothschild's 'outsider' status as émigré allowed him to fully explore his ideas of 'absolute beauty' to a greater degree than if he were British. Without having to navigate the British class system, which can be seen to inform our understanding of taste, Rothschild was free to follow his own vision. Furthermore, in London Rothschild was able to connect with other émigrés, such as Lucie Rie, William Ohly and Hans Coper. As posited in this research, this network of émigrés impacted greatly on the development of craft in Britain.

Rothschild's links with Europe, established through his retail, exhibition and collecting practices, were of great benefit and gave his shop an extra element of

⁶⁹⁹ Rothschild, 1983, p.26.

⁷⁰⁰ Liz Rothschild, interviewed by Janine Barker for thesis (17 April 2012). Uncatalogued.

interest. As discussed in chapter three, Rothschild's own cultural values were formed in Europe and so his embrace of Europe in later life can be seen as non-surprising. However, in comparing Rothschild's narrative to other emigres – Coper, Rie, his own brother – Rothschild's path towards Europe can be seen as less than typical, illustrating the complexity of personal experience. This is best illustrated in chapter six through an analysis of the German shows in the late 1960s and 1970s. For Rothschild, his reconciliation with Germany was largely facilitated by these interactions with German potters.

Rothschild's openness to the output of art schools during the 1960s and '70s also illuminates a key debate within broader craft history. As outlined in the literature review, and illustrated throughout this thesis, the constant re-positioning, re-defining and re-imagining of the three areas of craft, art and industrial design are a major concern for both practitioners and academics. Rothschild himself never felt such distinctions important or relevant, and his retail, exhibition and collecting activities support that. He felt it possible to embrace more sculptural work without feeling he had to turn his back on the more traditional makers, a fact that arguably broadened his appeal. However, regardless of this stance, I would argue that Rothschild did contribute to this debate; through his activities at Primavera and at Kettle's Yard, he presented the audience of consumers and makers with work that challenged their understanding of craft. Furthermore, his unique position as a retailer, an exhibitor and a collector provided him with a certain amount of power, particular in his relationships with makers. He had a direct influence on makers that went on to gain an international reputation - he gave Ruth Duckworth and Dan Arbeid their first solo exhibitions, and he championed Gillian Lowndes and Ian Auld. His connections with the Crafts Advisory Committee, as well as respected institutions such as the Victoria and Albert Museum, would have also marked him as an individual to seek out for both makers and consumers.

Areas for Future Research

During the course of this research a number of key areas of future research have emerged. By identifying Rothschild as a non-maker, this research has given close consideration to the important roles such individuals have made on craft. It would be of interest to position Rothschild within a larger network of these individuals, with possible subjects including the collectors Anthony Shaw and Ken Stradling

(interviewed for this research) and William Ismay, or some of the significant people involved in the Crafts Council, such as Victor Margrie.

The archive held at the Shipley is not yet accessible to the public and it has become apparent that there exists a real need to bring this material into the gallery space as a way of enhancing the visitor's experience of the collection. Such material also provides the opportunity to develop the collection itself, allowing for different narratives to emerge and to consider alternative curatorial practice. Whereas I have achieved this in part through an exhibition (figure 83), it would be useful to expand on this further by digitising the archive and putting the material online. This would be great benefit to the Shipley Art Gallery itself, highlighting a significant collection of post-war craft. Further to this would be the digitisation of material held in Liz Rothschild's collection as well as conducting other interviews to complement the existing archive.

With regard to this research, there have a number of areas that are worthy of further expansion that has not been possible due either to the limitations of known archives or to the parameters established. For example, it would of interest to consider in further detail the trade of craft - both contemporary and folk - between Britain and Europe and to position Rothschild within that research as well as compare him to other collectors and dealers. Rothschild activities post-1980 have been explored in some detail within this research, particularly with regard to his collecting habits and association with the Shipley Art Gallery. He also curated a further eleven exhibitions, with an increasing number in Germany and Holland. With Rothschild as a starting point, there would be potential to consider further the connections between Britain and Europe. Similarly, Rothschild's side company of Primavera Contracts is significantly under-researched, due in no small part to a lack of archival material. As a venture however it has both social and cultural value and it would be of interest to compare it with other independent contract companies and see how this trend developed.

Closing Statement

This thesis has demonstrated how Rothschild's position as a retailer, exhibitor and collector marked him as a unique character within the crafts. Due partly to his status as a non-maker, this is a position that has been previously under-researched. By using a narrative-based approach, this research has developed the narrative of Rothschild and his wide-reaching impact and contribution as a non-maker, which has

never been explored in detail. Rothschild's own narrative has been successfully integrated with the broader narrative of craft in post-war Britain.

Appendix A: List of Exhibitions, 1952 – 1980

<i>Date</i>	<i>Exhibition</i>	<i>Place</i>
14 – 24 May 1952	Albert Diato and Francine del Pierre (ceramics)	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
28 Oct – 14 Nov 1953	Baskets for Town and Country	Tea Centre, Regent Street, London
18 Nov 1953 – 11 Jan 1954	English Ceramics, Weavings and Braid Work	Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Holland
1954	Percy Brown (ceramics)	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
27 Apr – 9 May 1955	Ceramic Texture: Waistel Cooper and Susan Sanderson	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
7 – 21 Nov 1955	Microcosm: Alan Smith (toys)	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
12 – 23 Jun 1956	Stoneware: Katherine Pleydell- Bouverie	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
6 – 19 Nov 1956	Coastal Waters: Alan Smith (toys)	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
9 – 23 Jan 1957	Bernard Leach (ceramics)	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
10 – 22 Apr 1957	Sicilian Cart Carvings, Sardinian Rugs and Weavings	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
24 Sep – 5 Oct 1957	Decorative Glass – A New Approach (Juniper Workshop, Edinburgh)	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
28 Oct – 9 Nov 1957	Carvings from Sicilian Carts	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
4 – 19 Mar 1958	Porcelain and Stoneware by Bernard Leach	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
6 – 19 May 1958	Stoneware Pots by Hans Coper	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
11 – 24 Jun 1958	Contemporary Distractions: Alan Smith (toys)	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
4 -17 Nov 1958	Thrown and Coiled Stoneware by Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie and Helen Pincombe	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
c.1958	Special Display of Plant Pots: Leach, Pincombe, Pleydell- Bouverie, Coper, Rie	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
13 – 23 May 1959	Decorated Stoneware by Henry Hammond	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
9 – 20 Jun 1959	Handbuilt Stoneware by Dan Arbeid	Primavera, Sloane Street, London

Date	Exhibition	Place
14 -24 Oct 1959	Pots by Janet Leach and William Marshall	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
16 – 27 Feb 1960	Porcelain and Stoneware by Bernard Leach	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
26 Apr – 7 May 1960	Old Dutch Pastry Moulds	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
24 May – 4 Jun 1960	Stoneware by Ruth Duckworth	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
11 – 22 Oct 1960	Stoneware by Zoe Ellison and John Dan	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
8 – 19 Nov 1960	Crafts from Thailand	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
Dec 1960	Christmas Ideas for 1960	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
Dec 1960	Christmas Ideas for 1960	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
9 – 23 Jan 1961	Bernard Leach (ceramics)	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
14 – 25 Feb 1961	African Contemporary Crafts	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
Feb 1961	Ceramics from Hookerhill Training College	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
11 – 22 Apr 1961	Handwoven Tapestries by Gret Mohrhardt and Inge Richter and Woodcarvings by David Gilbert	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
30 May – 10 Jun 1961	English Stoneware by Barbara Wolstencroft (Cass) and Memorial Exhibition to Françoise Lelong	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
19 – 30 Sep 1961	Handbuilt Pottery from Goldsmiths' College	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
Dec 1961	Christmas Ideas for 1961	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
6 Dec – 17 Feb 1962	Stoneware by Ian Auld and Bryan Newman	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
Mar 1962	Stoneware by Ian Auld and Bryan Newman	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
3 – 14 April 1962	Fabric Murals by Michael O'Connell and Old Dutch Pastry Moulds	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
15 – 26 May 1962	Stoneware Pots by Gwyn and Louis Hanssen	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
25 Sep – 6 Oct 1962	Ruth and Aidron Duckworth (ceramics and mixed media)	Primavera, Sloane Street, London

Date	Exhibition	Place
c.1962	Gillian Lowndes (ceramics)	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
12 – 23 Feb 1963	Stoneware by Dan Arbeid	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
26 Feb – 9 Mar 1963	Ceramics from Camberwell	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
26 Mar – 1 Apr 1963	Majolica and Lustre by Alan Caiger-Smith	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
22 May – 1 Jun 1963	Folk Art from many Countries: Primavera International One	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
25 Jun – 6 Jul 1963	Stoneware by Janet Leach	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
29 Oct – 9 Nov 1963	Stoneware and Porcelain by Bernard Leach	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
17 – 26 Mar 1964	Triad: Stoneware by Gwyn Hanssen, Rush by Pamela Morgan, Wool Tapestries by Eta Ingham-Mohrhardt	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
16 – 27 Jun 1964	Crocks for Food Lovers	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
6 – 17 Oct 1964	Americana – Stoneware by Glenn Lewis, Warren Mackenzie, Marbeth Celotti, Textiles from Peru and Mexico	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
3 – 14 Nov 1964	Stoneware by Helen Pincombe, Batiks by Heidi Grieder-Mascarin	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
16 – 17 Feb 1965	Stoneware by Marianne de Trey and John Reeve, and Primavera's new printed fabric 'The University Collection'	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
24 May – 5 Jun 1965	Stoneware by Louis Hanssen	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
22 Jun – 3 Jul 1965	Pottery by Janet Leach	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
6 – 15 Jul 1965	Random Sculpture collected by Pauline Brooks; Decorative Glass Panels by Trevor Long	Primavera, Kings Parade, London
20 Oct – 6 Nov 1965	Viewpoint 1965: Artists from East Anglia	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
24 Nov – 4 Dec 1965	Frost, Heron, Hilton, Wynter	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
c.1965	Ian Godfrey (ceramics)	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
22 Mar – 2 Apr 1966	Stoneware and Porcelain by Bernard Leach	Primavera, Sloane Street, London

Date	Exhibition	Place
10 – 21 May 1966	Ceramics/Rugs: Gwyn Hanssen, Anthony Sutton, Christopher Clipson	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
17 – 28 May 1966	Paintings by Mary Newcomb and Iron Sculpture by Yunus	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
7 – 25 Jun 1966	'Leading the Way': Pottery, Jewelry, Rugs, and Hangings	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
21 – 29 Jun 1966	Ceramics by Ian Godfrey	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
29 Sep – 9 Oct 1966	New Faces	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
14 Oct – 5 Nov 1966	Art from Digswell	Primavera, Kings Parade, London
25 Oct – 5 Nov 1966	Ceramics by Ian Auld and Gillian Lowndes	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
c.1966	Gwyn Hanssen	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
30 Mar – 15 Apr 1967	Ceramics by Ruth Duckworth, Glass by Sam Herman	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
18 Apr – 9 May 1967	Younger Potters	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
12 May – 3 Jun 1967	Greek Textiles and Crafts Old and New	Primavera, Sloane Street, London
1 – 17 Jun 1967	Art Protis Wall-Hangings by Kveta Hamsikova, Prague	Primavera, Walton Street, London
20 Jun – 1 Jul 1967	Batiks by Heidi Grieder-Mascarin; Unika Glass by Floris Meijdam, Leerdam	Primavera, Walton Street, London
16 – 30 Jul 1967	Woodcarving	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
1 – 9 Dec 1967	Splendid Rugs designed and made by country folk from Cumberland; Paintings by Winifred Nicholson; Painted Stones from Ireland by Kevin O'Byrne	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
5 – 16 Dec 1967	Semi-Precious Stones, Minerals, and Jewelry	Primavera, Walton Street, London
8 – 14 Mar 1968	Takis Signals	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
27 Mar – 6 Apr 1968	Dressing Up	Primavera, Walton Street, London
18 May – 1 Jun 1968	Dressing Up	Primavera, Kings Parade, London
6 – 15 Jun 1968	Pottery by Alan Caiger-Smith and the Aldermaston Pottery	Primavera, Kings Parade, London

<i>Date</i>	<i>Exhibition</i>	<i>Place</i>
7 – 22 Jun 1968	Bernard Leach, Janet Leach, Lucie Rie (ceramics)	Primavera, Walton Street, London
4 – 12 Oct 1968	Ceramics from Germany	Primavera, Walton Street, London
19 – 30 Nov 1968	Landscape in Stoneware: Recent work by Ian Godfrey	Primavera, Walton Street, London
5 – 16 Dec 1968	Jewelry	Primavera, Walton Street, London
22 Oct – 5 Nov 1969	Contemporary Crafts from South America	Primavera, Walton Street, London
27 Oct – 3 Nov 196?	Fine Garments and Shawls by Francis Gooley	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
10 – 30 Dec 196?	Originals on a Budget	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
11 Feb – 4 Mar 1970	25 th Anniversary Exhibition	Primavera, Walton Street, London
Dec 1970	Circus: 25 th Christmas Exhibition	Primavera, Walton Street, London
Dec 1970	Circus: 25 th Christmas Exhibition	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
12 – 20 Jun 1971	Twenty British Potters	Kettle's Yard, Cambridge
11 Sep – 9 Oct 1971	British Potters	Kunstammer Ludger Koster, Monchengladbach, Germany
7 – 23 Jun 1972	More British Potters	Kettle's Yard, Cambridge
4 – 14 Nov 1972	Stoneware Pots with Flowers by George Rainer	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
13 – 30 May 1973	Leading German Craftsman	Kettle's Yard, Cambridge
29 Oct – 10 Nov 1973	Peter Simpson (ceramics)	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
9 – 26 Jun 1974	Potter's at Kettle's Yard	Kettle's Yard, Cambridge
1 – 14 Jun 1975	Ceramic Form	Kettle's Yard, Cambridge
26 Apr – 8 May 1976	Saltglaze by Ian Gregory	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
Jul 1976 – Jan 1977	Contemporary Pottery from Henry Rothschild's Collection	Bristol City Art Gallery, Bristol; Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle; Cartwright Hall, Bradford

Date	Exhibition	Place
25 Oct – 2 Nov 1976	Alan and Maria Gummerson: paintings, prints and hand-painted dresses	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
12 – 25 Jun 1977	Selected for Cambridge, Collected from India	Kettle's Yard, Cambridge
12 – 25 Jun 1977	Selected for Cambridge, Collected from India	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
19 Nov – 19 Dec 1977	10 English Potters	Galerie der Kunsthändler, Hamburg, Germany (and tour)
Dec 1977	Ceramics and Graphics of England	Galerie 66. Fachhochschule Kiel, Eckernförde, Germany
5 – 17 Jun 1978	Shape and Colour: Porcelain by Mary White, Paintings by Charles White	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
Jun 1978	10 English Potters	Kettle's Yard, Cambridge
10 – 22 Jul 1978	Blown Glass and Graphics	Primavera, Kings Parade, Cambridge
17 – 30 Jun 1979	Untitled ceramics exhibition	Kettle's Yard, Cambridge
18 Nov – 22 Dec 1979	Contemporary English Ceramics	Kulturgeschichtliches Museum, Osnabrück, Germany
Nov 1979	Christmas Market	Kunst und Gewebe Museum, Hamburg, Germany
25 May – 13 July 1980	English Ceramicists and Weavers	Emsland Museum, Schloss Clemenswerth, Soest, Germany

Appendix B: Objects in the Henry Rothschild Study Collection

Dan Arbeid (1928 – 2010)



Stoneware bowl, c.1968 [2002.22]
H: 12.8cm, Dia: 15.5cm

Bruno Asshoff (1914 – 2003)
and Ingeborg Asshoff (1919-1998)



Stoneware lidded pot, c.1960s [1995.160]
H: 13.8cm, Dia: 27.8cm

Gordon Baldwin (b.1932)



Stoneware dish, 1983 [R202]
H: 10cm, W: 60cm, d: 43cm

Oldřich Ašenbryl (b.1943)



Stoneware bowl, c.1970 [1994.648]
H: 21.5cm, Dia: 9.2cm

Ian Auld (1926 – 2000)



Stoneware bottle, c.1960s [2000.2889]
H: 20.2cm, W: 7.2cm, d:7.2cm



Stoneware bowl, c.1980s[1995.185]
H: 13cm, Dia: 37cm



Stoneware Form: Dyad, 1986 [1995.161]
H: 51cm, W:37.6cm, D: 21cm



Earthenware Form, 1987 [2002.35]
H: 53cm, W:47cm, D:10cm



Earthenware Form, 1989 [1995.162]
H:37cm, W:44cm



Earthenware Bowl, 1995 [2002.34]
H:21.5cm, Dia:32cm



Stoneware Form, 1998 [2001.466]
H:11cm, W:34cm, D:27.3cm

Richard Bampi (1896 – 1965)



Stoneware Bowl, c.1948 – 1965 [1995.125]
H:4.5cm, Dia: 10cm

Richard Batterham, (b.1936)



Stoneware Coffee Pot, c.1960s [2000.2873]
H:17cm, W:16.5cm, D:10cm



Stoneware Coffee Pot, c.1960s [2002.42]
H:17.5cm, W:16.5cm, D:10cm



Stoneware Bowl, 1984 [1993.10131]
H:20cm, Dia:34cm



Porcelain bowl, 1984 [2001.482]
H:7cm, Dia:29cm



Stoneware bowl, 1989 [2000.2890]
H:7.5cm, Dia:36cm



Stoneware pot, date unknown [2002.162]
H:35cm, W:27.5cm

Pierre Bayle (1945 – 2004)



Earthenware lidded jar, 1983 [2001.456]
H:52.7cm, Dia:17cm

Rita Beales (1889 – 1987)



Linen tablecloth, c.1950s [2006.4028]
H:120cm, W:120cm

Peter Beard (b.1951)



Stoneware plate, c.1980 [2000.2861]
H:3.4cm, Dia:31.6cm



Stoneware pot, c.1990s [1995.163]
H:14cm, Dia:13cm

Betty Blandino (1927 – 2011)



Stoneware pot, c.1994 [1998.285]
H:43cm, Dia:46cm

Charles Bound (b.1939)



Stoneware vase, date unknown [1997.3520]
H:23cm, Dia:15.5cm

Clive Bowen (c.1943)



Earthenware dish, c.1995 [1997.3519]
H:6.5cm, Dia:44cm

Charles Bray (1922 – 2012)



Glass form, 1989 [R213]
H:72cm, W:43cm, D:9.7cm

Alison Britton (b.1948)



Earthenware form, 2005 [2006.4237]
H:58cm, W:40cm, D:30.5cm

Sandy Brown (b.1946)



Stoneware plate, c.1980s [1997.3450]
H:3.8cm, Dia:26.6cm



Earthenware form, 1993 [1995.164]
H:27cm, Dia:25cm

Antje Bruggemann Breckwoldt (b.1941)



Stoneware form, 1972 [2002.17]
H:33cm, W:28cm, D:7cm



Stoneware vase, 1977 [1995.126]
H:28cm, W:18.3cm, D:11.5cm

Alan Caiger Smith (b.1930)



Earthenware bowl, c.1980s [2007.4211]
H:5.4cm, Dia:25.5cm

Michael Cardew (1901 – 1983)



Earthenware cider jar, 1938 [1996.1950]
H:51cm, Dia:29cm



Stoneware teapot, c.1950s [1996.1959]
H:10.8cm, W:15.5cm, D:12cm



Stoneware lidded jar, 1950 [1996.1951]
H:26.5cm, Dia:23cm



Stoneware bowl, 1950 [1996.1952]
H:5.4cm, Dia:24.7cm



Stoneware bowl, c.1954 [1993.10132]
H:13.5cm, Dia:31cm

Barbara Cass (1921 – 1992)



Stoneware bowl, c.1970 [1997.3444]
H:11cm, Dia:20cm



Stoneware bowl, c.1977 [1997.3514]
H:7.8cm, Dia:22.9cm

Michael Casson (1925 – 2003)



Stoneware dish, c.1975 [1997.3466]
H:8cm, Dia:47cm

Claude Champy (b.1944)



Stoneware form, 1994 [1996.1918]
H:18cm, W:62cm, D:10cm

Edouard Chapallaz (b.1921)



Stoneware vase, c.1980 [1998.292]
H:5.9cm, Dia:9cm



Stoneware vase, 1985 [1995.127]



Stoneware vase, 1985 [2002.4]
H:12.2cm, Dia:15.2cm

Dillon Clarke and Peter Layton (b.1946, b.1940)



Glass dish, c.1970 [1996.1919]
H:6cm, Dia:35cm

Peter Collingwood (1922 – 2008)



Linen macrogauze, c.1968 [R216]

Joanna Constantinidis (1927 – 2000)



Stoneware bottle, 1983 [1993.2032]
H:39cm, W:19.5cm, D:12.8cm



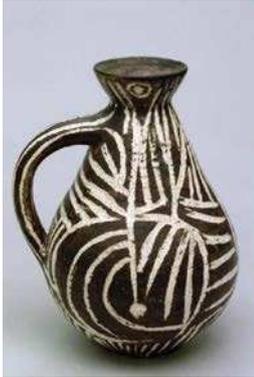
Stoneware bowl, c.1987 [1995.165]
H:14cm, Dia:27.4cm

Hans Coper and Lucie Rie (1920 – 1981, 1902 – 1995)



Stoneware cup and saucer, c.1950s [R209]
H:14.5cm, Dia:10cm

Hans Coper (1920 – 1981)



Stoneware jug, 1952 [2001.453]
H:24cm, W:22cm



Stoneware form, 1974 [1995.159]
H:24cm, W:13cm, D:4cm



Stoneware fom, 1974 [1996.1920]
H:26.8cm, W:9cm



Stoneware pot, 1975 [1995.156]
H:16.3cm, Dia:11cm



Stoneware vase, c.1975 [1996.1923]
H:22.9cm, W:18cm, D:8.9cm



Stoneware form, 1975 [2001.479]
H:30.9cm, W:6.2cm



Stoneware vase, 1975 [2001.500]
H:29.5cm, Dia:9cm

Andrew Crouch (b.1955)



Porcelain teapot, 2001 [2002.39]
H:15.5cm, Dia:14cm

Crowan Pottery (1946 – 1962)



Stoneware cup and saucer, c.1950s [1993.10111-4]
Set of four
H:7.5cm, Dia:13cm



Stoneware cup and saucer, c.1950s [1996.1890]



Stoneware plates, c.1950s [1997.3510]
Set of six
H:1.5cm, Dia:22.9cm



Stoneware mug, c.1950s [R249]
H:10cm, Dia:6cm



Stoneware mug, c.1950s [R250]
H:10cm, Dia:6cm

Antoni Cumella (1913 – 1985)



Stoneware vase, c.1960s [1995.129]
H:26.3cm, W:16.5cm, D:16.5cm

Derek Davis (1926 – 2008)



Stoneware vase, c.1972 [1997.3452]
H:14cm, W:14.5cm, D:7.5cm

Tjok Dessauvage (b.1948)



Stoneware bowl, 1972 [1995.184]
H:12.2cm, Dia:37cm



Stoneware pot, 1999 [2000.2862]
H:13cm, Dia:14.9cm

Albert Diato (1925 – 1985)



Earthenware bowl, c. 1950s [1995.131]
H:21.9cm, W:19cm, D:17cm



Earthenware bottle, c. 1950s [1996.1956]
H:17.8cm, W:10.2cm, D:8cm



Earthenware bowl, c. 1960s [1995.132]
H:9.6cm, Dia:23.6cm

Mike Dodd (c.1943)



Stoneware pot, c. 1970s [2000.2868]
H:20.2cm, Dia:18.5cm

Jack Doherty (b.1948)



Porcelain bowl, 2005 [2006.4235]
H:9cm, W:30cm, D:30cm

Ruth Duckworth (1909 – 2009)



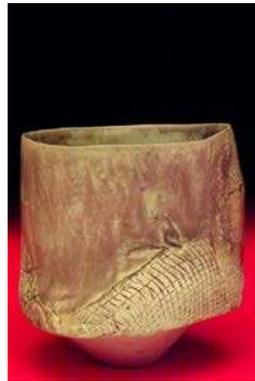
Porcelain vase, c.1950 [1995.166]
H:19.3cm, Dia:7.8cm



Stoneware form, c.1962 [1996.1953]
H :16cm, W :7cm, D : 3cm



Stoneware bowl, c.1970 [1998.256]
H:12.5cm, Dia:19cm



Porcelain vase, c.1970 [2001.495]
H :15cm, Dia :13cm



Porcelain form, 1975 [2000.2866]
H:10.5cm, W:11cm, D:7cm



Stoneware pot, c.1980s [2002.157]



Stoneware bowl, c.1985 [2000.2880]



Stoneware bowl, 1988 [1995.186]
H:9.5cm, Dia:8.8cm



Porcelain form, c.1990s [2001.475]
H:16.9cm, W:9.4cm, D:9cm

Kenneth Eastman (b.1960)



Porcelain pot, c.1980s/90s [1996.1954]
H:9cm, Dia:7.7cm



Stoneware form, 1989 [R206]
H:41cm, W:49cm, D:36cm

Alev Ebüziya Siesbye (b.1938)



Stoneware bowl, 1977 [2002.15]
H:16.5cm, Dia:27cm



Stoneware bowl, 1979 [2002.16]
H:10cm, Dia:38.5cm

Dante Elsner (1920 – 1997)



Stoneware tea bowl, c.1980s [2001.467]
H:10cm, Dia:9cm

Gutte Erikensen (1918 – 2008)



Stoneware bowl, 1955 [2001.471]
H:8cm, Dia:15cm

Antje Ernestus (b.1958)



Porcelain dish, 2005 [2006.4031]
H:6cm, Dia:23cm

Ray Finch (1914 – 2012)



Stoneware jug, c.1970s [R248]
H:21cm, W:14cm, Dia:11cm



Stoneware bowl, 1974 [1993.10134]
H:15cm, Dia:26.8cm



Stoneware dish, 1974 [2002.31]
H:15cm, Dia:26.5cm



Stoneware coffee pot, c.1975 [2002.151]
H:22cm, W:15cm, D:12cm



Stoneware plate, c.1975 [2002.153]
H:2.2cm, Dia:23.8cm

NO IMAGE

Stoneware plate, c.1975 [2002.154]
H:2.2cm, Dia:7.6cm



Stoneware cup and saucer, c.1975 [2002.155]



Stoneware cider jar, c.1978 [1993.10135]
H:44.5cm, W:22cm, D:22cm

Fred Foster (d.1968)



Walnut box, c.1930s [2000.2883]
H:7.7cm, W:11.4cm, D:7.7cm

Sheila Fournier (1930 – 2000)



Stoneware bowl, 1972 [1996.1883]
H:8.5cm, Dia:19cm



Porcelain bowl, 1974 [2002.24]
H:7.8cm, Dia:18.5cm

David Frith (b.1943)



Porcelain box, 1997 [1997.3508]
H:15cm, W:24cm, D:24cm

Guido Gambone (1909 – 1969)



Stoneware cup and saucer (set of three), c.1950s [2002.47-49]
H: 7cm, Dia:13cm

NO IMAGE

Earthenware plate, c.1950s [2002.50]
H :25cm, W :27.5cm, D :2cm

Christa Gebhardt (b.1937)



Porcelain form, 1985 [1995.133]
H:35cm, W:11.5cm, D:8cm

Johannes Gebhardt (b.1930)



Stoneware wall piece, 1973 [2002.32]
H:40cm, W:44.5cm, D:8cm



Stoneware vase, 1980 [1995.134]
H:16cm, Dia:10.5cm

Ian Godfrey (1942 – 1992)



Stoneware bowl, 1964 [1997.3443]
H:7.3cm, Dia:8.8cm



Stoneware bowl, 1971 [2001.489]
H:13.5cm, W:26cm



Stoneware lidded pot, c.1978 [1993.2034]
H:16.7cm, Dia:14cm

Hubert Griemert (1905 – 1990)



Stoneware vase, c.1960s [2002.20]
H:16cm, Dia:12.7cm

Haguiko (c.1948)



Stoneware form, 1997 [2001.491]
H:33.5cm, W:30.5cm, D:4.3cm

Shoji Hamada (1894 – 1978)



Stoneware bottle, c.1954 [2001.472]
H:20.7cm, W:15.6cm, D:13.7cm



Stoneware Jug, c.1965 [1993.10136]
H:24.4cm, W:14cm, D:14cm

Jane Hamlyn (b.1940)



Stoneware Colander, c.1984 [1996.1885]
H:7cm, Dia:18.6cm

Henry Hammond (1914 – 1989)



Stoneware bottle, 1959 [2002.37]
H:32cm, Dia:14cm



Stoneware bowl, c.1970s [1993.10137]
H:7.5cm, Dia:12.5cm

Gwyn Hanssen (1935 – 2013)



Stoneware bowl, c.1959 [1996.1924]
H:11cm, Dia:36cm



Stoneware dish, c.1990s [1996.1955]
H:11cm, Dia:35.6cm

Louis Hanssen (1934 – 1968)



Stoneware vase, c.1960s [1997.3518]
H:22cm, Dia:16cm

Toni Heinrich



Earthenware Form, 1973 [2001.490]
H:16cm, W:23.5cm, D:17cm

Ewen Henderson (1934 – 2000)



Stoneware, porcelain and bone china vase, 1984 [1995.170]
H:46cm, W:26cm



Stoneware dish, 1984 [1996.1925]
H:12cm, Dia:49cm



Stoneware vase, 1984 [2000.2879]
H:39cm, Dia:34cm

Nicholas Homoky (b.1950)



Stoneware, porcelain and bone china form, c.1988
[2000.2888]
H:49cm, W:51cm, D:22cm



Stoneware vase, c.1980s [1996.1880]
H:9.5cm, W:11.2cm, D:7cm



Porcelain vase, 1985 [1994.644]
H:16cm, W:10cm, D:5.5cm



Porcelain vase, c.1985 [2001.463]
H:11.5cm, W:14.5cm, D:5.2cm

Deborah Hopson Wolpe



Stoneware plate, 1986 [1997.3459]
H:4.4cm, Dia:29.6cm

Willi Hornberger (1932 – 1995)



Stoneware bottle, 1973 [1995.135]
H:14.3cm, Dia:6.5cm



Stoneware vase, 1973 [2001.459]
H:7.6cm, Dia:9cm



Stoneware vase, 1973 [2001.461]
H:11.4cm, W:7.7cm, D:7.4cm

Agnete Hoy (1914 – 2000)



Stoneware bowl, 1954 [1993.10138]
H:15.5cm, Dia:32.3cm

Donald Jones



Stoneware lidded jar, 1971 [1993.10139]
H:27cm, W:23cm, D:23cm

Gabriele Koch (b.1948)



Earthenware pot, c.2000 [2000.2863]
H:34cm, W:17cm, D:17cm



Earthenware vase, 2004 [2006.8315]
H:48cm, W:25cm, D:25cm

Beate Kuhn (b.1927)



Stoneware Maquette, 1965 [1997.3445]
H:9.5cm, W:7.7cm, D:7cm



Stoneware form, 1970 [2001.455]
H:46cm, Dia:10.3cm



Porcelain form, c.1976 [1995.137]
H:14.2cm, W:32.8cm, D:23.2cm

Bernard Leach (1887 – 1979)



Stoneware form, 1979 [1996.1927]
H:41cm, Dia:30cm



Porcelain kogo, c.1960s [1993.10141]
H:6.5cm, W:5cm, D:5cm



Stoneware cup, c.1960s [1994.650]
H:12.5cm, Dia:10cm



Stoneware pot, 1963 [1993.10140]
H:25cm, W:20.5cm, D:20.5cm



Stoneware caddy, c.1965 [1996.1960]
H:16cm, W:10.2cm, D:9.9cm



Stoneware jug, 1966 [2002.19]
H:30.5cm, Dia:16cm



Stoneware dish, c.1966 [2001.468]
H:7.2cm, Dia:36.5cm



Stoneware tile, c.1967 [2002.21]
H:22.5cm, W:22.5cm, D:2cm



Porcelain pot, 1972 [2001.473]
H:20cm, W:15,5cm, D:15,5cm



Stoneware bottle, 1973 [1997.3458]
H:33.7cm, W:27cm, D:10.2cm

David Leach (1911 – 2005)



Porcelain jar, 20th century [2002.7]
H:11.5cm, Dia:7.5cm



Stoneware pot, 20th century [2006.8313]
H:18cm, Dia:15cm

Janet Leach (1918 – 1997)



Porcelain vase, c.1960 [1998.258]
H:18cm, W:15cm, D:12.5cm



Stoneware dish, 1968 [2002.14]
H:5.9cm, W:25.1cm, D:24.7cm



Stoneware vase, 1969 [2001.457]
H:13.2cm, Dia:18cm



Stoneware lidded pot, c.1970s [1993.2033]
H:17.7cm, W:18.2cm, D:18.2cm



Stoneware bottle, 1972 [1997.3517]
H:15cm, W:9.2cm, D:9.2cm



Stoneware vase, 1976 [1993.10143]
H:27cm, Dia:14.5cm



Stoneware bottle, c.1982 [2002.18]
H:25.3cm, Dia:18cm

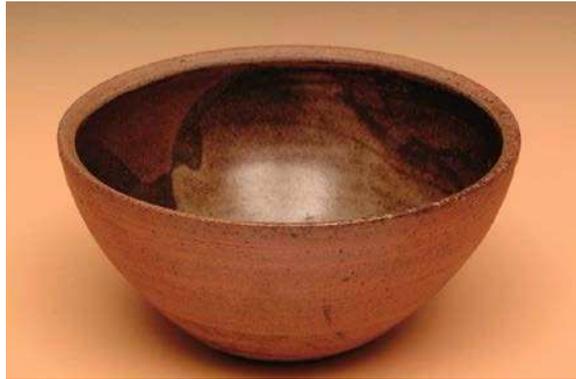
Jeremy Leach (b.1941)



Stoneware lidded pot, c.1970s [1995.124]
H:12cm, Dia:11cm

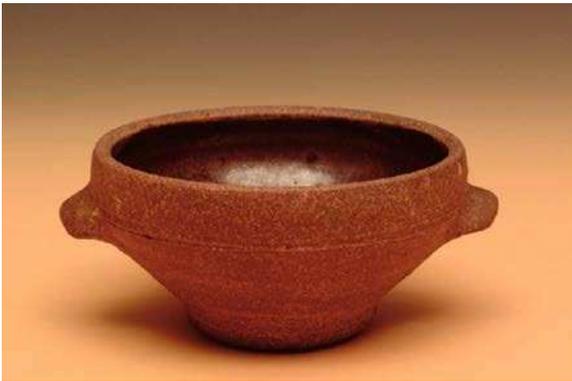
Leach Pottery (1920 – present)

NO IMAGE



Stoneware bowl, c.1950s [2002.43]
H:7.5cm, Dia:15cm

Stoneware sauceboat, c.1950s [1997.3512]
H:8.5cm, W:16cm, D:11cm



Stoneware bowl, c.1950s [2002.44]
H:6.5cm, Dia:14cm



Stoneware egg cup, c.1950s [2002.45]
H:3.5cm, Dia:4.7cm



Stoneware vase, c.1960s [1997.3515]
H:10cm, Dia:10.5cm



Stoneware sauceboat, c.1970s [2002.158]
H:9cm, Dia:16cm



Stoneware bowl, 1976 [1996.1961]
H:8cm, Dia:9.7cm



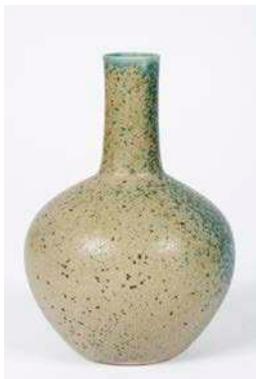
Stoneware bottle, 20th century [1996.1957]
H:26cm, W:14.5cm, D:14.5cm

Klaus Lehmann (b.1927)



Stoneware wall piece, 1972 [2001.465]
H:37cm, W:36cm, D:5cm

Eileen Lewenstien (1925 – 2005)



Porcelain bottle, c.1980s [1995.171]
H:17cm, Dia:12cm



Stoneware plate, c.1980s [1997.3461]
H:3.8cm, W:34cm

Liz Lowe



Glass bowl, 1987 [2002.26]
H:65.cm, Dia:13.5cm

Gillian Lowndes (1936 – 2010)



Stoneware bowl, 1965 [2002.38]
H:9cm, Dia:39cm



Stoneware form, c.1970s [2000.2878]
H:11.5cm, W:21cm, D:21cm



Mixed media Form – *The puff adder cannot fly but still it catches the hornbill*, c.1980s [1995.172]
H:28cm, W:25cm, D:54cm



Mixed media Form – *The puff adder cannot fly but still it catches the hornbill*, 1986 [2001.486]
H:47cm, W:66cm, D:15cm



Mixed media form, 1997 [1996.1921]
H:80cm, W:20cm, D:11cm



Mixed media form, 1997 [2001.499]
H:12cm, Dia:31cm



Mixed media form, 20th century [1997.3457]
H:7.8cm, W:25cm, D:2.5cm

Ethel Mairet (1872 – 1952)



Cotton, cellophane and linen textile, c.1940s [1998.261]
H:104cm, W:53.5cm

Mal Magson



Stoneware pot, 1983 [2000.2867]
H:10.5cm, Dia:12cm

Jim Malone (b.1946)



Stoneware bowl, c.1980s [1995.121]
H:10.5cm, Dia:18.4cm

John Maltby (b.1936)



Stoneware form, c.1990s [2001.485]
H:30.5cm, W:16cm, D:6cm

William Marshall (1923 – 2007)



Stoneware bowl, c.1955 [2001.452]
H:8.5cm, Dia:38cm

Jean Mayer (b.1924)



Stoneware bowl, 1971 [2001.481]
H:4.8cm, Dia:27cm



Porcelain vase, 1988 [1996.1929]
H:9.3cm, Dia:15.5cm



Porcelain vase, 1994 [2002.11]
H:17.6cm, W:21.5cm, D:6cm

Judith Mayer (c.1927)



Stoneware pot, 1963 [2001.298]
H:24cm, Dia:30cm

Carol McNicoll (b.1943)



Porcelain jug, 2004 [2006.4030]
H:5cm, W:8cm, D:5cm

Otto Meier (1903 – 1996)



Stoneware vase, 1978 [2001.474]
H:12.5cm, W:12cm, D:11.3cm

Maureen Minchen

Eric Mellon (1925 – 2014)



Stoneware plate, 1974 [1997.3441]
H:6.8cm, Dia:35.6cm

Ursula Mommens (1908 – 2010)



Earthenware pot, 1992 [1995.174]
H:34cm, Dia:17cm

Ursula Morley Price (b.1936)



Porcelain Form, 1977 [1995.175]
H:13cm, W:11cm, D:11cm



Stoneware vase, c.1990s [1996.1886]
H:14.5cm, Dia:7.8cm



Stoneware bowl, 20th century [1998.291]
H:13cm, Dia:25cm

David Mumby (b.1957)



Stoneware form, c.1985 [1995.176]
H:28cm, W:3cm, D:2.5cm

Lisbeth Munch Petersen (1909 – 1997)



Earthenware vase, c.1945-50 [1995.143]
H:11.4cm, W:8.5cm, D:7cm



Earthenware vase, c.1950 [1997.3446]
H:17cm, Dia:9.4cm

Alexandre Noll (1890 – 1970)



Wood dish, c.1950s [2000.2884]
H:4.6cm, W:29.5cm, D:19.9cm

Elspeth Owen (b.1938)



Earthenware pot, 1985 [1995.177]
H:10cm, Dia:11cm



Porcelain pot, 1986 [1998.288]
H:8.8cm, Dia:10.6cm

Jim Partridge (b.1953)



Oak form, c.1990s [2000.2882]
H:24cm, W:24cm, D:13cm



Oak form, c.2000 [2006.4029]
H:31cm, W:104cm, D:15cm

Colin Pearson (1923 – 2007)



Porcelain vase, 1974 [2001.476]
H:32.4cm, W:24.5cm, D:8.5cm



Stoneware vase, c.1970s/80s [1996.1916]
H:28cm, W:26cm, D:9cm



Stoneware pot, 1977 [2002.36]
H:31cm, D:44cm, D:17.2cm

Malcolm Pepper (1937 – 1980)



Porcelain cup, c.1980s [1998.289]
H:13.5cm, Dia:8.5cm



Stoneware dish, c.1970s [1996.1889]
H:6cm, Dia:35.1cm

Jane Perryman (b.1947)



Stoneware bowl, c.1988 [R207]
H:16.5cm, Dia:25cm



Earthenware bowl, c.1990 [1995.187]
H:15cm, Dia:20cm

Francine del Pierre (1917 – 1968)



Earthenware vase, c.1950s [1995.130]
H:15cm, Dia:24.2cm



Earthenware vase, 1953 [2001.493]
H:19cm, W:12.5cm, D:12.5cm

Henry Pim (b.1947)



Stoneware form, c.1980s [2000.2865]
H:28.3cm, W:55cm, D:14cm

Helen Pincombe (1908 – 2005)



Stoneware vase, c.1960 [1993.10145]
H:9.4cm, Dia:12.2cm



Stoneware bowl, c.1960 [1996.1964]
H:7.7cm, Dia:11cm



Stoneware vase, c.1960 [1996.1965]
H:10.3cm, Dia:12.4cm



Stoneware bowl, c.1960s [2002.41]
H:7.4cm, Dia:13.4cm



Stoneware bowl, c.1960 [1997.3516]
H:7.3cm, Dia:9.8cm

Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie (1895 – 1985)



Stoneware bowl, c.1930s [1993.10147]
H:13cm, Dia:18cm



Stoneware bowl, 1953 [2000.2870]
H:10.3cm, Dia:24cm



Stoneware bowl, c.1960-5 [2002.23]
H:12.4cm, Dia:19.5cm



Stoneware pot, c.1966 [1996.1962]
H:22cm, Dia:22.5cm



Stoneware bottle, 1974 [1997.3448]
H:16.5cm, Dia:17cm



Stoneware pot, 1975 [1997.3463]
H:5cm, Dia:9cm

NO IMAGE

Stoneware exhibition numbers, 20th century [2000.2872]
H:1cm, W:2cm, D:2.5cm

Jacqueline Poncelet (b.1947)

Veronika Pöschl



Porcelain bowl, c.1974 [2007.4216]
H:5cm, Dia:10cm

David Pye (1914 – 1993)



Porcelain bowl, c.1980s [1995.144]
H:9.7cm, Dia:17cm



Ebony box, c.1970s [1995.123]
H:2.3cm, Dia:4cm



Yew Bowl, c.1970s [2000.2885]
H:9.5cm, W:32.8cm, D:23.6cm

Kenneth Quick (1931 – 1963)



Stoneware bowl [2002.3]
H:9.3cm, Dia:12.5cm

Sara Radstone (b.1955)



Stoneware vase, c.1980s [2006.8314]
H:33.4cm, W:33cm, D:30cm

Peder Rasmussen (b.1926)



Stoneware pot, 1959 [2001.454]
H:13.5cm, W:25cm, D:22cm



Stoneware form, 2000 [2006.4032]
H:20cm, W:5cm, D:2cm

Colin Reid (b.1953)

NO IMAGE

Glass and slate form, 2004 [2006.4236]
W:38cm

Lotte Reimers (b.1932)



Stoneware bottle, 1973 [2001.464]
H:19cm, W:7.8cm, D:5.5cm

Andrew Richards



Stoneware dish, 1988 [1995.155]
H:6.7cm, Dia:23.8cm

Lucie Rie (1902 – 1995)



Stoneware jug, 1950 [R204]
H:7cm, Dia:6.3cm



Stoneware pepper pot, 1950 [R205]
H:7cm, Dia:5cm



Stoneware bowl, c.1950s [1996.1949]
H:6.5cm, Dia:10cm



Stoneware bowl, c.1957 [2002.27]
H:23cm, Dia:30cm



Porcelain bowl, c.1959 [2001.494]
H:15.2cm, Dia:14.5cm



Stoneware vase, c.1960 [1997.3453]
H:23.5cm, Dia:12cm



Porcelain bowl, c.1960s [1993.10149]
H:11.4cm, Dia:18.4cm



Stoneware bowl, 1962 [2002.30]
H:8cm, Dia:17.5cm



Stoneware vase, c.1964 [2001.483]
H:36.6cm, Dia:14.2cm



Stoneware bowl, 1967 [2001.469]
H:9cm, Dia:38cm



Porcelain bowl, c.1975 [1995.157]
H:7.5cm, Dia:22cm



Porcelain vase, c.1970s [1993.10148]
H:28.2cm, Dia:16cm



Stoneware bowl, 1977 [2001.492]
H:8.5cm, Dia:15.8cm



Porcelain bowl, 1977 [2002.29]
H:12cm, Dia:28cm



Stoneware bowl, c.1980 [1997.3454]
H:12cm, Dia:27.5cm

Mary Rogers (b.1929)



Porcelain bowl, 1984 [1997.3449]
H:12.5cm, Dia:19cm

Inger Rokkjaer (b.1934)



Porcelain bowl, 1974 [2001.458]
H:6.1cm, Dia:10cm



Stoneware lidded jar, 2004 [2006.4033]
H:22cm, Dia:7.5cm

Victoria Rothschild



Glass vase, 1998 [2000.2886]
H:39.5cm, Dia:8.5cm

Karl Scheid (b.1929)



Porcelain vase, 1973 [1997.3513]
H:11.2cm, Dia:12cm



Stoneware bowl, 1973 [2002.9]
H:9.8cm, W:15cm, D:12.2cm



Porcelain bowl, 1976 [1996.1881]
H:7cm, Dia:8.8cm



Porcelain bowl, 1983 [2001.462]
H:7.5cm, Dia:10.2cm

Ursula Scheid (b.1932)



Stoneware pot, c.1960s [2000.2876]
H:21cm, Dia:31cm



Porcelain bowl, 1967 [2001.484]
H:5.2cm, Dia:12cm



Porcelain vase, 1971 [1996.1926]
H:10.5cm, Dia:15.5cm



Porcelain bottle, 1971 [2002.10]
H:15cm, Dia:9cm



Porcelain bottle, 1972 [1995.146]
H:9cm, Dia:9.3cm



Porcelain bowl, 1972 [1997.3460]
H:8.7cm, Dia:5cm



Porcelain vase, 1975 [1996.1928]
H:7.8cm, Dia:8.2cm



Porcelain vase, 1980 [1995.147]
H:5.8cm, Dia:7.3cm

Margarette Schott



Stoneware, 1973 [1997.3451]
H:13.9cm, Dia:12cm

Peter Simpson (b.1943)



Porcelain form, 1974 [2002.159]
H:16cm, W:18cm, D:19.5cm

Alan Spencer Green (1923 – 2003)



Porcelain bowl, c.1970 [2002.6]
H:7cm, Dia:13.4cm

Mike Scott (b.1943)



Walnut form, 1994 [2000.2881]
H:23cm, Dia:30cm

Sam (Alan) Smith (1908 – 1983)



Wooden automata, c.1980s [1996.1922]
H:13cm, W:12cm

Julian Stair (b.1955)



Stoneware caddy, 1997 [1998.255]
H:9.5cm, W:20cm, D:7cm

William Staite Murray (1881 – 1962)



Stoneware bowl, c.1930 [1996.1963]
H:12.3cm, Dia:19.8cm



Stoneware bowl, c.1930s [1997.3447]
H:8cm, Dia:23cm

Gary Standige (b.1946)



Stoneware dish, c.1980s [1995.122]
H:6.4cm, Dia:31.2cm



Porcelain lidded pot, c.1995 [2001.496]
H:7.5cm, Dia:10cm

Barbara Stehr



Stoneware plate, c.1980 [1995.148]
H:6.7cm, Dia:38.5cm

Maria Stewart



Stoneware plate, c.1982 [1995.149]
H:8.8cm, Dia:44.2cm

Ursula Stroh Rubens (b.1938)



Porcelain vase, 1984 [1997.3464]
H:9.5cm, Dia:8.5cm

Angus Suttie (1946 – 1993)



Stoneware bowl, 1990 [S1151]
H:19cm, Dia:25cm



Stoneware form, c.1980s [2000.2858]
H:39.5cm, W:31cm, D:13cm



Stoneware form, c.1990 [1995.179]
H:36cm, W:47cm, D:23cm



Stoneware form, c.1992 [2002.5]
H:51cm, W:47cm, D:23cm

Sutton Taylor (b.1943)



Earthenware bowl, c.1980 [1997.3442]
H:16cm, Dia:37cm



Earthenware plate, 1993 [2002.1]
H:6.5cm, Dia:44cm

James Tower (1919 – 1988)



Earthenware bowl, 1956 [R203]
H:10.6cm, Dia:33.6cm

Johan van Loon (b.1934)



Stoneware vase, 1983 [2000.2859]
H:25cm, W:19cm, D:18cm



Stoneware bowl, 1984 [1995.150]
H:21.5cm, Dia:35cm

Angela Verdon (b.1949)



Bone china bowl, 1979 [1995.180]
H:9.5cm, W:10.5cm, D:7cm

Tina Vlassopoulos (b.1954)



Earthenware bowl, c.1980 [R208]
H:17cm, Dia:26cm

Charles Vyse (1882 – 1971)



Stoneware bowl, c.1920s [1998.259]
H:5.5cm, Dia:17.7cm



Stoneware bowl, 1930 [1993.10150]
H:7.8cm, Dia:24cm

Edmund de Waal (b.1964)



Porcelain bottle, 1997 [1998.290]
H:13.9cm, Dia:9.9cm

John Ward (b.1938)



Stoneware bowl, c.1980s [1995.181]
H:19cm, Dia:23cm



Stoneware bowl, c.1980s [2000.2869]
H:12cm, Dia:31cm



Stoneware bowl, 1982 [1998.260]
H:20.7cm, W:24cm, D:21.6cm



Stoneware bowl, c.1983 [2002.8]
H:11.5cm, W:10cm, D:15cm

Gerald Weigel (b.1925)



Stoneware vase, c.1969 [1996.1882]
H:8.8cm, Dia:9.5cm



Stoneware pot, 1973 [1995.151]
H:12.7cm, Dia:11.3cm



Stoneware pot, 1973 [1997.3462]
H:10cm, Dia:13.5cm

Gotlind Weigel (b.1932)



Stoneware vase, 1975 [2001.478]
H:12.2cm, W:10.5cm, D:9.6cm



Stoneware pot, 1973 [1995.152]
H:21cm, W:16cm, D:16cm

Jennifer Welch (b.1940)



Porcelain bowl, c.1975 [1996.1887]
H:9.7cm, Dia:9.2cm

Robin Welch (b.1946)



Porcelain bowl, 1975 [2002.28]
H:9.5cm, Dia:10.8cm



Stoneware pot, 1959 [1994.647]
H:70cm, Dia:25.5cm



Stoneware plate, 1975 [2001.470]
H:8.1cm, Dia:41.2cm



Stoneware bowl, c.1980s [1996.1884]
H:11.5cm, Dia:15cm



Stoneware plate, 1988 [1995.182]
H:6.5cm, Dia:39cm



Stoneware dish, 1990 [1994.607]
H:9cm, Dia:56cm



Stoneware pot, 1990 [1995.183]
H:26.5cm, Dia:33cm

NO IMAGE

Stoneware vase, 1990 [2002.2]
H:25cm, W:14cm, D:9cm



Stoneware vase, 1993 [1996.1879]
H:35cm, W:14.5cm, D:7.9cm



Stoneware bowl, 20th century [2000.2877]
H:27cm, Dia:37.5cm

Mary White (1926 – 2013)



Porcelain bowl, 1980 [2002.25]
H:6.4cm, Dia:25cm

Takeshi Yashuda (b.1943)

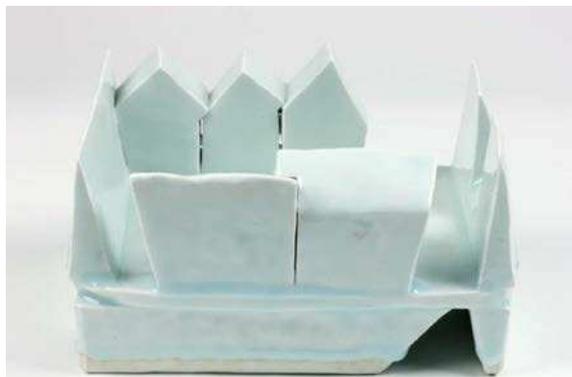


Stoneware tea bowl, c.1980s [1994.649]
H:9.7cm, Dia:9cm



Stoneware form, 1972 [1997.3465]
H:23cm, W:24.3cm, D:13.4cm

Msamichi Yoshikawa (b.1946)



Porcelain kayho (form), 1998 [1998.287]
H:13.5cm, W:25cm, D:14.5cm

Walther and Karin Zander (1941 – 2007, ? – 2008)



Stoneware bowl, 1977 [1995.153]
H:10cm, Dia:36.5cm

Unknown Makers



Earthenware bowl, c.1930s [1996.1948]
Korea
H:10.5cm, Dia:22.6cm

NO IMAGE

Stoneware bowl, 1970 [2001.13]
H:5cm, Dia:17.2cm



Stoneware jug, c.1950s [1996.1958]
Nigeria
H:20cm, W:13cm, D:13cm



Stoneware vase, 1994 [1996.1917]
H:42.5cm, W:30cm, D:21cm



Stoneware bowl, 20th century [1996.1888]
England
H:5.7cm, Dia:22.2cm



Oak coppice basket, 20th century [1996.1930]
England
H:40cm, W:37cm



Earthenware bowl, 20th century [1998.286]
Africa
H:8.5cm, Dia:20cm



Earthenware form, 20th century [2000.2871]
Peru
H:15.4cm, W:22cm, D:8cm



Earthenware bowl, 20th century [2001.480]
Japan
H:5.5cm, Dia:21cm



Stoneware lidded jar, 20th century [2002.33]
Japan
H:33.5cm, Dia:25.5cm



Earthenware berber pot, 20th century [2002.40]
North Africa



Earthenware coffee pot, 20th century [2002.46]
Denmark
H:18cm, Dia:10cm

Appendix C: Breakdown of Collection

Table 1: Nationality

N.B: Excludes unknown makers

Nationality	Number	%
British	85	61%
German	21	15%
French	5	24%
Japanese	4	
Danish	3	
Dutch	2	
American	2	
Australian	2	
Austrian	2	
Belgian	2	
Hungarian	2	
Brazilian	1	
Canadian	1	
Czech	1	
Italian	1	
New Zealander	1	
Polish	1	
Spanish	1	
Swiss	1	
Turkish	1	

Table 2: Gender

N.B: Excludes unknown makers

Gender	Number of makers	%	Number of Pieces	%
Male	82	56%	169	51%
Female	57	39%	132	40%
Collaborative	7	5%	32	9%

Table 3: Makers with Five or More Objects in Collection

Maker	Number of objects	Nationality	Gender
Lucie Rie	16	Austrian	Female
Unknown Maker	12	---	---
Ruth Duckworth	10	German	Female
Robin Welch	9	British	Male
Bernard Leach	9	British	Male
Ray Finch	8	British	Male
Hans Coper	8	German	Male
Ursula Scheid	8	German	Female
Crowan Pottery	8	---	---
Leach Pottery	8	---	---
Janet Leach	7	American	Female
Gordon Baldwin	7	British	Male
Gillian Lowndes	7	British	Female
Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie	7	British	Female
Richard Batterham	6	British	Male
Michael Cardew	5	British	Male
Helen Pincombe	5	British	Female

Table 4: Decade of Production

Decade	Number of Objects	%
Pre-1940s	8	2%
1940s	2	1%
1950s	47	14%
1960s	43	13%
1970s	94	28%
1980s	75	23%
1990s	53	16%
2000s	11	3%

Appendix D: Interviews

Fiona Adamczewski

Born in South Africa in 1930, Fiona Adamczewski came to Britain initially in 1952, before settling permanently in 1961. She worked in the Craftsmen Potters Shop, before working for Henry Rothschild at Primavera Walton Street, from 1967 to 1970. She has published reviews and editorials in *Crafts*, and published a monograph *Designer Textiles – Stitching for Interiors*, in 1987.

Interview conducted by telephone, 21 January 2013:

*Early life in South Africa ** Politics in South Africa ** Coming to the UK, 1961 ** London in the early 1960s ** Primavera Sloane Street ** Meeting Henry Rothschild for the first time ** Working at the Craftsman Potter's Shop ** Going to work for Henry Rothschild in 1967 ** Primavera Walton Street ** Working with David Jewell ** Stock at Primavera ** Folk art at Primavera ** Exhibitions at Primavera ** London in the 1960s ** Primavera customers ** Retail and exhibition at Primavera ** Henry Rothschild's character ** Pauline Rothschild ** Importance of Henry Rothschild and Primavera ** Being an émigré ** Craft and art ** Post Walton Street ***

JB: So to begin, if you could just let me know where and when you were born?

FA: I was born in South Africa on the 30th of December 1930 in a place called King William's Town which you will never have heard of.

JB: No, I can't say I have.

FA: Which was a dusty little outpost of British Empire where my father happened to have wound up being a doctor and a surgeon, Irish father. So one parent was Irish and my mother was South African.

JB: And when did you come to the UK?

FA: I came, well the very first time I came was when I'd finished university in 1952 and I was here for approximately a year and then I went back because I was very radicalised, concerned about the political situation there, and got into trouble and eventually left finally, when Mandela went to prison because I was pro-Mandela and anti-apartheid and I came away in '61 forever.

JB: I see.

FA: So that is that background.

JB: So when you came to the UK to settle what were you doing at that time?

FA: Well it was more a question of what my husband was doing because by that time I was married. Our original intention was to go to Ireland where my father had come from but my husband, on his – I went ahead because I was pregnant with my third baby and I went to Ireland and tried to find us a home in Ireland. Things were a bit rough for us because we had no money and for obvious reasons we were, he wasn't but I was, a political émigré, as it were. But he took a job in London. On his way to join me he

stopped off in London and had interviews. He was involved in computer research and technology in the early days of computers, and he was offered a job in London and he took it so when he arrived in Ireland I was just about to have the baby and 6 days after the baby was born I was in London, living in what I suppose today we'd call a squat, with my 3 babies and he was working and I had to deal with that situation for some while. I then by the time I got back to work, which was when Henry comes in to the picture, it was a few years down the line, probably about 3 or 4 years down, once the little children were at nursery school and what not. But I had encountered Primavera when I lived in London the first time.

JB: Okay, I see.

FA: If you want to know about that.

JB: Yes that would be interesting. So this was...

FA: That was in its very early days. It was in Sloane Street then and I was an ex-art student, I have a degree in design and history of art, and I was very interested in all that side of life so I discovered Primavera in Sloane Street and I didn't have very much money but I bought the odd little pot, like a Bernard Leach egg baking pot, something of that nature, costing very little. But I was very impressed with the place itself and I remembered it, of course. And when I was back in Africa I met a person who became a very close friend, a woman called K— A—, she was an Afrikaans girl, and she had had an affair with Henry Rothschild.

JB: Oh I see.

FA: When she was young, obviously, we were all young, and before he was married, and she'd been over in Europe after the war when a lot of people volunteered to help rebuild roads in Europe and things like that and she met him then and so when I was coming back to London, well I didn't know I was going to be in London, but I knew I was coming back to Europe and she said, well if you find yourself in London you must go and introduce yourself to Henry Rothschild, and she told me the whole story of her involvement with him and so in due course when I found myself living in London in 1961, well it probably wasn't until about '62 that I went around to Primavera which was still in Sloane Street then and I walked in and said — somebody came forward and said, can I help you, and I said, could I speak to Henry Rothschild please? and they looked amazed and said, have you got an appointment? and I said, no I haven't but I think if you tell him I've got a message for him from somebody called K— A— he'll probably see me, and the next thing there was this sort of explosion from upstairs and he rushed downstairs and jerked open the curtain and danced into the gallery where I was and said in a loud voice, who is this person whose got a message from K— A—? and that was how we met, which was quite amusing. And he took me upstairs to have a coffee and we talked a lot and of course what we immediately had in common was our political stuff. He'd lost his country as I had lost mine through that kind of fascist thing and there we were, so that was how we met.

JB: And so when you started working there that was a few years after that?

- FA: No that was later. Yes once I needed to go back to work, we both needed to work to support ourselves, I got a job at a place called the Craftsman Potter's Shop which doesn't exist any longer but did in those days and I'm sure you can find out all about that if you don't already know.
- JB: I know where it is, yeah.
- FA: Just behind Liberty's in William Blake House. And I went along there and, well I wrote a letter to the man who ran it, who owned it, and asked if there was any work and he invited me to come and meet him and the same sort of thing was the sympathy level was that one had political interests in common and he didn't have a job to offer me but after a short while one of the girls who worked there was having a baby and he wrote and said, would you like a job? And so that was the first job I had in England that time and Henry walked in one day when I was there and said, why are you working for these people? That was his sort of manner, and I said, for the simple reason that I have to have a job, and he said, well why don't you come and work for me instead, and that was it. I then left them and went to work for Henry. And that was the stage at which Primavera was in Walton Street, no longer in Sloane Street.
- JB: So that would have been 1967, is that right?
- FA: I can't remember the date exactly. I think it was a bit earlier than that. Wait a moment, let me just think. No, you're probably right; it probably was about '67.
- JB: Yeah.
- FA: Yes. It that would have been about that. And I was there until it closed. We had to close – well you probably know the reasons. I don't know, do you?
- JB: I've heard different versions of events. I know Henry decided to focus on the Cambridge premises.
- FA: Well the reason for that was the lease of the property in Walton Street, money was the problem, they wanted a great deal more and there were just two of us working for him in the gallery at that time and David Jewell was the manager and I was his assistant and Henry put the case to us that if we were to go on we would have had to be very much more commercial than we were. We were rather selective. We had a really lovely gallery and he said, if he were to continue with it he'd have to go much more commercial what would we feel, and it had existed then for about 25 years if my memory serves me, and we both said, no, no don't do that because you've got the Cambridge operation going which was a different thing altogether and why spoil the reputation of something so fine, let it die with its reputation intact. And of course we were both out of work then and that was the end of it. In fact I was the person who locked the door for the last time on that place. Sad, but it had a tremendous life.
- JB: Yes. Could you tell me a little bit about the Walton Street premises, how it was set up?

FA: Yes it was one main gallery on street level and downstairs there was a stock room, quite a big one, and a packing facility and upstairs there were offices where Henry... when he was in London, because he was by then living in Cambridge and mostly up there, but the bookkeeper and people like that worked upstairs and he had an office up there. I hope this is accurate but you know I am 82 and it's a long time ago, but I have a pretty clear memory of that time.

JB: Yes.

FA: But it was really the street level was just one main area and we displayed that and we had exhibitions there and we carried on just the same as they had done in Sloane Street only on a slightly smaller scale. Because they also did wholesale, quite a lot of importing of things from places like Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia and we had to manage the reception of things like that and then they despatched to the various shops all over Britain who bought from him.

JB: So what sort of product was that?

FA: Well odd things like corn dollies and bits and rather, what would you call it, folk art. He was very interested always in that and he had a very good eye so I think he was unique in one respect, or in several respects, but he was certainly as far as I'm aware the first person in London who combined industrially made artefacts with craftsmen made artefacts, very successfully. And he also did, for the colleges and so forth, he undertook decorating schemes and so forth so they even manufactured blankets which were under his label, as it were, to go to the colleges in Oxford and Cambridge, places like that. In fact we had quite a lot to do as you must have gathered, although there were only two of us. And he wasn't very much there; he left it to us to run the place. I think what he was quite good at was finding people, you know, people who would serve him. And I don't mean that sarcastically, I mean they'd understand what he wanted, what his aim was, what his vision was and carry it out and he had some very interesting people over the years working for him one way and another.

[...]

JB: What was the other stock that was in the Walton Street premises? What was the main trade?

FA: Ceramics, glass. Henry was pretty much the first person to discover all kinds of people and show their work. People like Lucie Rie, Hans Coper, very very fine potters. He also I think was the first person, if my memory serves me, to have an exhibition of studio glass. People like Sam Herman. He was very interested in pots. Well you know that because he's given his whole collection, hasn't he, to the Shipley.

JB: He has.

FA: But a fine collection, very fine collection of ceramics, my goodness. And he did – that was always I suppose the big love. But he, also he had everything really, even furniture.

JB: Even in the Walton Street?

- FA: Yes, yes. Not on quite as – the one in Sloane Street was bigger, that's all, spatially; you could have more there. But the general feeling wasn't different, it was the same. I think he's – of course it gradually was varied in the direction of having a little bit more commercial emphasis and that was out of necessity not desire. I don't think it pleased him but he had to do it, that's all. He was a realist. He'd been through enough stuff to know, so you can't live on dreams alone I'm afraid.
- JB: No. Could you talk to me a little bit about what London was like at that time in general, your experiences of that time?
- FA: Well mine were quite coloured I supposed by the difficulties of my own life which I suppose like all people who leave their country forever you're a bit discommoded, you have a lot of adjusting to do. It's not that I hadn't lived in England before, I had in '52 but even in '52 was still very much England in post-war, there was still full rationing and London was bombed to hell, as you know, and hadn't been repaired because there wasn't any money so by the '60s things were looking up a bit. It was the '60s after all and there was quite a lot of stuff going on, hopeful kind of stuff. There was an optimistic atmosphere much more than there was in the '50s and we had – I mean he had a reputation, the gallery had a reputation and a lot of people came to it, people of great interest. I could reel off names endlessly but every kind of person from Nureyev the ballet dancer, to somebody like Sandy Shaw who was a pop singer who happened to live in Walton Street and ran around in her bare feet and was always popping in and out. So it was a more, I suppose what I'm talking about is the change in society was quite apparent already then. Everything was less formal. I mean to give an overview is quite difficult at 5 seconds notice but I can only say that it was the time of mini-skirts and the Beatles and all the rest of it and I do remember wonderfully, this might amuse you, we had a German, not Jewish, but gentile German bookkeeper who was called C– S– and she spoke with a very heavy German accent and Henry had been extremely kind to her and given her a job because her husband had refused to help the Nazis with germ warfare and they had tortured him virtually to death and then sent him home to her to die and then she was...they were overrun of course by the Russians in this part of Germany where she lived and she was raped by 3 Russian soldiers and she'd had a pretty rotten time and when she finally got herself to England - I don't know how exactly - she met Henry but he gave her this job as the bookkeeper and I remember one morning when she came in to work she said to David and I, 'It was terrible on the underground, there were all these filthy Beatle boys breathing down my neck', and that was exactly the way she spoke. But that's just a little flavour.
- JB: What kind of customers did you get in Primavera? I know celebrities and things like that but generally what kind of customer was it, middle-class or...
- FA: Well right across the board really, right across the board. Clearly there were people who were collectors who came [...] I subsequently worked for the Craft Centre of Great Britain as it was called [...] [which] was in Covent Garden and some of the people I met when I worked at Primavera who were collectors of ceramics, for example, were then people who came into all the places I worked in subsequently so they'd got their first

acquisitions through Primavera but ended up continuing to be collectors of either glass or ceramics or whatever the discipline was that interested them. You would find them turning up wherever you worked. I would say it was very democratic, there certainly wasn't just upper-class or anything like that, there was no class onus in the thing, it was just about people who were very focused on what you nowadays call the applied arts. Then you've got all sorts of people and when we had exhibition openings it was very well attended. Lots and lots of people came and usually we had very successful exhibitions, sold everything mostly. And that, difficult really at this remove to remember. Life is so long you know, and one goes on, and then you think, well you don't think in chronological order.

[...]

JB: How did the retail side of Primavera differ from the exhibition side?

FA: It didn't really, only in so far as we carried the work of individual craftspeople all the time. Let us take an example like Lucie Rie or Hans Coper, we always had work in stock from them, Bernard Leach, people like that, but at the time of an exhibition as in any similar outfit the individual crafts person would select obviously their very best things to submit for the exhibition, so an exhibition you would then clear the gallery of other things in the case of the Walton Street outfit. It was a small space compared to Sloane Street and therefore if we had an exhibition we wouldn't have other things on view, we would concentrate, focus on the one artist for the length of the exhibition which would never be desperately long. We wouldn't run an exhibition say for a whole month, not as far as I can remember, something like 2 weeks maybe would be sufficient. But there would still be an opening and all the usual folderol. I don't think there was a great difference. Obviously in between while you displayed the gallery with a general thing of giving examples of everything that you carried in stock. That was quite challenging because in order to keep it looking good you had to have some ability to display. Couldn't have done it if you didn't know what you were doing.

JB: And was Henry – you said he wasn't there a lot of the time – so obviously...

FA: No he did come and go and he was quite a presence when he came I can tell you. He was quite a tricky customer Henry. I was very fond of him, don't get the wrong impression, I liked him but he was quite a volatile person and a lot of people found him difficult. He could be very offensive. He didn't mince his words. He would say just what he thought regardless of what effect it had upon the person who was hearing it and quite often I think people found him very – they thought he was very ill mannered and very rude but that was just his way. He didn't pretend to be – to think something he didn't think. He wasn't English, you know.

JB: Yes.

FA: He was very very much what he was. And he simply came out with things and people sort of stepped back 2 paces and looked absolutely horrified but that was Henry, you had to get used to him and he was quite forceful and he could be very temperamental. Sometimes he would throw a real scene and you had to just take it on the chin, never quite knew where it was coming from or why but you worked it out. But his wife was a saint. She was an absolutely amazing person, Pauline. She really was the

person I think in his life who gave him stability and a marvellous woman. Didn't look for any praise herself, she was...but she was very very bright and very capable and she ran the whole thing really in the background. He was the ideas man and she was what kept it going.

JB: Yeah. Do you think from what you saw, had she not been involved would the business have been so successful do you think or...

FA: Oh that's a very difficult thing to answer because she always was there. As long as I knew them. That would be – as I say I think he was very good at – this sounds rather as though I'm praising myself and I don't want that to happen - but I think that he recognised things, abilities in people where on short acquaintance he could identify that you were going to be good at a particular thing and he might pull you in to do something like that. I don't think it would have failed because he was a very - I mean he started off in an upstairs room after the war and he had absolutely nothing. He wasn't a Rothschild from the Rothschild's, not at all.

JB: Oh no.

FA: I've had dealings with those Rothschild's and it's a very different cup of tea. Everything that Henry achieved he achieved on his own ability and strength of purpose. He was very determined and so admirable. Because one must remember that when he started the whole thing there wasn't any Terence Conran or Habitat or anything like that. This was really a pioneering operation and everyone was influenced by it. People looked at it and thought, I'd like to do something like that. But I think that of course he was a German Jew, he came from a background where he'd been well educated and he was much influenced by the Bauhaus; Germany until the Nazis got hold of Germany was a place where design was paramount. And he had to go. Well he was lucky to get out.

JB: Yes.

FA: He could have ended in a gas chamber like six million others. But he didn't, thank God. So really I don't think he would have failed. I think Henry was always going to make something happen. Powerful personality whether you liked him or not he was very powerful.

JB: He does, looking at the things that he was doing, the retail, the exhibition, the contract work, doing exhibitions abroad later on in life, there does seem to be a tremendous amount of energy there.

FA: Oh yes, that he had. Spades. No, tremendous energy. And a good brain, quite diverse in his interests and applications. And he was very – he certainly didn't draw attention to the fact but I think he was very good to a lot of people. Of course because he understood. He helped crafts people who'd come from Germany, many Jewish like Lucie Rie. He helped a lot of people but he would not have talked about it because he knew what the world was that they had left behind them, and no, and he was unsentimental, he wasn't – he was opinionated but he wasn't vain. I don't think so anyway. Other people may differ but I don't think so. I think he was a good man.

[...]

JB: The people that he helped, in particularly those that were émigrés. Do you think because his own aesthetic tastes linked to his European background, do you think that was also part of it? That he understood?

FA: It certainly is. Oh yes. I mean he was essentially a European really. Sophisticated, without illusions. God knows he'd lived through some stuff and no I think his judgments were – I didn't spend a lot of time – well he, one doesn't. I suppose we never talked much about what both of us had experienced in police states but my experience was minimal compared to his. It's always horrible to watch your country turn into a fascist state and I think once it's happened and you've had to go you are then in a certain sense a displaced person forever more. In my case I would say I love England, I love living here, I wouldn't want to live anywhere else, I'm very grateful that they have me and I'm sure Henry felt the same. He'd been in the army and everything of course as you probably know. But I think you get out of those experiences a certain kind of detachment growth. It cannot but grow because if you weren't – it's difficult to express really. I think if you were focused all the time on what you'd lost you would just die, you know. You couldn't bear it. So you've got to put all your energy into other things or if you have any sense you do and he was a survivor. He recognised that there was something missing, that there was something that could be offered and I mean this in terms of the eclectic nature of what he did that didn't exist in London at the time and he made it happen. Therefore he was a huge influence on other people. Irrespective of whether they liked him or not they were influenced by him, in my view.

JB: In those years in Walton Street he started to collect or sell slightly more experimental works. I'm talking people like Gillian Lowndes and Ian Auld and how...

FA: Yes. Ian Auld, Ian Godfrey.

JB: How was that received by...

FA: Very well generally. There were of course like any other thing, if particularly with somebody like Ian Auld and Gillian Lowndes too, the people who loved Bernard Leach didn't love that. The two things didn't always cross over, clearly. Ewen Henderson's work we showed, I suppose we were the first people to have Ewen Henderson and that kind of work a lot of people went, oh God no I'm not interested in that. Of course they would, like any other thing, but then Henry was well up for that. In fact he liked the idea of that I think very much, that he was being provocative and pushing something at people saying, have a look at this, what do you think. It didn't bother him that people didn't like certain things. It never seemed to bother him. I think he was confident enough not to worry about that and work always attracts – it's also a question of generations isn't it, age. Younger people who were the same ages as the people who were producing this new work were interested in it. Just as in due course when people like Alison Britton came along there were people who loved her work, including me. I think that this is a question of, gosh well quite a lot of things, how educated you are around the particular discipline, do you know about glass, do you know how it's made, do you know how pots are made and so on for you to appreciate what that person is doing with the particular discipline and how they're pushing the boundaries and so on.

But clearly some people wouldn't have liked experimental ceramics for example because they like domestic ware, they wanted pots to use on the table and there were potters whose work one could offer them in every area, you just had to remember which customer liked what and keep a few things to show them when they came in.

JB: So the domestic ware never disappeared from Primavera?

FA: No, no. No. We always had the things from Lucie, we always had things from Bernard. Lucie moved away from all that but then Bernard had his separate areas. He himself produced wonderful individual pieces but the pottery in St Ives continued to produce a range of domestic pots which we still sold. People loved them so you kept them. I still have some. Not many but a few.

JB: So when the Walton Street closed you didn't carry on at Cambridge, you were then...

FA: Oh no. I never was in Cambridge. No I lived in London [...] I went on to work for the Craft Centre and I ran the Glass House in Long Acre at one point for some time and then I freelanced at exhibitions as a freelance person always working with crafts people until the very end of my life, my working life when I had 2 years of working for a fashion designer friend called M— H—.

JB: So during that time after you left Primavera was there much professional connection with Henry still or...

FA: You mean on my...well no. I mean I still knew him of course but he was living in Cambridge, I was living in London and I had a very busy life as you can imagine. My feet hardly touched the ground. I was always doing exhibitions, working, and I had several different things I had to do, and I had 3 children and I didn't have any money so I was always working and I didn't get — I saw Henry from time to time at openings of exhibitions and I went up and I think I saw him once at Kettle's Yard we met and looked at a show together with him but there wasn't a lot of contact any longer. Not at all the same as it had been. But no but I always felt I was aware of him, I knew what he was up to and so on and there we go, that was it.

Gordon Baldwin

Born in Lincoln in 1932, Gordon Baldwin studied at the Central School of Art in the 1950s, going on to teach at Goldsmith's College. His career as a ceramicist spans a period of more than sixty years. Baldwin was awarded an OBE in 1992 and received an honorary doctorate from the Royal College of Art (London) in 2000. His work is represented in many important public collections worldwide and has been the subject of a number of major retrospectives, most recently the touring exhibition *Gordon Baldwin: Objects for a Landscape*, originated by York Art Gallery and selected by Tatjana Marsden.

Interview conducted in person, 6 December 2012:

*Early life in Lincoln ** Central School of Art and Design/Crafts ** Tutors and staff at Central ** London in the 1950s ** Influential people ** Craft shops in London 1950s, 1960s ** Craft and art ** Meeting Henry Rothschild and going to Primavera ** Goldsmith exhibition at Primavera 1961 ** Relationship with Henry Rothschild ** Henry Rothschild as a collector ** Nature of collectors ** Henry Rothschild as an émigré ** Importance of Henry Rothschild and Primavera ** Primavera Sloane Street ** Examples of work in the Henry Rothschild Collection and the Shipley Art Gallery ** Henry Rothschild as a collector ** Henry Rothschild's character ** Pauline Rothschild ** Reflections on Henry Rothschild, Primavera and his collection ****

JB: Just for reference throughout the interview if you could just tell me when and where you were born?

GB: I was born in Lincoln, and I was born in 1932.

JB: And when did you first become interested in pottery?

GB: Well it was in Lincoln as a matter of fact. When I left school at 17 I wasn't quite really sure what I wanted to do, but I had a leaning towards something vaguely revolutionary so I went to an art school and one of the things you do in those days, it was called Intermediate in Arts and Crafts, and you had to do a craft and of all the crafts I chose pottery, I knew nothing about it. It wasn't that I had a great longing to do it, I didn't even know I suppose that people ever still made pottery on wheels by hand. And I met - the teacher was a man called Robert Bladderwick who featured quite strongly in the curated exhibition I did at York alongside my retrospective. And that's it, you know. And then I wanted to leave Lincoln Uni, I mean you shouldn't study in your own county, your own town, you should go somewhere. I think I would have liked to have gone to Paris but that was out of the question so I had to find somewhere to do it in London and you see in the '50s you could get a grant, right, but they wouldn't give you a grant if you could study whatever it was you wanted in your home town.

JB: Oh I see.

GB: So I had to choose something which I couldn't do. So I sort of had this idea I wanted the artist's way of life. I only knew about painting, I knew a tiny bit about sculpture, but those two things I could have done in Lincoln. So I found a course called Industrial Pottery, which they did at the Central, and applied for that and went to London and I did the Central studio course as well and with the people I met in London on that course and the teachers and so on I got terribly involved. And here we are. The rest is history.

- JB: So had you not had that desire to leave Lincoln you might not have...
- GB: Well who knows? Yeah, who knows? Because looking back I don't think I showed tremendous talent. I just had this sort of growling idea of being an artist and it turned out that... Well I painted right through until oh the '60s and then one day I stopped, hung up my palette so to speak, and I thought right, I'll carry on with this and that's...so things happen in strange ways. Presumably there are people who they met somebody and then they did it and they wanted to do it forever and they did forever and they did it wonderfully. It wasn't quite like that with me. So there's a potted history of how I got to London and how I got started.
- JB: Could you talk me through your time at Central and the kind of tutors that were there, and the way the course was taught?
- GB: Well I was, looking back, incredibly lucky because there were only a handful of students and we were, Central had a sort of underlying philosophy like the Bauhaus, and the principal those days was William Johnston who was an artist and was a practising artist, and rather a good one at that. You won't find many practising artists principals of art schools any longer; you will find managers, managerial people.
- JB: Administrators.
- GB: But he was, and he was great in going round exhibitions, private views and so on and meeting young artists who were showing and say "come to my art school and teach," and he would put them in any department, you know. A painter could find themselves in the textile department, a sculptor working in the pottery and then they shifted around so you were endlessly coming across different outlooks. And young people, young artists, like William Turnbull who's unfortunately just died, Eduardo Paolozzi was there, he's also now dead, but they were the wild men of art and there they were and we were being taught by them and so it was a very, I think, very exciting time and you could go in any direction. Nowadays when you're doing a course its set down and it goes in this direction and that's the direction it goes in, you can't suddenly go off at right angles or whatever it is, but we could go anywhere and we could try anything with the tremendous enthusiasm and support of the staff. So it was like being thrust into an alchemist den and we were all trying things and I think we really did think we could alter the world. But of course we didn't alter the world and artists happen but they have made differences, you know. It was a really exciting time. So Dora Billington ran it and Harding Green was her second in command and then there was people like Ken Clark whose work may even feature in Henry's collection, I don't know, and Nick Baggett who went to America and became quite well known over there for his work. And we had people from Stoke-on-Trent teaching us how to throw. There was an underlying basis with all these ideas floating around but we all learnt our crafts, skills seriously which I don't regret. I think it's a very good basis if you like. If you are going to be a composer of music you've got to learn your harmonies and all the rest of it, and we did and it was a good time and it was, people were moving from one department to another, people would suddenly appear, like Louis le Brocquy would suddenly appear and want to do something in pottery – "I want some big bowls", you know. So as it turns out I made them for him, but it was that sort of environment. You

didn't think, well I'm in the pottery department, there's a painting department, there's a sculpture, it was all just one big school and it was a very good time, very good, we were very lucky to have been around at that time. The facilities weren't very good. There was still a smell of burning in the place because it had been bombed but it was a very optimistic time in the '60s. We didn't have much but we were going to do miracles.

JB: During your time, because you were a tutor there as well, was that right?

GB Later on I was, yes.

JB: Who else was around you who were the influencers, some of the other artists and potters that you knew?

GB: What, to me? Oh well there was Hans Coper. Of course Lucie Rie was and they were both showing and I saw their work. James Tower, I remember having quite an influence on me. Of course there was inevitably Bernard Leach and all his followers, because there was no way you could ignore him, but I was never a Leachian. I always saw that as being - well I found it strange for an Englishman to be making what looked like Japanese work. I just found that rather odd. I mean I loved his book, I really enjoyed reading *The Potters Book*, the way of life it was describing, but it wasn't a way of life that I ever got involved in. And Hans Coper of course represented the potters' modern artist. He could stand against other artists in sculpture and painting and so on and he - the fact that he had done what he did, and also there was William Staite Murray, he also the fact that he did what he did, gave one the encouragement to do something for yourself although I neither made work that looked like Hans Coper at any time nor William Staite Murray. But there's two ways of being influenced, one is to say "that's nice, I'll do one like it", or "what he is doing?" and the energies, that's the thing. I now... it somehow gives me the energy to try something for myself. I can't think of any more but I spent a lot of time - I used to snoop around art galleries when I was in London. That's a good place to study as it turned out, with all the different galleries and the Institute of Contemporary Arts and all those. Lots of experiment and somehow you felt it got into your bones. It was good. It was good.

JB: But what were some of those shops and galleries that were around at the time? Obviously Primavera was one, but also the...

GB: Well Primavera I suppose was the only one apart from the Berkeley Galleries that showed Hans Coper and Lucie Rie, and as I remember they were shown in really an old fashioned way. Lots of shelves with hessian, as I remember it. Hans Coper - not Hans Coper - James Tower rather impressed me because he showed in Gimpel Fils which was a proper art gallery but the majority of people making pots, there was nowhere and you didn't have an entree into art galleries and Henry's Primavera was the place, and he of course had what we call 'the eye' so he would see something for the first time and say "hm", as in come and show it in his gallery, so he was a great influence in that respect. But there weren't many, I mean very few. Then there was the Craft Centre of Great Britain, you know Hay Hill, I dimly remember it and I was a member and so if you went around you would see all sorts of things popping up as well as very traditional stuff. But there weren't many places, and outside of London,

well I'm not really qualified to say but I dare say there were hardly none, hardly any.

JB: So do you think that came from that divide between the crafts and art?

GB: Oh yes. Well yes, and don't forget I'm talking about the '50s and very early '60s and England had taken a bit of a battering in the war and so there weren't that many places anyway but there were none in the Cork Street area and so on. The Leicester Galleries, a proper art gallery I may add, yes that showed people like William Staite Murray who was one of the first people I think who stood up to say 'this is a pot, it is also art and it costs the same as any other art' that sort of thing, and he showed there. But if you wanted to see things like Picasso ceramics you had to go, I remember there was a show at Cambridge in the Fitzwilliam, I remember going as a student in a student party to see these things, but they weren't in London. So oh for years it was difficult. But I'll tell you a story about a gallery called McRoberts & Tunnard, a big gallery in the West End, saw photographs of my work, black and white of course in that period, and contacted me - "wow, come and see us". So I went, folio and more photographs, and they were getting really interested and then one of them said "what are they made of?", because in the '60s it could have been bronze, unlikely for a young man, cement, fondue, resin, bronze, all manner of stuff, and I said "well they're ceramics". "Oh my God" he said "they're pots! Now we're interested in your work but you'll have to have it cast into bronze." So I said "well would you cast it?" and they said "no, no you've got to cast it," and I said "well that's the end then because I can't afford to do such a thing," and I remembered that for years, you know, that idea that unless it went into... can we call it fine art material, and pottery was not, that was it. So my debut into the West End didn't happen. And it took me right until I lived here '96, 2000, and I did have one piece cast into bronze. I thought, bugger it I will have a piece cast into bronze and see what it does. Well it didn't make a lot of difference actually, I've got a feeling that the ceramic piece was still more interesting. But I had one piece cast into bronze. McRoberts & Tunnard of course as a gallery disappeared so I was a bit too late, I missed the boat.

JB: How extraordinary though.

GB: Yeah. And it's still in a weird way knocking around. I mean after all we do have a Crafts Council and an Arts Council, they're much more tied together now through funding but there is that separateness. I am trying to think, I did show one piece in the Leicester Galleries years ago. I've never shown in places like Gimpel Fils. Mostly I had to be content with showing wherever, England or wherever in the world, in galleries which specialised in pottery and craft or what, you know. Yes, still there, still knocking about, not so much. I don't know how much a difference for instance Grayson Perry has made. He hasn't made a difference to lots of others, I mean he has become a celebrity and he does do other things. Or Edmund de Waal for instance. But they are exceptions to the rule. I did rather hope, in my youth and innocence, I'd like to have a piece in the Tate Gallery, but it never happened. It was left to an American to be the first one to show pots but that of course he had also made a reputation through his paintings, so that made a difference. So an artist can do some pottery and that's art but I'm not sure about the other way round. Still, there's still a big divide and of course your collectors, some of the avid collectors of ceramics are not

good on painting, and sculpture. They don't seem to quite know what they're looking at but they've got a passion for pottery. So there's the divide again you see. It used to bother me when I was younger but it doesn't really matter now. I know what I'm doing and that's something.

JB: Now it's been something that's come up again and again through the research, this craft, fine art and why the distinctions are drawn, and it seems with your generation there was a merging happening but maybe it didn't quite go beyond?

GB: Didn't really come. No there was a bit of, I mean there was a merging in ideas, and I think while the general public may have been led to see definitions via material, if you work in clay you're a potter, if you're a potter you're a craftsman. If you work in weaving then you're a craftsman. And though I know of several people working in many different fields who are definitely not just craftsman, they have the craft but they have ideas which are to do with art and music and poetry and all the rest of it, and I noticed that – I've always been very comfortable amongst visual artists and poets and so on, who we appreciate each other's work, so the divide seems to be somehow in and around galleries and officialdom and so on rather than those people what I'll just call 'those in the know' you know.

JB: Yes I see. So the actual practitioners it's not so much of a...

GB: No I don't think so.

JB: It's the people that are then trying to sell you or...

GB: Well yes. And then there are these specialist galleries and I seem to have been, my whole life has been involved with them. Look at Barrett Marsden whom I am now contracted to ever since they've been open - nobody would go there to look at painting because it's not known as painting its known about ceramics and silver and those things which... and people don't actually know what to call you. I've noticed though that I can be called an artist frequently but there are times when people are not quite sure – "are you an artist or a craftsman?" Once they know what you work in, and they may not know what you do with what you work in, which is... so but it's still there it's not as bad as it was very, very clearly defined.

JB: That's very interesting. Well if we jump back to then Primavera as it was, when did you first become aware of Henry and Primavera?

GB: Well I must have gone as a student I should imagine, because one would spend most of one's weekend going round different exhibitions and galleries and the Tate and this, that and the other, and I must have - he was only a walk from where I used to live and I think I came across it in that by just popping in, never buying anything, but popping in, but my real introduction to Henry was after I'd left the Central, I had done my National Service, I was back in London and I was teaching at Central and Goldsmiths Lane.

JB: So what year was this roughly?

GB: Well it would be 1956-ish, '56, '57 and Henry... I don't know how we met, but it was to do with Goldsmiths and I was guiding, or helping to guide -

we were known as the pottery department and didn't use the word ceramics in those days, pottery department - into more radical ways of thinking to do with modernism and several of the staff, we were all working, we taught and we worked and we were doing our own thing. Now somehow Henry got to know about this, and it may have been because we put on an exhibition at Goldsmiths called Prehistory to Picasso and we borrowed things from museums and all sorts of things and we got things which children had made and we jumbled them all together and made a very fine exhibition but there was no reference to chronology so... and Henry might well have come along to that, got to know about what stuff we were doing there because we were then invited to have a show at Primavera. The place was cleared, it wasn't a very big gallery as you recall, and 4 of 5 of us had a few pieces in and it was the Goldsmith's College show and I can't remember precisely which year it would be.

JB: I think I would be able to check that if you give us the lists. [Handbuilt Pottery from Goldsmiths' College, 19 – 30 September, 1961].

GB: And that was when we first - and Henry sold, much to amazement, I had several pieces sold to the GLC ILEA, the London Education Authority, had a huge collection which they loaned to schools. It's now deposited at Camberwell and it's not loaned to anybody. In fact I suspect a lot of pieces have been lost or broken or whatever it is. And they bought from me some quite, we will call them sculptural pieces, pots that are quite useless other than being themselves, and that was my first introduction. I think we might even have had two shows as a group. I never showed there at Henry's on my own. And soon after that he wouldn't have anything to do with me. I've heard stories about him being in somebody's house and seeing a bit of work and "that's nice, who did that?", "Gordon Baldwin", "Horrible". And to this day I don't know what I did, but I upset him very severely for a few years and it was after that period. Eventually he came round and became a very good friend and my number one fan in a way, and you would never had known anything. He used to make me feel like the best thing since sliced bread. It was good for the ego he was, but I never to this - he did once or twice say things like "we didn't get on so well at one period did we?" and I said "no Henry we didn't. I never understood quite why." "Oh no, it's all water under the bridge." So I don't know what had happened because I know Henry now well enough to know that if you upset him you upset him and he didn't forget, but it was soon after that and then I hardly ever saw him or had anything to do with him for several years and then I suddenly discovered he was buying my work from exhibitions. His collecting and he was collecting me as well, and then he used to ring me up and we'd have conversations and so on and I went and saw him in Cambridge. He came here. And then it was a sort of friendship but he was all the time buying my work. I don't know how many pieces he bought but he seemed to buy quite a number and he was passionate about his - he also had some good paintings. I remember sitting having lunch with him and I knew of Joan Eardley, the Scottish woman that used to paint waves and things on the beach in storms, and I had never ever seen any of her work and there Henry had one above the dining table. So he had an eye and he was passionate about his art so whether that, you would say well if he collected good paintings and he bought these pots then he didn't differentiate between paintings and pots and so they were all art, or they were all things that he wanted and desired and had. I don't know, I never

had any discussion with him about art and craft. He had some lovely things of all sorts.

JB: But as you were saying earlier, from your experience it's quite unusual for collectors to...

GB: Well I know one or two but it is, they tend to fall into this category or that category and become passionate about this and that but I think that's the nature of collecting. They're quite odd fish and they're not just buying, I'm not sure about Henry, but he probably falls into this category, they're not just buying the thing you've made, they're buying a bit into your life, they're joining in with your life. I've known several collectors, they join in a way, join in with your life and they do it by paying you some money and taking some work and then they can come again to the studio. But they want more than just the object; they're quite a special breed. Very useful, but they're quite a special breed. I'm trying to think whether - and Henry was a little different because he ran a gallery as well as collecting and a lot of the collectors of course they don't run galleries they just collect, and then they look for somewhere to put it when they're finished, at the end of their lives, and Henry's went where it went and other people's goes where that goes. But he was an amazing man. Even when he was, I think he must have been nearly in his 90s when he lived in Oxford and he would ring me up and he had been to... "Hello Gordon, have you been to the so and so gallery, and the so and so gallery?" and oh he said "yeah I went to the so and so and I did this and I went..." and I said "Henry, you're exhausting me. I haven't been to any of these things." But he was absolutely passionate about... he never missed anything. "Wonderful, wonderful exhibition of Mesopotamian work, wonderful!" - you know, it was so - yeah he was quite special in that way. He used to make me feel such a ninny. "No Henry" I said, "I haven't been anywhere, I've just been in the studio." "Quite right, that's where you should be, in your studio." He always referred to me as 'my boy'. "Hello my boy, how are you?"

JB: What did you make of his character and the fact that he was a German émigré? He had that sort of Jewish European ideal. How did that fit in with you?

GB: Well yes. Well I don't know. He certainly demanded, or he got from me, massive respect. But we can put it another way, I was quite scared of him because he was such a powerful character. He made me feel at times completely ignorant. He knew so much and he was so passionate about everything. Yeah, I used to feel, oh God Henry, I'm such a wimp, I don't know any of these things, I haven't been there, haven't been here, because his life had been pretty chequered and it amazed me. He was visiting me once and he said "I'm just going round the town" and he picked up this suitcase, and even in his later life he was pedalling his postcards. He had a postcard business and he used to go round all the shops cold calling. And he was rich, because his brother was rich and his brother left him a lot of money, but here he was peddling these...humping this great case round like a travelling salesman. I mean "Henry, what are you doing?" But for him it was quite normal. I don't know much about his early life over in England but it was probably quite tough having come over. I don't know. He always used to say "The Rothschild name is a bit of a nuisance. Everybody thinks I'm immensely rich but I'm not that family, you know." I think he was a bit scary in a way because he seemed so big and

knowledgeable and cosmopolitan and all this, and that wonderful accent which always helps doesn't it, which if you can make pronouncements in an accent like that it doesn't matter what you say it sounds profound.

JB: Do you think he was a bit at odds maybe with British or English establishment of how things were done within the arts and crafts?

GB: Well certainly he was a campaigner. All that design for student's accommodation he did, all those nice fabrics and he was a campaigner, he wanted to alter things, I'm quite sure of that, and make things better and if some establishment figure, shall we say, was against what he was trying to do in some way well then he was against them. He was not slow on criticism but I don't remember him at all going on very much about things like that. But I think, as I told you, when whatever it is I did or didn't do he was against me very powerfully for a while and to this day I've absolutely no idea what it was about and he never said. But we did have a laugh of "oh yes, yes we were..." of that sort. But I suppose that he maybe clashed with lots of people in the course of his... because he had a vision of what should be and those people are going to meet people that they argue with and I think cross swords with but mostly he was certainly a charming host. Yes. Seems a long time since I saw him now. When did he die?

JB: 2009.

GB: Oh yes.

JB: So yes, 3 years.

GB: 3 years ago. Yeah.

JB: He does seem to have been a character of extremes.

GB: Well I think he was and that was his strength. He wouldn't have done any of the things that he did, to start Primavera at a time when there was nothing like Primavera, nothing at all, there was no other gallery. To do all these things and to make his own way, yeah I think he was. He was a powerful character and he did, I suppose you can say he did good things.

JB: Do you remember much about the Sloane Street shop or gallery, just in terms of how it was presented and laid out?

GB: Oh yeah, well I've got a fairly good picture in my mind's eye. It was very small and really quite cluttered with things and the display was - these days displays are more pristine and white and blocks and pieces in rows and it wasn't a bit like that. It was very arts and crafts movement with fabrics and then a pot placed at the bottom, that sort of thing. And I think it became also, you know how book shops can become a place where writers meet and talk about books and about what they're doing, although I don't include myself in this, but a lot of the early potters, Pleydell Bouverie and people like that, they were all knocking about going in and it was a place to meet people in London. So he was disseminating ideas by the very fact that he was there, not just the exhibitions, so I don't think there were many solo shows, what you got was the mixed shows, and the Goldsmith one was quite rare because he had to clear an awful lot of quite small premises. I get the impression of a window where there was lots of work on display

and then a quite narrow gallery with a little table where he could write receipts or whatever it was, so quite small and utterly different from any gallery now, utterly differently displayed.

JB: While I was in London a little while ago I went to see the premises as it is now and it did strike me when I eventually got outside, because it was one of those quite fancy shops now where you've got to hit a buzzer to be allowed in. So I had to go in and explain why I wanted to look inside and it was a very small, small space.

GB: It is, yeah, but it was very central, very good position, but it was a very small place. But carried with it a great reputation in the end. Primavera was something to reckon with and based on, when I look back in my mind's eye, quite modest stuff actually. Nicely thrown bowls a la Leach and so on, yeah, but it was early days when I first was involved with it and then of course Henry gave it up and it went to Cambridge and then Henry just became a roving guy who he always wanted to go to exhibitions because he would go and buy things, for the Shipley. Yes. I only have certain memories of it and after a while Henry was always there somewhere and I was here or there and we didn't meet that much, we only talked on the telephone and it was always about him telling me the marvellous exhibitions he had been to and why hadn't I been.

JB: I have, I'm not sure with your eyesight how well you are going to be able to see them, but I have some images on my laptop of the pots that you have at the Shipley as part of Henry's collection and I wonder, if you can kind of make them out, then we could just have a little talk about those.

GB: I might be able to see them. I suppose I can see these paintings. It's just the focus that's gone. I might be able to see.

JB: Yeah there's about 5 of your pieces. They all seem to be '80s and '90s.

GB: Well he did buy later than that. I don't know. Yeah '90s late '90s. I'm trying to remember now because after a while his buying diminished when he lived in Oxford.

JB: Yes, I think he was downsizing a little. Can you make that one?

GB: Well it's a bowl isn't it, it's a big bowl.

JB: So this is from '95 this bowl. [HRC 2002.34]

GB: Yeah, yes.

JB: Just to say a little bit about it really. Was it part of a series or do you remember?

GB: Well it would be, yes, because almost everything I've ever done is a series. Not very many, often 8 or 9, possibly up to 10, and bowls have appeared in my life in lumps and this, typical of that period; they were always referred to as paintings in the form of bowls. I think is this one pierced a bit?

JB: Yes.

GB: Yes, I used piercing and so, and they were much, yes and this would be a series of bowls and then I would stop making bowls altogether and probably not make any for months or even years and then I might suddenly have a way of doing some more because I wasn't – I was trying always never to repeat what I'd been doing but yeah that's a very typical one of that period and I guess it's probably about this big.

JB: Yes.

GB: Some are bigger. I've got one upstairs which is that big, but they're this sort of big. And they were very - my original idea was to be a painter, they were very much about painting and not about in the usual way of decorating, so that's why I refer to them as a way of pointing you, okay so they're paintings made to look like pots, made into shapes of pots and the colours were muted. This is probably a blue, I don't know, is it?

JB: It's sort of yeah a blue, sort of greyscale blue almost.

GB: Yeah. And my work has been often involved with black, white, blue, grey, quite muted colours which some people refer to as referring to certain sorts of natural objects like stones and so forth although that wasn't particularly in my mind. I was more concerned in the sweep of colour on the...and the little marks and so on. I can't say I actually remember making that one because that would be a lie but.

JB: Now this is a little bit of a smaller image. I don't know if you can quite see it. It's sort of this bowl shape here with a kind of...

GB: Has it got a rim on it, an extra rim?

JB: Yeah, it's sort of a...

GB: I honestly can't see that but there was a period. What year is that, do you know?

JB: This is called Dyad 2 and it's from 1986. [HRC 1995.161]

GB: Oh Dyad, well there must be two parts of it then.

JB: Yes and there's a sort of taller tulip vase.

GB: Yes I made several pieces which there were pieces around the studio and I would join suddenly, intuitively, two pieces together hence the Dyad.

JB: Okay, so it wasn't a planned...

GB: Well nothing is planned that much with me. One works and it...one of the reasons I actually work in series or several pieces is it gives me an opportunity. I work and then I go back to this one and gives time for something to develop. I don't start with knowing what it's going to be, I only start with an urge to do and I will have some structural knowledge, because you can't just do nothing, you've got to have some way of building and there was a period when I did a lot of work joining together and I would

have - my studio would be full of what you could call finished bits but then the bits were joined to other bits and this would be that period.

JB: I see. So this is a form from 1987, it's quite a thin sort of like a thin pocket with a slight opening, I think, at the top here. [HRC 2002.35]

GB: Yes, yeah. Well I made some pieces - I actually can't see them very well - but they were sort of cloud pieces. I always saw them - whether that's one of them but they were very flat like that.

JB: Yes, that's right.

GB: Yes, and greys and white and...

JB: Yeah the similar decoration to that first one with these kind of sweeps of colour leading up here.

GB: Yeah. Well that might be from a series called Clouds but it might not because I really don't see it clearly enough.

JB: That's fine. So this is another form 1989. It's very spherical, perfectly spherical actually with a closed spout. [HRC 1995.162]

GB: Yes, yes. That was what '70s, late '70s.

JB: '89 actually.

GB: '89! Oh this is one of the later ones, one made here obviously, or no, been made at Eton. What is its catalogue name?

JB: I've just listed it as 'Form'. I might have a.... It's all right if you can't.

GB: I can't remember them all I'm afraid, there were so many of them. But okay.

JB: This last one is one of my favourites actually, which is a 'Painting in the form of a bowl' from the early '80s. [HRC 1995.185]

GB: Oh yes, an early one. This is probably a glazed surface as well rather than unglazed. Yes, yes, that's another one 'Painting in the form of a bowl', that's right, yes.

JB: So a lot more colour in the sort of blues and very faint yellow tinges.

GB: Yes.

JB: I think that's one of my favourite. I'm not just saying that because I'm here.

GB: No, No.

JB: It's one of my favourite pieces in the collection actually.

GB: I made it, yes. Yes of course York now have several of those in their collection.

[...]

I think Henry would have bought those from galleries, possibly the Craft Centre, judging by the date, and he did buy from the Barrett Marsden as well. But the Barrett Marsden didn't exist, did it, in those days? It didn't start until 1996, '97, '98, 1998, '99 I think the Barrett Marsden opened, but those were not bought - I can't remember Henry ever buying anything directly from me. He always bought it from the galleries.

JB: Because I know with a lot of the people that he did buy from, or at least when it came to selling through Primavera, he would buy directly. He was very into, well I don't know if maybe he just couldn't sit still in one place for too long. He needed to be out and about.

GB: Oh he was always out and about, yes, he was, sniffing out everything and everybody and everyone. He wanted to know what was going on. He wanted - I'm quite certain he felt the absolute necessity to make sure that he knew what was going on so he didn't miss an exhibition. He needed to know. Yeah I think that's also another condition of collectors, they want to know what's going on.

JB: Scared to miss out.

GB: I think so in a way, yes. Oh yeah. But I don't remember him ever coming to the studio at any time and buying a piece of work, he always got it from a gallery. Yeah. So I don't know where he got those from but he got them.

JB: It would be great to try and get a proper provenance of each of the objects in the collection but I don't think record keeping was a strength of Henry's.

GB: No. I think I remember one of the last times I saw him he was trying to catalogue everything and wasn't having a good time. No, but he - yeah and then my memory's not good enough, you just don't remember. We could put York on twice more and still have work left over. So I converted an awful lot of clay into ceramic over the years and while titles actually are quite important in my work, sometimes I couldn't remember them. It's sad isn't it, my memories going but I'm trying to think, he's got more than that, Henry has.

[...]

He was very generous. I remember we were talking about something and I said "I'm having a terrible time because my kiln's old and worn out and keeps breaking down and I can't afford to pay..." "Oh it won't cost much for that my boy, let me know how much it is and I'll buy one for you." He didn't, I thanked him profusely, but I never did ask for it, but he was an incredibly generous person in that respect because he would have done. But of course my pride wouldn't allow me to ask for it, but he would have done. He was very generous. So he was scattering work around like the good fairy.... Yes, he was a nice guy, Henry.

JB: Was he very - with other artists or craftsmen, however you want to term them?

GB: Yes.

JB: As I know he encouraged a few people, there's Elspeth Owen, I know that he championed her work, and Gillian Lowndes.

GB: Oh yes.

JB: Was that part of the norm for him do you think, in your experience of him?

GB: Well yes. He thought these people did good work and therefore Henry told you, or told the world, these people are doing good work and he would, yes promoted them. He promoted us all one way or another. Because that's what Primavera did, it promoted the whole idea of handmade pottery and from that grew this great web. But yeah he was very passionate about people and if he liked them he wanted to let everybody know about them, yeah. And the people he promoted were good. They were. Very good. And he saw it. And he often saw it I think before anybody else. He didn't require to be told. He may have made some mistakes sometimes, I don't know, everybody does, but I don't know about that.

JB: He seems to have been very instinct driven.

GB: Oh yes. Oh yes. In a funny way there's no other way is there. I mean if you analysed everything and then decided what you were going to do with this thing which you've now analysed, somehow its magic had gone. So it was an instinctive with that thing called 'a good eye' for things and if Henry said it was good that was quite an accolade. I think it was used as currency – "Henry Rothschild says it's okay", "okay right then". He was highly thought of really. Of course all people were scared of him in some way but they respected him in the same way as I did

[...]

Because Pauline was a strong person too. I think behind the throne Pauline had a tremendous influence. That deep voice. I think one valued Pauline's approval as much as Henry's although she didn't say much and let Henry get on with it but she may have had quite a hand in the collection I can't say. but she was strong person.

JB: I get the sense through talking to other people and Liz as well, especially, I think she is very keen to let it be known how Pauline kind of reigned him in a little bit and kept... I suppose allowed for him to do what he did because she was quite a grounded person whereas he wanted to be...

GB: Oh yes. I am sure that she may have said at times "Henry, come on, have sense, that's stupid, don't do it" but I often wondered how much, she was very quiet about his collection, she didn't say very much. Henry would be going on about things, holding them up and so, and Pauline would sit quietly and I wonder how much she did but she was a nice person. But funny, you didn't get to know her very easily. She always kept herself to herself. Henry was vociferous. It was quite hard to get a word in edgewise with Henry. He had a lot to say for himself but Pauline was quiet. Yes. Strange talking about all this thing in the past. I seem to have been doing it far too much recently, you know with the retrospective. Pointless going on about the past, the past, till I got to the point where I felt like a man with a past, a bit of a present, and absolutely no future whatsoever and here we are talking about the past again, and a past because Henry was himself

and he had only died in 2009. Nevertheless he was a person of an earlier era. Things have very much changed.

[...]

But I don't know, I wonder how he would get on now the way things are and the way things are so related to celebrity status and things of that sort. I don't think he would like that at all. He was the champion of shall we say the quiet artist like Gillian Lowndes who never went in for any sort of self-advertisement. I think he would see her as the real thing and maybe some of the way the junketing and so on that goes on now, maybe not. No I can imagine he wouldn't like people who had just bought so as to keep it for a couple of years and sell and make a fast buck. That wasn't what it was about as far as he was concerned. Poor old Henry, in a way. He's gone, and he was rather a sad man in the end when Pauline died. When he rang me up he sounded so old and frail in those last years. His mind was alright though but his voice was that of a very old man. But I think in the end, in the last few years when he used to ring I think he'd really had enough, you know, and the world, he'd had enough of it. And all the things that he used to do he couldn't really do anymore. He couldn't collect because he had nowhere to keep them, well he used to give them to Shipley but that's not quite how it used to be. He used to be surrounded with his collection. Suddenly won't be. He used to say things to me like "Gordon you're alright, you will always be remembered because you've made your own monuments", i.e. my work, and he said "I've got nothing; nobody will remember what I did." And I said "well Henry I don't think that's true. You'll be remembered for your collection that is your monument." "Oh well where am I going to put it? Who is going to have it?" Anyway in the end it did but he was very low. He was concerned about... he'd done all this and what is there to show for it? Well of course there was and there still is, things to show. Then he wouldn't let it be called the Rothschild collection would he?

JB: Yeah.

GB: Because he thought, oh I don't want that name to be used, people get the wrong idea. And what was it called, the...?

JB: The Eagle collection, yeah.

GB: The Eagle Collection, that's right. And I said to him "why don't you call it by your name Henry, and then it is your collection after all and you can be really quite proud of all what you've done." "Oh" he said "well, you know, people have funny ideas about the name Rothschild." Anyway it's called Rothschild now isn't it, the Rothschild?

JB: Yeah, it's The Henry Rothschild.

GB: Yeah well that's fine. But The Eagle Collection, come on Henry. But he was very concerned about things like that. As time went on I suppose it's when you're about to give up life you wonder what you've done or you've left behind or what and I can still hear him, very self-deprecating. He was very pleased about that exhibition that was put on, you know. I didn't see it unfortunately but he was very pleased about that. That really pleased him. So he got his little monument in the end and it's still there, and you're fostering it aren't you?

JB: Oh yes. And I can't remember who it was I talked to about - I mentioned to somebody, I don't know if it was Liz or somebody else, but what Henry would have thought about somebody doing a PhD about him.

GB: And what did she say?

JB: Oh I think it was Liz, I'm sure it was Liz, I think she said I think he would have been quite pleased, a bit shocked but pleased.

GB: Yeah I think he would be quite pleased. He would sort of pooh pooh it a bit but inside of him I think he would be very pleased, yeah. So there you are, you can tell him wherever you are.

JB: Well. It's just trying to get all these different parts together because he did so many things.

[...]

GB: He had a lot of energy. You know, he was a dynamo wasn't he? Even up when he was in his 80s. As I say I used to feel quite exhausted after a telephone call because he had done so many things and I thought phew, my God, and I hadn't done them but I felt quite tired.

Alison Britton

Born in 1948, Alison Britton studied at the Royal College of Art in the early 1970s. Best known for her large abstract forms, Britton is also a prolific writer, curator and teacher. Her written work has been compiled in *Seeing Things: Collected Writing on Art, Craft and Design*, 2013. Represented in Rothschild's collection, Britton delivered a talk at the fourth Henry Rothschild Memorial Lecture in November 2014.

Interview conducted in person, 22 November 2012:

*Early life in Harrow ** Interest in clay ** Central School of Art and Design ** Influences at art school ** Craft and art ** Central and Camberwell ** Exhibiting and selling work in the 1960s ** Royal College of Art ** Being aware of Henry Rothschild and Primavera before meeting ** Craft outlets in London 1960s ** London 1960s ** Henry Rothschild as a collector ** Henry Rothschild as an émigré ** Hans Coper ** Exhibiting in Scotland 1980s ** Importance of Henry Rothschild and Primavera ** Henry Rothschild's character ** Buying work ** Examples of her work in the Henry Rothschild Collection ** Art schools in 1960s ** The archive at the Shipley Art Gallery ** Sam Smith ** Own work ** Craft and art ** European influences ***

JB: If we could start, just for reference, from going back through it, if you could tell me when and where you were born?

AB: I was born in Harrow in 1948.

JB: And when did you first become interested in pottery?

AB: At a very young age. I think I first did it at school when I was 7 or 8. My father worked at the Institute of Education in London alongside a wonderful potter called William Newland who used to send home things in my father's briefcase, bits of clay or soft bricks you could carve. So I knew that it was

a thing you could do from a very early age and I still have kept a couple of things from when I was about 8 or 10. It was a very good department at school so I did it quite a lot at school and I went to Leeds for my Foundation course in 1966 having done Art A Level and done a lot of pottery at school. And I thought I was keeping an open mind, was almost seduced into painting but then came back to ceramics, came to Central School, where Bill Newland taught. So I've had a sense of it, almost a vocational sense of it, from quite young.

JB: And what was it particularly that you think drew you to the form?

AB: I think plasticity and all the different things you could do with clay, the fact that you had the glaze and the body and the modelling. I never did much throwing, although I had to on my first degree obviously, but mostly it was hand building and sculpture, forming and modelling and just in the free way.

JB: And could you just say something about the tutors that were there at Central?

AB: At Central at the time? It was soon after William [Newland] had stopped teaching there. The Head of Department was Gilbert Harding Green and we had a different subject each day. We were taught by Bonnie van de Wetering for design and drawing and surface work. Then we had someone who we made silk screen prints with called Robin Wallace. John Colbeck taught throwing, Michael Casson taught throwing when I was in the second year, Gordon Baldwin was very important to me, his was a hand building day. And Dan Arbeid, he was unfortunately made to teach things he wasn't particularly interested in, he was made to teach chemistry and plaster model-making when he was actually a hand builder, which was very unkind. Punishment of some kind from the Head of Department. Eileen Nisbett taught a bit there, but perhaps not when I was first there. I have actually written a history of the ceramics department, a chapter. There's a book called Making Their Mark and I did the chapter on the Ceramics Department so if you wanted to check that out you could.

JB: Yeah, I will do, that will be good. Who would you say influenced you in terms of what you were doing, the other sort of potters and artists that were...

AB: Oh, outside in the world at the time? If I think of the teachers I had, I was most interested in the Gordon Baldwin day; and one of the technicians there was called Jerome Abbo and he was quite important, he went on to be the head of the course in Harrow. Of fellow students I think Richard Slee, he started two years above me but he ended up in my year because he went away for a year. He always seemed really appealing and interesting and full of ideas. I remember the first sort of sculpture show in the '60s that I went to was of Anthony Hepburn, Tony Hepburn, who went on to teach in America. Then there was a group around Hans Coper, Lucie Rie, Gordon Baldwin. They weren't all a group but they certainly were often in the same shows, but it was the slightly more sculptural side of ceramics that I found more interesting than the...I was never really grabbed by the Leach phenomenon. I was slightly too late to be taken up with it I think. I think if I had been there in the '40s I might have been. I have always liked Cardew more than I like Leach. More vitality in it I think. So quite a mix,

you know, but I wasn't just looking at ceramics either, I was also looking at everything really, sculpture and painting and photography, and I've never thought that you gain from keeping it in a box by itself.

JB: No. Did you feel at the time that, coming back to that, the Leach and Cardew traditions, to what's happening in the '60s, did it feel like a conscious move away from these kind of workshop traditions to being in at an Art school?

AB: Yes definitely, definitely. I think being a student at Central in the '60s it felt very different from being a student at Camberwell in the '60s. We knew them vaguely but we felt very distinct from them in that they were still very Leachy and they were doing . . . it was almost about colour, they were doing green and brown things and we were doing blue and yellow things, and we were very encouraged to look at the whole global history and went to the V&A often. The two teachers who were married to each other, Bonnie Van de Wetering and John Colbeck, every holiday they went collecting images from museums in Istanbul and Crete and all that. We'd get wonderful visual information about the whole world of ceramics. So in that context the Leach tradition looked narrow and quaint in a way.

JB: It's just something that keeps coming up and I think with Henry having...

AB: European roots.

JB: And brought along - in the collection at the Shipley there's Leach and there's Cardew but then there's also your work and Gordon Baldwin and Gillian Lowndes...

AB: Yes of course she was teaching. She was teaching probably before and after. I don't think I was taught by her at Central but she certainly featured for quite long periods. It's funny that I can't quite remember whether she did or she didn't.

JB: What were the experiences of selling and exhibiting your work? How was that facilitated by Central and getting your work out there?

AB: Well I went straight on to the RCA so I wasn't really trying really to sell then. I sold well at my Degree show; I seem to remember, but awfully cheap. Friends and relatives and some other people bought things. And I was showing drawings as well. I remember selling drawings. Then when I left the RCA, which was three years later, I remember feeling that all my early moves to put things in the gallery context were wrong. I'd put them in places where they looked badly made and overpriced, so it took time to find the right locations. I don't think I ever had anything in Primavera. So I don't know why in a way. Once I got to the British Craft Centre, showing there, Henry Rothschild was definitely a big figure, he was well known to me, possibly because Fiona Adamczewski then worked at the British Craft Centre having worked for him. So I often heard about him and I probably went to the gallery, I should think, on visits to Cambridge. My sister had been at Cambridge. I probably did.

JB: Were you aware of Primavera when it was in Sloane Street that would have been about...

AB: What dates was that?

JB: It closed in '67 and moved to Walton Street briefly.

AB: Right, I don't think I was. I couldn't rule it out, I couldn't say that I hadn't been to a show there in '67 before, but I'm not sure.

JB: What were some of the other places that were selling craft in London at that time?

AB: British Craft Centre was where I saw the Tony Hepburn's, I remember. I went to that a lot. I don't think there was much else until the Craft Council started, and that wasn't until the '70s, and then their gallery was suddenly the great focus. It was a tiny one to start with in Waterloo Place. I'm sure there must have been other shops. Pam Henry, who is Michael Casson's sister, she ran one, she was one of the places where I thought my things looked over-priced and badly made. Then I think I tried...there was a new place starting with Christopher Srangeways He started a funny gallery, sort of much more designery in a way, and it was in a passage off Kensington Church Sreet. He also owns the big building full of architects and designers where I go and have my hair cut, in Holborn.

JB: Okay.

AB: But he was more quirky, the beginning of the post modernist kind of thing.

JB: One of the things, we'll come on to Henry in a little while more specifically, but one of the things that I am quite interested in is how he started in '46 and then was in London at the time were it was all the swinging '60s as it is...

AB: Not everybody noticed.

JB: Yeah, I think it's because Sloane Street is just round the corner from the King's Road and I find that quite interesting to think about how he would have fitted in to what was going on in the King's Road,

AB: Yes, but if you think about what Sloane Street and that neighbourhood is, at bottom, the people that live there, they are not swinging at all, there is the old money basically. And still is. It's a very, very expensive neighbourhood with really well-heeled people so I would have thought it was a really strong market for him, as was Heals of course, Heals was full of new ceramics in the '50s and '60s. It's where the Newland's used to show, Margaret Hine and Bill, they did a lot and so did a lot of other people. I certainly remember going to Heals shows early on, but it wasn't a gallery, but felt gallery-ish I think. And Liberty's also went in and out of doing craft shows.

JB: It's just a very interesting time and as you say not everyone noticed but it was indeed swinging.
[...]

AB: In the history of that neighbourhood there was a place called the Little Gallery, wasn't there, Muriel Rose? She wasn't far away was she?

- JB: Yes. That was before the war.
- AB: Yes, but it was in that neck of the woods wasn't it?
- JB: Yes it was - before the war there was the Little Gallery, there was Dunbar Hay, the new Hand Workers.
- AB: There was an émigré guy too called Bill something, William Ohly who would have known Hans Coper, a German Jewish refugee.
- JB: Oh I've not heard of that.
- [...]
- I think [the collection is] spread about further than I initially thought it had. When I first started the project I thought everything had pretty much gone to the Shipley and then it's not quite the case. There were little bits gone off elsewhere and Liz still obviously has a few pieces.
- AB: Yes. Yes. I wouldn't have thought that Henry . . . however much when I met him he was always very, very warm and charming and delightful . . . but not an orderly person I wouldn't have thought.
- JB: No.
- AB: I can remember getting some things sent to me, I'd just had a baby, and I remember the collector Liliana Epstein sent me a great big bunch of beautiful flowers and Henry sent me a nice letter with some slides that had marmalade all over them, so I would have thought that they were very different people.
- [...]
- Do you think, did he have a particular curiosity about the émigré artists like Coper and Rie and...
- JB: Well that's an interesting aspect, because initially when I started the project, and Cheryl was very keen on this as well, we felt there must have been some sort of pull towards that kind of aesthetic to be into Coper and then later Ruth Duckworth, but when I spoke to his daughter and I posed that question to her she seemed to think that it was just the aesthetics of it, it wasn't really the fact that they were émigrés that he supported their work. But saying that though their aesthetic is very European too.
- AB: It's very different. Yeah it was .
- JB: It's kind of a mixture. But it's an interesting area to look at so I think sometimes you make broad assumptions and actually it's a little bit more nuanced than that.
- [...]
- AB: And he didn't feel he could never go back to Germany did he, which Hans did, Hans never went back to Germany, but Henry did didn't he?
- JB: He did go back. I think the earliest sort of confirmed date that he says in an interview was kind of early '50s.

AB: That's pretty early.

JB: But I think it did take him quite a bit. And then he started going a lot more in the '70s and '80s. He was putting shows on over there with some English potters and brilliant German potters.

AB: Yes. I remember that. I used to visit Hans, because he was my tutor when I was at RCA. I often go to Cornwall so I'd go and see him on the way and I know that he never got over the conviction that German chocolate was the best, so he would have German chocolate but he would never allow his work to be shown in Germany, I don't think at any time during his life time. He showed in Holland a lot but he wouldn't send anything to Germany

[...]

[on her own work] I have a record of all - it's got fuller as I've got older - but early on I would list everything that was in an exhibition, so I've got it listed where I was in a show that Henry organised for instance and what the things were and what they cost at the time. Later on I started drawing everything, so then I know more exactly which bits went where. I know there's a fairly horrible dull piece in a Scottish museum that I wish wasn't there because they'll never buy another one, which I think he sold them. I think it's in...

JB: It might be in Paisley is it?

AB: Edinburgh I think.

JB: Edinburgh.

AB: Yeah. Yeah I wish I could erase that one and make them another one. But yeah, I think I could send you the information on whenever we had actually kind of made contact as it were.

JB: That would be brilliant if you could do that. Maybe we could talk a bit more directly about Henry then and Primavera. So you were aware of him as this figure in the craft world?

AB: Yes, definitely part of the scene, a very energetic part of the scene. I can't remember when I first met him though. I know I met him a number of times but I don't know what the first time was or what the context was. Probably at an opening I should think.

JB: And how did he - I'm trying to think of the best way to phrase this - as a known person was there a feeling that you had to talk to him or you had to...

AB: No, no I think he was just very easy to talk to actually, he was just very charming and lively.

JB: Do you remember personally any sort of difficulties with him, or you always got on well?

AB: Yep. I always enjoyed talking to him. He was a bit spluttery sometimes I remember but I think I always enjoyed conversation with him.

JB: But you never exhibited at Primavera?

AB: Not knowingly. I don't think I was even part of a group show there, I think when I was in things that he organised it was him curating for somewhere else.

JB: So would that have been at maybe Kettles Yard or...

AB: Possibly, or I think there was a show in Scotland that he organised. I'm not sure if it was at a museum, perhaps it was at this museum which had bought this dull piece.

JB: I've got a comprehensive list of all the exhibitions.

AB: Oh, that would be the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh I think.

JB: And what was the experience of him buying from you then...if you could just explain how that worked with him buying as a dealer to then sell on to other institutions or the museums?

AB: I think usually the way it happened with me was in an actual exhibition rather than him just having stock, although I do think that there's two leaning black and white pieces that he took to a show and then they were part of his stock and then eventually Ed Wolf bought them. I think, I can follow that up for you. I've got a catalogue of that probably. So, I don't remember him ever coming to my studio, he must have done though mustn't he, to pick things, or whether we did it all through slide. I suspect he has been. If he did come to my studio it was probably when it was in King's Cross.

JB: I know that was something he was very keen on.

AB: Visiting the artist, yes.

JB: I think he liked that kind of handle. I don't know how unusual that is compared to other dealers and collectors whether they would visit them.

AB: I suspect that he wasn't interested in me in the first few years of my practice, because to start with I was quite flat. I'd made tiles mostly at college and then a few objects and my first things were mostly commissions for the first couple of years and then I would have a few objects going into shows and the Craft Council did a touring show of my things pretty early on in the '70s, '76 I think. But I think it was more in the '80s that he started to be interested. My work did change a bit from being more figurative to being more abstract so maybe he didn't like the figurative stuff, I don't know, but I think the first things I remember being dealt with by him were fairly early '80s.

[...]

JB: I suppose if you could just talk a little bit about the piece that's at the Shipley.

AB: I remember being surprised that he bought it.

JB: In what way?

AB: It isn't what I would expect him to like in a way. It felt quite - it's quite a loose piece - it's got writing under the surface which you can barely read. It's called Unclear Suggestions,(2005) I was very pleased that he bought it, because it's quite a major, a big large scale thing and I knew he was so old by then. I felt that's so fantastic he's still gathering these quite substantial things.

[...]

Yes, I'm sure he did a lot of work with him [Gordon Baldwin]. I feel that Henry Rothschild had some kind of affiliation to the Central more than to other art schools, but I don't know why I think that. I think it was mentioned quite a lot by staff and things so whether it was just that Gordon knew him and I think that Jerome Abbo showed, that Henry had organised, and Dan probably, Dan Arbeid.

JB: Yeah. They're all names that I know. He either showed or...I think he did a few exhibitions that were for, seems to be, graduate shows actually.

AB: Oh really. I didn't know that.

JB: I don't know if they were all Central or...

AB: Is that in the '60s?

JB: Goldsmiths?

AB: It could have been. There was a ceramics course then. It might be quite early on.

JB: In the '60s yeah, early '60s.

AB: And is there a show of his that's thought of as his kind of master work, some museum show or something that he curated, do people talk about...

JB: No I don't think anything has come up like that. A lot of people talk about him I think when he was working at Kettles Yard with Jim Ede, and bringing German potters over and really exposing...

AB: Yes and were they documented, were there catalogues for those?

JB: Yes.

AB: Oh really. That's interesting.

JB: There are. Well there's some catalogues and price lists and all those kind of things.

AB: Oh that's good. So where did you find them, with his daughter?

JB: No, they were with the archive that was deposited at the Shipley. So there's some - I should have really brought my laptop to show you a few

things – but wonderful invitation cards and things like that and the earlier ones, sort of late '40s done by Sam Smith and they're just, they're beautiful on their own. It's just an invitation card but they're really quite fresh and you think about just coming out of the war and this kind of real burst of energy.

AB: Sam Smith is the guy who carved things as well isn't he?

JB: Yes he did the little like seaside dioramas and things, quite quirky little... I think Henry [...] It's mainly a ceramics collection at the Shipley but he did a video interview for the Shipley before he died with Andrew Greg and Matthew Partington and at the end of the video interview he goes round his home showing various pieces that he has and he still had quite a few Sam Smith pieces that he had obviously quite treasured.

AB: Kept with him, yeah.

JB: So again it just shows that diversity of where his interests were.
[...]

AB: [on the piece in the Shipley] Well I know exactly when it is. I can cite it with the other ones it was with. It was part of a train of thought about gender really, about how this would be a female form for me, and some of the others were much more square and...

JB: Is it connected to some of the pieces that were at the Farnham show, because I think there was one piece that kind of reminded me slightly of it.

AB: There's one piece that is similar, with a rippled 'column' or tree trunk kind of form (Bundle, 2003)

JB: It goes in, into a kind of - I can't think of what the right word is - you can tell I'm not from a ceramic background.

AB: Is this the whitey one.

JB: Yeah I think it was.

AB: In the middle.

JB: But it's got this...(gesture with hands)

AB: Spout?

JB: Yeah, so there's the spout on one side, but then on the other side it goes in to a...(gesture with hands)

AB: Oh, that's earlier actually. That's 1990, so this is much later than that. But I did make a lot of double forms, and so both of them have an echo of the white thing,

JB: Echo, that's a good word. That's probably what I was trying to think of.
[...]

- AB: Okay. The first little gallery I showed in was in Barnes, was Tim Boon, Amalgam, it was good. That was quite an important early gallery. Very hessiany it was in the '60s and '70s when I first saw it. Hessian walls, there was a lot of hessian walls in galleries in the '60s.
- [...]
- JB: I feel like that whole, the workshop art school debate is really important because it feels like Henry had a foot in both camps and moved quite fluidly.
- AB: Yes. I think all those Europeans had a different view of it. I think the atelier somehow wasn't in conflict with the art school in the way that it was for Leach and Cardew who had come to ceramics from a very different route and they somehow saw the art school as a way of rarifying it and cutting it off from its proper routes of digging up the clay first and all that. So that was a real antithesis which Tanya Harrod writes about beautifully. But I think for all the people coming from the German central Europe context they didn't understand that. It didn't have any meaning. They just sort of synthesised it.
- JB: Yeah. I think that's a quote of Tanya Harrod's actually, the way she phrases it that thinking over it they weren't interested in that debate because they just wanted to make a living and that was the, all that kind of intellectualism of Leach's philosophy on making was, not disregarded, but sort of...
- AB: But I also think that the artistic context in those countries was much more synthesised, there wasn't gulf. Because of the Bauhaus, it had been so strong. The Bauhaus was as much about architecture as about painting as about tapestries, it was the whole spread, it wasn't class divided in a way.
- JB: It wasn't that hierarchy.
- AB: Yeah, so they brought it, they brought that thing and that was what was so great about being taught by Hans Coper in a way. It just gave us a different flavour, just it wasn't lumbered with things that that tradition had been lumbered with, I think. Yeah, you didn't have to have the honest toil part, you were allowed to just think it and do it. I think there's a huge extraordinary story in why these gentlemen turned to something so manual totally against everything their families would have expected of them.

Sandy Brown

Born in 1946, Sandy Brown's career as a ceramicist is less typical of those in her generation. She found herself in Japan in her early 20s and worked in a pottery in Mashiko. She returned to Britain in the early 1970s and set up a studio with her partner Takeshi Yasuda. In 1973 she was awarded a New Craftsman Grant from the Crafts Advisory Committee; it is likely this was the moment Rothschild, who sat on the CAC, became aware of her work. Exhibiting her work internationally, Brown is also well-known as a guest lecturer on ceramics.

Interview conducted by telephone, 23 January 2013:

*Travels to Japan 1960s, 1970s ** Training in Mashiko, Japan ** Daisei Pottery ** Japanese workshop practice ** Carrying Japanese practice back to UK 1970s ** Relationship with Takeshi Yasuda ** Use of colour in ceramics ** Setting up a studio in Hampshire, UK 1973 ** Moving to Devon 1970s ** Developing technique ** Friendships with other potters, John Maltby ** Developing colour and glazing techniques ** Exhibiting in USA ** Feeling outside the establishment ** Crafts Advisory Committee ** Experiences of selling and exhibiting ** Meeting Henry Rothschild ** Comparisons between UK and Japan approach to retail of ceramics ** Other outlets for selling in the UK ** Marianne Heller ** Henry Rothschild as a collector ** Way of making ** Own work in the Henry Rothschild Collection at the Shipley Art Gallery ** Firing techniques ***

JB: This is Janine Barker talking to Sandy Brown on the 23rd of January 2013. If we could just start with where and when you were born please?

SB: 28th of January 1946. Born in Tichborne Hampshire.

JB: And when did you first become interested in pottery?

SB: When I was in Japan.

JB: I see and when was that?

SB: That was in 19... I was in Japan from 1968 to 1973.

JB: And what had drawn you to Japan?

SB: Well I left England actually to go to Australia and for some reason I turned left in Singapore and ended up in Japan knowing nothing at all about Japan or pottery or ceramics or art or anything.

JB: So did you make it to Australia at all or...

SB: Not till much later. I went to Australia about twenty years later. I was invited to be out at a residence there and that was when I completed the journey.

JB: So what were the influences while you were in Japan? What turned your head there?

SB: Well I lived in Mashiko which coincidentally – I got drawn into ceramics in Japanese culture and coincidentally I ended up in Mashiko which is probably because it's the nearest pottery centre to Tokyo, it's only about 2

hours out of Tokyo [...] and so I ended up living in Mashiko and I was actually living about 50 yards away from Shōji Hamada who was still alive and working then, and I worked in, I was able to work in a traditional one of the few old family potteries that were going in Mashiko. Mashiko is a village of about a thousand potters and there are, there were then and there still are, about eight families who are the old families who have the big eight chamber climbing kilns and I worked in Daisei pottery which was one of the old family potteries that had an eight chamber climbing kiln and wood fired and Hamada himself, when he first arrived in Mashiko which was in the 1920s, had also worked at Daisei pottery many years earlier. So there was a whole circular influence where Hamada was influenced by the traditional language of Mashiko because prior to Hamada going there Mashiko was a place that made the traditional rice jars and pickle jars, very sort of traditional shapes with four or five Mashiko glazes and when Hamada came along he revitalised the way of using the glazes in a much more painterly and layered fashion and introduced new forms and the whole place livened up and so and then they in turn were influenced by him so the pottery where I worked, Daisei Pottery, was quite Hamada influenced. Using, well they were using the traditional Mashiko glazes which most of the potteries did use which are using rice husk ash, using a local stone to make 'kaki' which is the iron red glaze, Tenmoku black and an ash glaze, a clear ash glaze. So they're the glazes that we think of when we think of the whole Leach Hamada influenced Japanese pottery although I didn't come across Leach until much later when I was there. Actually I met Bernard Leach in Mashiko. So I worked in the Daisei pottery as a general helper and I was influenced I suppose by all sorts of things really. The Daisei pottery was a very free place because the family, it was one of those potteries where it didn't have the master potter at the top of the tree with lots of people working for him. Most potteries have. This was, in fact none of the family actually made pots. They'd inherited the kiln and the business like farmers inherited land but they didn't make pots, they got their various nephews and sons-in-law and cousins and people to come in and make pots to fill the kilns so much more relaxed open atmosphere which was how they were able to incorporate me and they were much freer, they were very free in what they made and very fresh and they would chuck glazes on pots and play around and be experimental not actually doing many glaze tests but they were experimental in the way they used the traditional language and so it was a great place for me to be. It was a wonderful place for me to be. I love that sort of relationship, that healthy balance of a strong tradition with an open exploratory imaginative freshening approach that they had.

JB: So there was never a feel that you ought not to do it that way and you have to do it a certain way. It was...

SB: No, no, not at all which it could have been if I'd gone to any of the other potteries where there would be one famous name at the top and you have to do it that way. No it was much more open and so it suited me fine.

JB: So that was really your training. You had no formal art school training or...

SB: No, no. Exactly so I didn't go to art school. I've never been to an art school. I have taught in art schools. I have taught drawing, I've taught ceramics, I've taught throwing back in this country and I've even been invited to open a new art school which I did in North Devon two or three years ago but I've

never actually attended an art school as a student and actually I'm very glad I didn't because when I came back to England [1973] art schools then and ceramic courses in particular were incredibly conservative and they had quite a narrow sense of what they thought ceramics should be. Now the field is much more open and, you know, it's much more open but then it wasn't and so my work – and of course the other important thing is that I met Takeshi Yasuda in Mashiko and we came back to England together and he was effectively my art school really. He was a great person to work with. He was just about a couple of years older than me but he had been just at the point of setting up his own studio. He had his own studio going in Mashiko for a few years before he came to England and he has a really good technical and creative understanding and so he was very supportive when I was being expressionistic and free and quite playful and lively. He absolutely loved it and supported it and he really believed in me and that was great for my confidence. Yeah he was quite crucial actually so that was how I was able to develop my style outside of an art school environment and outside of the mainstream ceramics environment then and so because my work looked very different, I was one of the first people to use colour, there was this prevailing belief that you shouldn't use colour in ceramics then, in fact, it should all be reduced stoneware and there weren't very many...I didn't know of any people doing sculptural or abstract work then, they may have been around but I didn't know of any. So it was a much more conservative feel and so my work with its direct expressionistic handling of clay and strong colours looked very different and to be able to handle there's a good bit of...it's received, a lot of people absolutely loved it and some people didn't. Some people thought I shouldn't be doing things that are so different and to help me withstand that, it was a bit of a buffeting early on; Takeshi was really helpful in helping me to keep going down my path.

JB: So you were in Japan for 5 years.

SB: Yeah.

JB: So when you came back you say a little bit about the reception there but how did you establish yourself when you came back?

SB: Yes it took a while actually. It took a while for me to find my way, for us both to find our way, because neither of us had ever worked in England in ceramics before so we started off by moving in with my mother and she had a small cottage in Hampshire [...] and we set up the studio in her garage and her conservatory became a showroom and we got planning permission to put a sign up at the end of the road saying pottery and we got a grant. We were one of the first people to get a grant from what was then the Craft Advisory Committee. It later became the Crafts Council. But we were very fortunate to get a grant that was enough to cover as a maintenance grant and also to buy in some equipment, so it helped us get started in the first year and also I was earning money then. My Japanese was very good and I worked as an interpreter for Japanese television when they were making programmes here. I earned very good money then actually. I had wads of cash. And we got started by building a kiln to – we had a wood fired kiln in the garden because that's what we knew. Takeshi had had a wood fired kiln in Japan in Mashiko so we started off by building a wood fired kiln doing basically high earthenware really firing to about 1150, 1200 and we were digging up clay from the garden and trying to

learn about the materials and about the ceramics world in this country which was actually very very different to what we'd both known in Japan. And then my mother wanted to move house, that's right, or actually we all decided we'd do it together but she wanted more land so we decided to move to Devon and that's when we moved to Devon after two or three years and bought a place which had some more land and more outbuilding so that we could set up the pottery and she could keep a smallholding which is what she wanted to do. So we all moved down to Devon together and we did the same thing again which is set up a studio in one of the outbuildings. This time we had a much bigger barn to use as a gallery. We got planning permission and a sign outside so we could sell directly. Neither of us knew anybody else hardly in the ceramics world and so we were just trying to find a way to make it work and the way to make it work was to sell direct from the gallery and well we were wood firing then. I wasn't doing any of the work that I'm known for now, that came a bit later. We were wood firing, doing natural ash, looks a bit in the same neck of the woods as Svend Bayer and Nic Collins are now. It was that sort of work, undecorated, unglazed and it went okay, it was selling very well but I wasn't really fulfilled doing that. I felt the kiln was doing the bit that I wanted to do which was basically decorate the pots and so I started doing glazed ware, I built a different kiln and [13.05 unclear] and doing a little bit more oxidised firing using slips and glazes. At that time I wasn't using any colour and then relationships between my mother and myself and Takeshi were a bit difficult. We were living on top of each other which isn't a healthy thing. Children are supposed to leave home and I hadn't left home really. Even though I'd been all the way around the world I'd basically come back to where I'd started and so we all needed more space and so we moved out. Takeshi and I had bought a small house in South Molton which is the nearest town and I set up my studio there. He kept his studio on the farm for a while and also at this time Takeshi was teaching in Farnham, he'd made contact with, we got to know Sebastian Blackie, and he was teaching in Farnham. When Henry Hammond was there he would go up one or two days a week and that was the beginning of getting to know people in the ceramics world in this country. I think we did make, when we were still living in Hampshire, we had done a few talks in Farnham at that course about the ceramics world in Japan and we were beginning to make friends here that way and then I moved to South Molton, had a gas kiln then at this point because I didn't want a wood firing kiln at all and Takeshi had also at this point been invited to do a residency in Norway. John Maltby who we also got to know because he lives in Devon, John Maltby recommended Takeshi to do a residency at the art school in Bergen in Norway and so Takeshi was away for about four months, five months. He decided to do electric kiln firing while he was – no, gas kiln, he was working with a gas kiln there and so then we decided that when we moved into South Molton I would have a gas kiln and fired oxidised stoneware and I would start to use...find out what sort of oxides and colourants were available at stoneware, and at that time everybody thought there was no colour that was available for stoneware. All the colours that were available then were used for manufacturing which uses earthenware and one day somebody gave me a glaze catalogue which was made for the factories in Stoke-on-Trent, a sales catalogue showing some of the colours that the earthenware factories were using and I was amazed at all of these colours and I couldn't believe what a range there was and why weren't we able to use them, why weren't we using them? But I was told even by the suppliers, when I tried to get some samples, that oh no they won't work at stoneware, they're not

designed for stoneware, they'll burn out and so I decided to try them anyway so I just said please just send me those loads of samples and let me try them out and a lot of them did burn out but for all of them were quite a few colours that were still okay at stoneware temperatures so I gradually started incorporating them into the repertoire of materials that I was using. And then another supplier sent me new colours that were just being developed which were colours that we now know they're called Rosso Red, Coral Pink and Mandarin Yellow and they're in all the glaze catalogues now but they were the first high temperature oxidised stoneware colours and I got them first, luckily just because people knew. They work very well, they're very good colours at stoneware temperatures. They're stabilised colours using chrome oxide and tin and frit and they've fritted and stabilised so they're strong colours at high temperatures and so they became associated with me. I made a big impression on British ceramics at that time because of the colour and also the fairly vigorous clay handling at the time and actually it did me a lot of good because I got a lot of recognition and I was invited to exhibit in the USA and all sorts of places. Yeah.

JB: It's a very remarkable beginning for you.

SB: Yeah it was.

JB: How were you received by other potters that had gone through the art school? Was there any...

SB: Well at that time, how was I received by other potters? Do you know, I don't know. If I think about this I actually don't know. I think that some potters took a bit of a while to come around actually. It was well received by places, the galleries in London, places like Contemporary Applied Arts which was then they were called the British Craft Centre and they were in Earlam Street and the CPA sold very well in all of those places and lots of galleries around and the Crafts Council, because they invited me to exhibit in the USA, and the galleries here were very keen. I think some of the potters actually took a bit of time. Svend Bayer, who's actually a really good friend of mine, because he lives not far away, and we see each other quite often, he told me about ten years ago when I'd been doing it for about fifteen years, he said your colourful work it really works doesn't it, and I think he was just saying it because it really was beginning to strike him for the first time almost but it's so different to his work that it took him a while to come around to it I think.

JB: It just seems, to have such confidence to come back and set up, what...

SB: I know. It's amazing isn't it? It scares me now to think about it that I did. Sometimes I think that a bit of ignorance is a good thing. I didn't know what I was doing really. I just came back and got on with it.

JB: Well that was very interesting. What were your experiences of selling and exhibiting?

SB: Well actually, funny I was thinking about this before you rang, that actually probably the first gallerist that I actually met was Henry Rothschild and he came to the, when we first moved down to Devon and we moved with my mother onto the small holding, before I moved into South Molton, when we were wood firing, he came to visit us and he was the first gallerist I met and

was absolutely charming and delightful and it was great to meet him. I think that could well have been after Takeshi had been to Norway because I seem to remember that Takeshi was beginning to do glazed ware then rather than the unglazed wood firing work that we were both doing and he was using the Mashiko glazes. While he was in Norway he was reconstituting the Mashiko glazes that he had used without the natural materials but from the chemical formula he was mixing the glazes using the chemical constituents and so made very successful sort of...so he made rice ash glaze without the rice ash by using their chemical compositions and so I think that was where we were at. I think that's the work we were making when Henry Rothschild first came and he bought quite a few pieces for Primavera and it was a really good experience to be part moving out into the wider world. That was an introduction to it and he was very charming, very encouraging, very interested.

JB: And do you know through what means he'd got to hear of you?

SB: I know, I wonder. I wonder. It's quite possible that it was through John Maltby because – yeah I think that's probably the most likely.

JB: I know he did sit on the Crafts Advisory Committee for a short time.

SB: Did he?

JB: Yeah so that might have been around that time.

SB: He wasn't there because I know...well I don't know, see I'm not entirely sure who was on the panel when we were there because – yes he might have been there. Yes that's possible he was there because we didn't know anybody and we just sat in front of a few faces and I didn't know who the faces were. I know one of them was David Leach, that's the only one I can remember. I don't know who the others were. But yes it might have been him. That's interesting. It hadn't struck me.

JB: Did you ever visit Primavera? That would have been in Cambridge I suppose at that time?

SB: No. Neither of us did actually. I don't quite know why not. I think probably that we weren't very good at keeping in touch with him really. I think we just were a bit, I suppose, ignorant about how life works and just thought that well we'll just carry on making it and people will turn up and of course you have to be a bit more proactive than that and so we didn't really – we were a bit lazy I think in not really keeping in touch with him and letting him know what we were doing. He kept in touch with us. He did come and visit but we didn't actually - we were a bit, I don't know, ignorant really about how to – and I think there was a period that also, I have to say this, that I was a bit bolshie and a bit 'anti' the whole exhibition world. This took about probably seven or eight years for me to grow out of when I first came back from Japan. Takeshi grew out of it first and because he applied to join the CPA and was actually turned down, which was quite extraordinary, and John Maltby kicked up a huge fuss and then it ended up that he resubmitted and he was accepted the second time but I remember at that time, and this was in the 70s when we were living on the farm and doing wood firing, I was saying oh well that's a very bourgeois thing to do, why do you want to become a part of them? I was a bit like Groucho Marx, who would want to

join something that would have you as a member. It was just really quite teenager tantrum like behaviour and so I was a bit withdrawn I think from the world at that time. It wasn't until I moved into South Molton and I started to in a way develop the more colourful flamboyant work really that I started to think, well it's a great thing, why don't we want to exhibit, why don't we want to be part of the CPA and other organisations. So maybe that was why we didn't actually [keep?] up with Henry Rothschild at the time.

JB: Do you think that was informed by your time in Japan if things weren't done that way? Were there those type of organisations in Japan that were...

SB: Well I think that's true yes. I think there were no gallery systems. When I was in Japan there wasn't a gallery system. There weren't people like Henry Rothschild who had galleries. What happened was that all potters basically had to do it all themselves so what they would do is that they would apply to rent spaces in the big department stores and the top of the tree were the equivalent of Selfridges in Tokyo and that was where all the best potters exhibited and the way that worked was that you would rent a space, if you were well known, you would rent a space in Takashimaya, which is the big department store in Tokyo, and you would exhibit for a week. You would be given a space and you would exhibit there for a week and you would have to do all the marketing, all the mailing, all the photography, all the promotions and the private view and everything. In fact they didn't have a private view, what would happen is the potter would be there for a week and so there would be a continual sort of...and so the potters, that was a bit unknown really and I think you're quite right to ask that question. There wasn't that system so we didn't quite know what the...how to...and we didn't realise I think the significance of Henry Rothschild until quite a bit later.

JB: What were the other types of galleries or retail outlets that you were selling to at that time or exhibiting in?

SB: Well I was exhibiting in what was the British Crafts Council, in the CPA and in Oxford Gallery and the Devon Guild and I don't know where else. I should have dug out my CV. And also exhibiting from when we moved to South Molton we had a small house which had a, it was in the town, and it had a small gallery that was right in the town so it was a good retail place so we were selling from there as well, as well as galleries. I'm just trying to think which galleries at all now. Oh then not long after that, that's right, Marianne Heller started exhibiting in Germany and Marianne Heller, she started in the early '80s, late '70s early '80s, operating from her house. In fact she's having her 35th anniversary this year because I'm having a big show with her so that will tell us when she started, so it must be late '70s isn't it?

JB: Yeah.

SB: So we met her very early on. I was one of the first people to exhibit with her when she used to exhibit from her house and then now she's moved into one of the biggest galleries in Europe in Heidelberg. So she used to come over quite often and buy work and that has been a longstanding relationship, I've been showing with her every two or three years since. And then for a while Tony Birks had a gallery. Oh Amalgam, that's right I had my first London show with Amalgam when Tim Boon was running

Amalgam. Yeah so there was Tim Boon. And then a bit later on in the mid '80s Tony Birks started up the Alpha House Gallery and I showed there quite a few times.

JB: If we can come back to Henry, what were your other notable encounters with Henry or with Primavera?

SB: I remember him coming down to buy one of the pieces that was in the collection, the basket piece [HRC: 1995.164] you sent me the picture of, and I remember him coming down with Ronald [Pile] because Ronald used to come down a few times when he was working for Henry in Cambridge and I think there was a period when I saw Ronald more often than Henry because Ronald used to do a lot of the travelling around. And then Ronald and Henry came together, both of them came to South Molton and I remember the day they bought that piece and I was really pleased that they liked it because it was one of my favourites and it's quite a robust piece and I was really pleased that he liked it too.

JB: Have we got the date right for that then?

SB: What date have you got?

JB: '93.

SB: '93?

JB: Yeah that seems a bit late.

[...]

SB: No, it must be earlier than that. No, it must be earlier than that. Yeah it must be late '80s because Takeshi and I separated in '92 and it was before that so on my senses it would be late '80s.

JB: Yeah. It's a good thing to pick up on. I was thinking that those dates didn't seem quite right. So did you know that he was buying for himself, that piece?

SB: I didn't no. No. No that was very nice to know actually. I don't think I realised it until the Shipley Gallery wrote and told me they had it.

JB: It is a very interesting piece. Was that part of a sequence of similar items or...

SB: I didn't make very many pieces like that, no. It was made by spreading out a slab of clay on a cloth and making the slab by using the heel of my hand just to spread the clay out so it's got that rhythm, it's got...the shape of my hand is in the rhythms of the slab. I could see it even in the photograph and then folding, just folding the slab around so it's got a nice undulating texture on it and I only did that two or three times. It was often when I've had a bit of clay left over from something else and was just messing about which is why it's quite so fresh. The handle is made by twisting clay. It's probably a...somebody told me once that they thought it was a Japanese inspired shape. That had never struck me before and I don't know, maybe

it is. It's not the traditional English shape that you see in collections in the V&A is it?

JB: No.

SB: It has come from Japanese meal time. I don't know. I don't know where it came from.

JB: I think it's a lovely piece the playfulness of it and the texture.

SB: Thank you. Thank you. I'm glad you do. It's just decorated with manganese oxide and bit of white slip on the clay and then its manganese oxide and a trailed blue glaze and it's not glazed overall which is actually another thing that I like about it because the clay, it allows the contrast between the matt clay and the glossy glaze, that contrast is there as well.

JB: The other piece which is the plate [HRC: 1997.3450].

SB: Yeah.

JB: Could you just talk a little bit about that?

SB: Well the plate is a form that I've [made?] for a long time. I call them roundish plates. They're dinner plates but they're also paintings. They're also vehicles for the paintings and I've made a lot of them over the years and I don't think I've ever painted any one the same twice and I think of them as, they are dinner plates. I've made quite a few. I've been commissioned to make dinner services for quite a few people and I've always done it in such a way that I have the freedom to decorate them all in a different way so they're really a blank canvas. Because with some of them, like the basket form, the other piece there, the clay handling is quite strong in that and so that then means that the decorating has to follow the clay handling. The expressionistic use of clay so when I come to decorate it I'm following what I've done with the clay and so I like working that way and I also like working where I've got a clean canvas where I don't have to follow what the clay has done. I can just forget about that and paint quite freely and that's what the dinner plates provide. They're slab made over a hump plaster mould and they're not a perfect circle, they're roundish. You use a just freehand drawn circle to make the shape and then they're covered with white slip which gives a nice clear background for the colours and then I can just paint them in whatever – in fact the painting on the piece that is in that collection is one of those colours that I – it's got the Rosso Red which was a pinky colour actually, one of those colours that I was using right early on. Yeah so I think there's some blue on it. I haven't actually got the photograph in front of me because I'm not right in front of my computer where you sent the email but I remember it's got blue and a bit of green dollops as well hasn't it?

JB: Yeah.

SB: So the plates are – that plate would have been decorated fairly quickly without any planning or designing or none of that stuff. It's just creative doodling really because I have all the colours open in front of me, I have all the glaze buckets on the table in front of me and the brushes, each

brush is in the pot and I just pick them up and doodle and something happens.

JB: It sounds like a very freeing way to work.

SB: It is yeah. It is. I have to give myself permission to fail and I have to give...to help me relax because it's really about being relaxed and not worrying and being too precious about it and as long as I feel relaxed, as long as I feel well it's okay, it might work, it might not, as long as I'm relaxed and not tense about – because I used to get quite tense and think this has got to work, I really want to do a good one and then I can't do it then. I have to just let go. I have to relax and then that's when it's, things happen.

JB: My knowledge of ceramics before coming to this project was minimal but I do find it very interesting in terms of how much seems to be left up to the fate of the kiln and how it's all going to work in there. I find that very...an interesting way of...it must be an interesting way to work when you're not quite sure how things are going to turn out.

SB: Yes. Yes because even although, when I'm firing now I'm firing in an electric kiln now and most of the time I do still have a gas kiln, so the actual quality of the firing is not going to affect the work much like wood firing where it has a huge effect. The type of firing has a huge effect on the finished result or some gas kilns when the potters are playing around with the atmosphere and the type of flame inside the kiln and that can have a huge effect on the colours of the glazes and the way the clay looks at the end. But now the quality of the firing is not what affects the...it's just basically heat that my glazes need. They don't need a particular atmosphere. But even with that, even when I've tried to allow everything else to be fairly consistent so I don't mess about with the content of the glazes too much, I don't mess about with the type of firing so that that allows me to be the inconsistent one, allows me to be the one that moves about and changes and plays but even then I have no idea what the pieces are going to look like because when I'm painting or when I'm playing with the clay, I'm using the clay and the colours, it all looks very different in its raw state. There's the copper green glaze which is a transparent glaze which is coloured with copper oxide to make it green and the cobalt blue glaze that I use, both of them when they are raw are in fact a pale grey. So I can't really tell. Obviously I know which one's which but I don't know what they're going to look like and also it's very hard to tell, even after all these years, how strong the colour is in its raw state. So I don't know if it's going to be a really deep green or a pale green or a really strong, even with the pink, a strong pink or a washy pink and how the colours are going to work in relation to each other because that can affect them as well. I don't know that until after I see them coming out of the kiln. [...] it is a form of alchemy really. It's sort of magic.

JB: That's very interesting. I think they are lovely pieces. They're very playful. They do stand out in the collection I think.

SB: Oh thanks.

JB: There's a lot of Leach and a lot of Cardew and a lot of browns and things like that so that's very interesting. Is there anything else that you think would help with my project with regard to Henry?

SB: Well I think now that when he came down and bought that piece, because I don't know where he got the plate from, I don't know where that came from. I just remember him coming down to buy the basket piece. I think that it's actually very touching that he was open to that because I know his prenominant, his initial introduction into ceramics, was with reduced stoneware, Cardew, Leach sort of aesthetic and it was very touching to me that he was open to some sort of changes and that he welcomed it because he was hugely supportive and took a childlike delight in what was going on when he came down and I think that's a very generous spirited thing for him to have done and as I didn't really realise that at the time. I was a bit young and now I think about that and I think it's quite remarkable really.

[...]

JB: That's been wonderful. It's an interesting career progression that you've had. Quite different from other potters that I've spoke to who've had more of a formal training I suppose.

SB: Yeah I think in many ways the fact that I didn't have a formal training has allowed me to develop in a different way and I think although I really didn't have any choice about it, because I didn't even know art schools existed, I didn't even know that was possible so I think I'm very pleased with the way I learned and the way I developed. I don't feel I've missed out. Yeah interesting isn't it how your life turns out.

JB: Yeah very bold choices to make I think.

SB: Yeah.

Jane Hamlyn

Born in 1940, Jane Hamlyn came to pottery in 1968 through adult education classes. In 1972 she was accepted to study at Harrow College of Art. She went on to establish Millfield Pottery in 1975. She is best known for her functional ware and work with salt glazes.

Interview conducted by telephone, 10 October 2012:

*Early life in London ** First experiences with pottery ** Primavera in the 1960s ** Nursing career late 1940s ** Family ** Adult education courses late 1960s ** Studying at Harrow ** Primavera Sloane Street ** Craft Council setting up grant 1975 ** Craft Potter's Association ** Primavera Cambridge ** Meeting Henry Rothschild ** Ronald Pile at Cambridge ** Henry Rothschild's character ** Relationship between makers and buyers ** Starting up a workshop ** Primavera as a place to look at other's work ** Relationship with William Ismay ** Differences between Henry Rothschild and William Ismay ** Henry Rothschild background ** William Ismay ** Henry Rothschild Collection at the Shipley Art Gallery ** Own work in the Henry Rothschild Collection ** Collectors and their collections ** William Ismay ** Henry Rothschild as collector ***

JB: So you already answered a few of my questions which was really useful on this word document. So just to clarify that you were born in 1940.

JH: I'll tell you if you go wrong.

JB: And whereabouts were you born?

JH: I was born in London.

[...]

JB: When did you first become interested in pottery?

[...]

JH: [From prior correspondence:

As a child 8 years old on holiday in Brixham

As a student nurse 19 years old I bought a lovely green & white tin-glazed cup & saucer at Briglin Pottery near Baker Street.

Newly married & living in London in 1962/3 I bought a very large Coxwold Pottery mixing bowl at Elizabeth David's Kitchenware Shop near Sloane Square & discovered Primavera nearby. I saw Lucie Rie pots displayed in the window & could just about afford a simple thrown, oval white bowl with a dark rim.

It was a functional piece but I rarely used it.]

JB: [As an 8 year old] Was that a practical interest or interested in...

JH: Well how interested can a child of 8 be? I was taken to a pottery and my mother bought some little pots and I remember the pots, they were earthenware with spots on so it's very hard to tell in terms of influence which is really what the questions is about. Where and how far back in one's childhood these things have an effect. Michael Cardew was taken

to see Fishley Holland when he was a child so you ask me when did I first become interested and the first time when I can remember becoming interested in pottery, you could write an essay on what that means, was when I remember being about – I must have been 7 or 8 in Brixham and there was a pottery called Brixham Pottery actually which people now collect so actually it was good stuff. It wasn't studio pottery in a Leach tradition it was – that would be 1947, '48 we're talking about, so it's post war – not peasant pottery, appealing to a young married. I suppose that was just before the Festival of Britain in 1951 so it was modernist if you'd like to call it that rather than pseudo-pottery but it was nevertheless thrown on the wheel, made by hand and decorated with spots, so certainly I didn't make similar things or anything as a practitioner, but I've only written as a child 8 years old on holiday in Brixham. Then the first pots I actually bought was when I was a student nurse, when I was 19 when I actually had my own money to buy and used to go to antique shops and buy little odd bits of pottery so I suppose that fostered an interest in hand made nice things.

JB: When did you first start making then? Was that before you took your art education?

JH: [...] adult education classes in 1968 to '72 so I was a young mother, in fact I was about 28, I had 3 small children under 5 and the one in the middle who was 3 was killed in an accident so I went to my local adult education classes because I thought I can't stay at home with a baby and the older one was at school. I thought shall I do home wine making, soft furnishing or pottery so I decided to do pottery because I was already interested in pottery. So I went there until my 2 remaining children were at the school and then my husband was teaching part time while I did that. Then in 1972 I applied and was accepted as a full time mature student on the 2 year studio pottery course at Harrow. [...]

JB: Just to go back to what you mention in that first answer about Primavera and seeing the Lucie Rie pots do you remember much about the feel of Primavera as it was going in and what kind of atmosphere it was?

JH: I was in my early 20s. My husband was a student at the Royal College of Art. We had virtually no money and as I remember it it was near Sloane Square, I can't remember the name of the street, but it was double fronted with a set back door with window either side. As I remember it, I might be wrong; it might only have been a window on the right. I'm now 72 so remembering when I was 22 is asking quite a lot.

JB: Whatever you can remember.

JH: And I remember the Lucie Rie pots in the window on the right and I know they were those candle-shaped. I didn't think of it at the time but I suppose it might be said they were vaguely phallic although they were like candles, tall – fairly tall, actually some of them were quite - so white, straight up, cylindrical but at the top rounded with the hole in the top but rounded, curved round at the top, they weren't straight at the top, and then they had a small hole and they had a white volcanic kind of glaze on the outside and I don't remember whether maybe even one or two of them might have had a very simple flower arrangement in them. They were sort of vases. And I think I went away, I can't remember exactly, but I know that I did save up and go back and buy a bowl, with a simple thrown foot ring you could only

see from the bottom, thrown and then I think when it was fairly soft made oval and it had a dark brown rim. Later on I went to pottery classes at the Putney school of art and a really nice woman called Mrs Rompala there helped me and in fact I gave the Lucie Rie bowl to her because she was such a good teacher.

JB: That's lovely.

JH: So the feeling of the shop, I suppose I was fairly awe struck, I was young, poor and I should think I thought it was rather sophisticated. It was a gallery, it wasn't – my memory of it was that I don't remember anything ethnic about it; I only remember these very sophisticated things – and I suppose it must have been about the third thing I bought because I bought the green and white tin-glazed cup and saucer at Briglin when I was 19 and then I bought a very big, lovely green mixing bowl at Elizabeth David's kitchenware shop and then I must have round about that same early married time bought the Lucie Rie. Yes I didn't really think about pots much at all because I was young and we'd lost a little boy and we were getting on and then I went to adult education classes and then I started getting pottery books out of the library and I've always made things, I've always been a maker and my mother liked going to antique shops and my father was a carpenter and joiner who made ship models in his spare time. Very good ones. In fact one of them is in the National Maritime museum. So making was in my genes, as it were, but I didn't think of being a potter until I found out that there was a course at Harrow and you could train to set up, to be a self-employed potter but it was really nothing to do with Primavera at that stage.

JB: No I understand that. When you finished your course and started to sell and exhibit you talk about your application for the setting up grant with the Craft Council and David Canter giving you first solo exhibition.

JH: [From prior correspondence:

When I applied for a CRAFT COUNCIL setting-up grant in 1975, David Canter (one of the interview panel, founder of CRANKS restaurants & Hon.Sec .of CPA & proprietor of Guildford's 'Craftwork' Gallery) offered me a Solo Exhibition on the strength of the pots I brought to the interview. The show was enthusiastically reviewed in CRAFTS magazine by Rosemary Wren & 'put me on the map' as a promising new talent. Also in 1976 I was elected Full Member Craft Potters Association where I have continued to sell & exhibit , with a Solo Show there most recently in 2011. I have earned a modest income as a full-time potter & my work is represented in many national & international private & public collections including the V & A.]

JB: Do you remember when you first started dealing with Primavera or with Henry?

JH: I think, as I said, I don't know whether he read the article by Rosemary Wren in Crafts Magazine. I imagine that he might have – well more than likely that he would read Crafts Magazine because he had a shop who was looking out for stuff to sell and we're now talking about the shop in

Cambridge, not the one in Sloane Square. I can't remember when that shop closed.

JB: The one on Sloane Square closed in '67.

JH: Okay. And when did the one open in Cambridge?

JB: It opened a few years before that, I think it was '64 [1960]

JH: Okay. So at one time he had 2 shops.

JB: Yes that's right; there was a bit of an overlap.

JH: And then he closed the one in London and my dealings with him when I was making and he was buying for then was the shop in Cambridge. I don't know how he heard about me but I suppose I was the new potter on the block and had been reviewed in Crafts Magazine and in a sense David Canter not only was the founder and ran the Cranks restaurant, he also had a gallery himself called Craft Work in Guildford so I suppose in a sense that gallery was his (Henry's) kind of rival. It was in Surrey, in Guildford as opposed to in Cambridge but people in business know who else is doing similar things so presumably Henry might have thought well if it's good enough for 'Craftwork' and David Canter then maybe we should have some in the shop. As I remember the shop in Cambridge, I haven't been there for a long time, but it's fairly small window. You go in on the right and in those days you went downstairs, most of the ethnic stuff and the more valuable and more prestigious things tended to be at the back and higher up, I suppose because they were valuable and expensive. Then you went downstairs on the right and when you got downstairs there were lots of stock shelves with mugs and teapots and functional things which is it was that part of the shop to begin with that Henry was buying for from me and that was the only part of the shop that I could afford to buy anything in myself. So later on he would buy occasionally a slightly better more expensive piece that he would put upstairs but I had more to do with Ronald Pile actually than I did with Henry because Henry would come in the early years but latterly even when Henry was still the proprietor Ronald Pile, I'm sure you know this, worked for him and became his right hand man and did quite a lot of the buying. He would go to people that Henry had already vetted and that Primavera already stocked but obviously Henry trusted Ronald to know the sort of things that would be suitable for their shop.

JB: Yes I spoke to Ronald last week actually, we did an interview together which was very interesting because he started, I think it was '76, he started working for Henry so it's about the same time that you were beginning to be active.

JH: Yes.

JB: What could you tell me about the personality of Henry? You talk a little bit about the way that he would choose things.

JH: I don't know if I could say I liked him; I didn't dislike him but he was not exactly distant and he wasn't exactly unfriendly but he was slightly, not exactly patronising and not exactly superior but a little bit of all that, slightly patrician. I wanted him to buy my work, I needed the money and the

relationship – in those days, it's different now because I'm as it were somebody, but in those days I was a nobody who needed the money. I was a young setting up potter and so in a sense that relationship was based on his patronage even though he was buying from me at wholesale prices. So yeah it wasn't cold and it wasn't warm. It was lukewarm I suppose you'd say. I don't know really. He was just somebody with a shop who bought my work and he wasn't the only one. Even those days people who had shops and galleries would come and I had a stock room and they'd choose what they wanted and pay me and take the work away. In his case he didn't pay me there and then, he would pay me at the end of the month and he was quite picky but then that's part of the job. The people say - I say 'they' meaning not just Henry but all people who come and buy from you – they know their shop, they know their customers' taste and of course they have their own taste and so that relationship is never entirely comfortable because they have the power and you need the money. So he was okay but I was a young woman, I was 32 when I went to Harrow and when I left I was 35 which now seems quite young. How old are you by the way?

JB: I'm 29.

JH: Well you may – I don't know, you're still young, you probably do – but 35 you think you're still quite young and I was starting up and it takes 10 years when you set up on your own and make things it takes you 10 years really before you – you're acquiring a repertoire of knowledge. I never started off by making a standard range so every time anybody came to buy stuff there'd be new things, there would be some things that were better, some things that were not so good. How much you charge for things is always a difficult one and I know of none of the people that ever came to buy from me would argue about the price or would say this is too expensive. But Henry was obviously always very aware of how much things were and I suppose he thought with the mark up how much he would be selling them for so that was always a perfectly legitimate factor in our relationship but you have to understand that if you're the maker of something you have deep insecurities about what you've made and what other people choose and what they like, especially early on in your career when you're not too sure yourself, is sometimes quite puzzling the things they pick and you don't always know why and it is sometimes worrying or you think why on earth did he buy that thing rather than this thing, why did he always buy the cheap stuff that wasn't so good and why it was I made it cheaper because I didn't think it was so good. So all the kind of insecurities within the artist's own make up come into play in those situations and certainly in my relationship with Henry Rothschild. We never had a cross word although I know of people who refused to speak to him, refused to deal with him and found him quite objectionable. But he was slightly paternalistic towards me.

[...]

It's quite difficult to explain those sort of things because they often, at the time you don't really think about them.

JB: Yeah you're looking back and evaluating it from there aren't you.

JH: Yes.

- JB: Talking to Ronald last week he did talk about Henry would on occasion offer advice to potters starting up. Did you ever feel like there was an element of that there?
- JH: No. I've been in business since 1975. No. I wouldn't have thought it was the place of a shopkeeper to tell me – I think at the time I had no idea that he collected pots himself, he was just a shopkeeper as far as I was concerned. It was a nice shop and it was in Cambridge. No, the only advice I would have ever sought or welcomed or found useful would have been from my peer group and other potters whose work I respected and people like Michael Casson who taught at Harrow and was always available to ex-students and I was a member of the CPA, I was later chair of the CPA and those sort of things you discuss amongst yourselves and as far as the aesthetic side of things my husband has always been available but not interfering in matters aesthetic, so if I wanted to know anything about that kind of thing I'd be more inclined to ask him and compare what I was doing with what everybody else was doing at the time from a business point of view. You'd go to Primavera and see how much Johnny Leach was charging for a mug. You'd go and look. I think this is common practice. You see what your peer group is doing, what their price range is and think well I suppose I have to price my things accordingly.
- JB: Which as you say must be very difficult to judge something like that and to not sell yourself short but also keeping up with the market as well.
- JH: Yes sure but I think artists' insecurities never go away. So my accountant came last week and he said do you think you're charging enough and I said well it's a question of cash flow. I don't know. I don't get paid £7 an hour, let alone £10 an hour but that's another matter which we're not going into at the moment.
- JB: I understand. You mentioned in an email that we had back and forwards there about William Ismay and that's one area that I'm interested in is the difference between Rothschild and other collectors or exhibitors and Bill Ismay is obviously a very significant person in all of that.
- JH: Yeah.
- JB: How do you think they compared with each other in their way of going about business?
- JH: Well I think the phrase "compared with each other" is a bit misleading. What you're asking me is what's the difference between them?
- JB: Yes.
- JH: Well from my perspective I knew Bill, I have to call him Bill because he was Bill to me, I knew Bill Ismay very well. I knew him over a long period of time. I went to his house, he came to my shows, he came to my exhibitions and when he died I was executor of his will, I cleared his house, sorted out all the stuff and know a lot about him. Henry Rothschild, I think one of the significant things about Henry Rothschild was his name, the word Rothschild I should think, I don't know if it's still the case, but it's a name that's associated with money, privilege and Henry always used to say I'm not one of the rich ones but I suppose having a name like Rothschild is

probably a bit of a cross to bear because people will always think that you're wealthy – so what I'm saying is I've no idea about Henry's background. I think I read somewhere that he actually served in the war so presumably although his family might have emigrated in the '30s he must have been a British citizen, was he?

JB: Well he emigrated in '33 and became a British citizen.

JH: Okay. How old was he then?

JB: In '33 he would have been...

JH: Early 20s, late 20s?

JB: He was born in 1913 so he was 20 when he came over.

JH: So he was already a pretty well formed adult at say 20. That's only 9 years younger than you so he was the Henry that grew up in – where did he come from, Austria?

JB: He came from Frankfurt in Germany.

JH: Germany. Okay. So I imagine from a well heeled privileged family.

JB: Yeah, very middle-class family.

JH: Yes okay. And had the wherewithal to get over here and presumably a network of friends and relatives to help him. Was he educated in England?

JB: Yes he did a year at university in Frankfurt and then he transferred to Cambridge so he actually...

JH: And what was his subject?

JB: Chemistry actually.

JH: Okay so he was a scientist.

JB: Well his family business, his father's business, was in scrap metal so his father encouraged him to do chemistry. I don't think he had any interest in it.

JH: Quite [28.20 unclear].

JB: But apparently he used to sneak off and attend history of art lectures so he was pushed to do chemistry but I don't think he really, from what I gather, had the passion for it.

JH: Right. So in fact my understanding that his was a very privileged background is not the case? Bill Ismay was a single child and I'm not quite sure about - his father may have died young, I don't quite know about his father much – but certainly in his teens he was living with his mother in the house that he died in. He was in the war, he was in signals in India and the first pot he ever had anything to do with was he was on a train and the guys were going along with chai cups which are those little terracotta cups they have tea in and you'd buy a cup of tea, you'd drink it from this little

terracotta cup and then you'd just throw the cup away. Their potters made them in their millions and millions. That got him first interested and then when he came back to England and went back to Wakefield he started buying Yorkshire Potters pots. He started finding out – he was a librarian, it took him a while to get a job after the war but he did get a job eventually. I think he might have worked in 2 museums and then at libraries and then had his own library I think, worked in his own library - and from buying Yorkshire Potters he then realised there was a wider world. He learned about it and I don't think - he never called himself a collector. He would say I've got some pots. So he did have that sense of his own ego, if you like, being associated with his collection. Certainly not initially and he obviously did have an ego but he wasn't making a collection initially I think although as the years went by and he began to accumulate more and more and he knew more and more and he used to go down to London. He bought a fantastic collection of Michael Cardew who was a big hero of his who he met then and I think Cardew actually stayed with him once at Welbeck Street. And then later bought Coper's and Rie's but all his things are bought from his salary as a librarian and I don't exactly know how his method of collecting evolved. Started off with Yorkshire Pottery, pots made by Yorkshire potters I should say, because he was a Yorkshireman, and then he must have – the CPA shop, I can't remember the date when the CPA shop opened in Marshall, initially in Lowndes Court then in Marshall Street, must have been in the mid to late '60s in Lowndes Court and then in the late '60s in Marshall Street and certainly when he used to go there and buy from exhibitions. I think he had a policy almost of when somebody was elected as a new full member of the Craft Potters Association of Great Britain he would then buy one of their pots, more or less. As I say I didn't know Henry very well but Bill's life, he was bachelor and his life was greatly enhanced and enriched by his love of pots and his affection for some potters, and the great affection that many potters held him in not just because he bought their work. He and I used to exchange books, novels. He was just a really nice guy. Shy, self effacing, obviously an intelligent man and well educated. He did classics I think at Leeds and a very different background and a very different character and a very different motivation and a very different relationship with the potters and he believed in the project I think. He was buying at the time when we all believed in the project. He thought it was good for humanity to have pots and use pots and at private views when he bought a pot, he'd then, if he went with someone or he met someone or he started talking to someone or they would talk to him he would then try and persuade them to buy something. He was really supportive of potters. He knew that they didn't make a lot of money and of course he had his favourites. He had potters whose work he particularly liked and he would buy consistently through his life. And there were other people whose work I don't think he was very interested in but it might also have been a question of his budget because the Coper's and Rie's that he bought he bought when they were young and up and coming and the same with Cardew. He never sold anything that he'd bought and he wanted his collection to be kept in Yorkshire and all kept in one piece and he never gave anything away, he never cherry picked it, it was a complete...I mean emptying the house was amazing. So it was good by then, well not indifferent but he obviously bought some things to support the potters. [...] yeah his whole modus operandi was like that and that must be very different from someone who on the one hand was running a shop and on the other hand had his own taste and I imagine that Henry was aware of Bill but he must have been aware of the Sainsbury collection

as well. I suppose it's not surprising that his taste inclined more towards the European modernist style whereas Bill was inclined more towards the more earthy traditional or gutsy heartfelt more expressive kind of work. Their taste was very different even though there appear to be overlaps.

[...]

JB: I think there's a few bits of correspondence. I'm going to talk to Helen Walsh [Curator at York Art Gallery] at the end of the month and hopefully together we patch something together to see exactly what kind of relationship, if they did have a relationship with each other.

JH: [...] He (Bill Ismay) would go to all the craft camps, all the demonstrations, all the talks, it was a real passion for him and he collected books, he collected small press books. He had quite a large collection of those [...]

JB: No. I'm looking forward to talking to Helen a little bit more about that. It is interesting these people don't exist in their own bubble. It's interesting to see how they connect with what else is going on at that time. If we could just finish talking about the colander of yours which is in the collection?

JH: Right, yeah.

JB: I don't know if I clarified this in an email back to you, because you write here that the Henry Rothschild collection suggests a particular and personal taste. The collection at the Shipley is what Henry bequeathed from his personal collection when he died. He wanted it all...

JH: You're telling me this now and I didn't write that down.

JB: No, I'm just clarifying that's what the collection there is. So it's a mixture I think of things that he's acquired while he was...

JH: [From prior correspondence:

As a title "The Henry Rothschild Collection" suggests a particular & personal taste & in Henry's case I think it was modernist pots which held the greatest appeal. Perhaps my more decorative pots were not to his taste but as a significant potter of the late 20thC he felt 'a Jane Hamlyn' must somehow be included. I don't know why or how he acquired it (probably unsold stock!) but I am very disappointed that such an inconsequential piece, by being included in 'The Henry Rothschild Collection' shown at The Shipley Museum & Art Galley might be seen alone as representative of my work & whole career. It is a nice little colander and typical of the well-made functional pieces which were my 'bread & butter' in the 70s & early '80s. But I am a much more ambitious potter than that. Fortunately my work is well represented in other important collections!]

Yeah just as in interesting aside, I remember going to the Shipley before Henry died, I can't remember the name of the curator at the time, maybe she's still there, and it was at the time when Henry I think had just gone into or was about to go into a home. Incidentally Henry did come to ...and this is before Helen's time so she might not know this, when Bill Ismay died, once we'd succeeded in getting all the pots out of the house and wrapped up and in a safe place there was a guy who worked at York City Art Gallery, I'm afraid again his name escapes me but Helen will know who he was, and he and Janet Barnes I think, between them, decided that they would

have a memorial day for Bill and so it was really good, they put on a really good show. Various people gave talks. Emmanuel Cooper gave a talk, David Whiting gave a talk, I gave a little talk and lots and lots of people came. The lecture theatre was pretty full and Henry Rothschild did come to that, he sat at the front. So he obviously knew Bill and he knew about that.

JB: You were saying you'd gone to the Shipley.

JH: Oh yes. Well I went there and I think it was just before he went into the home or just afterwards, and he'd initially loaned the collection to the Shipley didn't he?

JB: Yes it was called the Eagle Collection.

JH: Okay. Because I remember being taken downstairs to a basement room and some of the pots were there, the more valuable ones, I think the reason the Coper's particularly were arranged on the side there, and I don't know if at that point he'd given as much as he did ultimately but I remember thinking in my cynical way that it was actually quite useful to all intents and purposes to suggest to a museum that you might bequeath them your collection because until you die that would mean the museum pays the insurance and you don't have to worry about them.

[...]

No I think that he's not the only collector who has to worry about what to do with a valuable collection when they downsize. The Anthony Shaw collection has just been given to York City Art Gallery for much the same reason. I think he's moving out of his house so that obviously is a problem when collectors who have a valuable collection before they die and they downsize they have to do something with it. And I wonder whether when that happened, as it was done piecemeal, Henry must have had friends and family that he would have perhaps given things to, so to what extent his entire collection is represented by what was eventually bequeathed to the Shipley I don't know. I don't know if anyone would know but I do know that every pot that Bill ever bought is now in the possession of York City Art Gallery. When he realised that he had a collection, even though he didn't call himself a collector, he never would have parted with any of them. People did occasionally give him pots but he would never give them away. So that might be another difference between them, where you're not quite sure whether there was a little bit of cherry picking went on. I wouldn't blame a human being for doing that. If I had a lot of lovely stuff I'd give the best bits to my children before I gave them to a museum. Unless your ego is very much bound up with the idea of being a collector, and of course that is also true of some collectors that they like the idea that there will be a collection called by their name. That's extremely common. I suppose a collection has to be called something but I don't think Bill's – I mean as I said before I don't know Henry well enough to know to what extent that mattered that his name was, because it is a sort of perpetuating your name for posterity, for eternity isn't it.

JB: I'm not sure. When Henry was still alive the collection that was at the Shipley was known as the Eagle.

JH: Was it [the collection] added to after he died?

JB: And that was added to after he died.

JH: It was?

JB: And then it became the Henry Rothschild collection.

JH: Okay. So for me what might be interesting if I were you I would be what happened in between those two times. Some was given on semi-permanent loan with a question mark at the end of it and then later more was added and what happened in between. Was that all and if not why not and also where did the rest of it go and why. That's actually quite interesting.

JB: Yeah he does have a....

JH: Obviously it pertains to his motive in altogether as a collector.

JB: I'm not sure how much...

JH: I suppose it's interesting the word collector because a collection is just a collective noun. It's just something that's a group of stuff and when you call something a collection you give it kudos by adding the name of somebody and sometimes they put that condition on the bequest. The museum also wants to honour them and is grateful to be given it obviously but those issues I think are really quite interesting.

JB: Yes the whole notion of a collection and when something becomes a collection in the sense that we know it in the museum and gallery sense is very interesting. It's not just semantics; it's something a bit more than that that is quite hard to define.

JH: Yes and in the case of York, for example, the WA Ismay collection will be assimilated into the larger collection of York City Art Gallery along with the Deans collection and all the medieval collection and all the rest of it so that it's just a bigger collection of a lot of small collections.

JB: Yeah I see what you mean.

JH: But I think the other point is that they're all very well these bequests but they are complicated and when a museum receives these things and shows them to the general public - this really was my point about the colander - that whether an ignorant visitor visits a museum and sees what's in their display cases then an assumption on the part of the public that the fact that it's in the museum gives it a provenance that has a value attached to it so I would imagine, I don't know, I'm not a museum person, but if you have a purchasing budget I don't know whether that's a case of filling in the gaps when someone makes a personal bequest say of 20th century ceramics, in the case of both Bill and Henry Rothschild, whether they assume that it's a broad spectrum ex-collection or whether it's just a personal collection. Bill was adamant that if he left it, because I was involved in deciding who was going to have it, and there were lots of machinations and negotiations with York City Art Gallery over a period of time about what they had to do, they had to leave it complete, they mustn't put the accession marks on the outside of the pots or if they had to put them there they had to be invisible. He wasn't keen on them being there

at all. But then if you're a museum and you're given a lot of stuff obviously some things are more valuable than others, some things are better examples than others, some things you've got lots of already and you can't sell any of it unless you've made arrangements beforehand with the person that makes the bequest and then I wonder what is the responsibility of the museum to fill in the gaps, do you see what I'm saying?

JB: Yes I do. I think Henry had looked at other places to leave his collection to and I know the Fitzwilliam was one of those places.

JH: Yes I suppose that would be the obvious one.

JB: But I think they wanted to choose certain pieces and apparently Henry was quite adamant that they could take everything or they could take nothing.

JH: Yeah. Well I think that's obvious because if a museum cherry picks and those pieces are assimilated into the overall collection then that's when the name of the donor becomes obscured so I think ego is involved there to some degree. I suspect that in Bill's case he actually saw it as a project, as a 20th century project to do pottery and be inclusive, I think that was why he used to buy when somebody was made a member of the CPA they had to be elected, they were selected by a committee to be a full member. He would think they'd already been through the sieve as it were and I think he thought of it in the end latterly as being a representation of the whole broad picture, not just his own taste although I think he might have – I think I seem to remember there might be a smallish Fritsch [Elizabeth Fritsch] wrapped up in an old dried milk tin somewhere but the big names of the '70s didn't really play a part. His big collecting phase was really in the '50s and '60s and up till the end of the '70s I suppose and the mid '80s but the new Craft's Council, young Turks, weren't really represented much in his collection at all but I think he thought that it was a slice of a particular period of time and that it was a broad spectrum collection of those times, the heyday of studio pottery really but I don't know what's in the whole of the Henry Rothschild collection so I can't really make that sort of comparison in terms of what it seems to represent beyond his own personal taste. But I think Bill's collection went beyond his own personal taste to some extent. I don't think he'd ever bought anything that he didn't like but I think there was a kind of a logic behind it, he had a picture. I think, I could be wrong, it could be just that he liked going to shows and it became his life, it's what he did, it's who he was, he'd go to an exhibition with his bag and he'd pick up the pot that he bought from the last exhibition and he'd buy one for that exhibition and he'd take home the one that he'd bought from the last exhibition. It was really amazing. Sorry, rambling.

JB: It's all very interesting. I'm looking forward to seeing the collection actually when I go to York at the end of the month.

JH: I don't think they've got it all on display have they? I'm sure they haven't. They've got a selection though, not all of it.

JB: Yeah I can imagine that they won't have it all out but that's something I can talk to Helen about on how they...

JH: How many pieces are there in the Rothschild collection, do you know? Hundreds or thousands?

- JB: Not thousands.
- JH: Right. So Bill's collection will be bigger.
[...]
- JB: [...] there's the main area of the gallery that's just Henry's pots and then there's a few other of his pots that have been put into other displays in the gallery and then I think there's a handful of things, not very many things, that are in storage and they rotate out as space allows. But no it's not a very big collection or anything or as you say William's collection and somewhere like the Fitzwilliam where...
- JH: No. All the more strange if there are only so many pieces to think that there's a funny little colander of mine in there. That makes it even more peculiar really anyway. But that's another matter. I don't know what else is in there, in that sense. I suppose I'll have to come and see.
- JB: Yeah there's things that you would expect, the big names of pottery I suppose, the Leach and Cardew and...
[...]
Yeah any my focus I really want to try and not write a biography of Henry, that's not what I want to do. I really want to think about how he was in that context of the craft world from '45 up until 1980, 1990 so it's been interesting so far.
- JH: For me he was a shopkeeper, obviously a gallery owner but a gallery is a shop in the end, who had those instincts and concerns and then a private individual who had his own likes and dislikes and passions and so on and I suppose if he liked pots he also had privileged access to buying stuff half price which for people he was buying things off may not at the time appreciate. That happens, if you're a maker, also you realise that about galleries too. If you have a show and you don't sell anything sometimes the gallery will be kind and buy something for themselves. Their interpretation is that they're being kind and your interpretation might be that they're buying something - they're getting something half price and both of those things are true and not true. So it's a complicated thing you're dealing with actually.
- JB: Yeah it certainly is. Well hopefully it will all come out well in the end.
[...]
- JH: But presumably most of the things that he bought he bought direct from that artist?
- JB: Yeah I think he did. I think he would visit auctions and things like that but I do think a lot of the time he was buying direct.
- JH: Yeah.
- JB: And as you say that does give him a...
- JH: Financial advantage over Bill.

- JB: A financial advantage yeah.
- JH: You can see also that would affect the way that maker would feel about those two different men.
- JB: Yeah that's definitely something to look into. Unfortunately Henry wasn't much of a business man in terms of keeping records.
- JH: Records. Unlike Bill. I know he catalogued everything. I don't know if he actually kept the prices that he paid for everything. I wouldn't be surprised.
- JB: Well it's something that's very much lacking.
- JH: Sometimes things have still got the sticky labels underneath them, the prices.
- JB: Well that would be very useful to have that with Henry but unfortunately...
- JH: I know, I can't remember where it was now, but I picked up a Michael Cardew pot once and it had I think about 8 shillings underneath on a bit of brown paper. They're nice when you find those sorts of things.
- JB: No, unfortunately not so much of that. I did find, I was down at the Craft Study Centre down in Farnham looking through Michael Cardew's receipt books, his invoice books. I went through quite a lot of those and it was invoices for Primavera or for Henry so that was really useful.
- [...]

Ronald Pile

Born in 1952, Ronald Pile studied History of Art at Edinburgh University in the early 1970s. On leaving, he took work with a small pottery but found himself more drawn to the attached shop than to the act of making itself. It was through this shop that Henry Rothschild first met Pile and invited him to work with him at Primavera Cambridge in 1978. Following Rothschild's retirement in 1980, Pile took over the shop, which he ran until selling to Jeremy Waller in 1999.

Interview conducted in person, 2 October 2012:

*Background and studies and Edinburgh University 1970s ** Early work in small pottery, Stoke Gabriel ** Developing interest in retailing and displaying craft ** Meeting Henry Rothschild ** Going to work at Primavera Cambridge 1978 ** Henry Rothschild's character ** Cambridge in the late 1970s ** Cambridge and London ** Primavera Cambridge ** London in the 1960s ** Customers in Cambridge ** Primavera Cambridge ** Exhibitions ** Henry Rothschild travelling the country ** Henry Rothschild relationship with potters ** Pauline Rothschild ** Henry Rothschild as an émigré ** Ronald Pile taking over Primavera 1980 ** Relationship with Henry Rothschild after 1980 ** Henry Rothschild's relationship with potters ** Importance of Primavera and Henry Rothschild ** Henry Rothschild Collection at the Shipley Art Gallery ** Memories of Henry Rothschild ***

JB: [...] The first thing is to just clarify when and where you were born just for any dates...

RP: ... London, 1952.

JB: Ok then, if we could just begin then with what you were involved in before you started working at Primavera and with Henry Rothschild? Just to get your background...

RP: I read history of art at Edinburgh, a little bit later than most other, a few other undergraduates, so by the time I graduated I was, it was 1975 so I was 23, because they're four year courses in Scotland, they're designed that way as I'm sure you know. And like you I rather wanted to be an academic, I thought that's what I was heading for but I, for various reasons, began to feel that that wasn't for me and I left Edinburgh not knowing what I was going to do at all. So I needed a job and I was living in, I went back to the ancestral seat as it were and the only job I could find was in a local pottery and then that was, still the 70s, a small country pottery but commercial, they were feeding the tremendous fashion at the time for handmade pots. So there were jobs to be had in these very small places and I got a job with a man called Michael Skipworth in a little village called Stoke Gabriel a lovely pretty little village, and I had no interest particularly in ceramics before that it was, I was taken on to pack to begin with and fill holes and that sort of thing, very unskilled. But because I became very interested I started doing more interesting things there. But for the purposes of my relationship with Primavera, we also had a little shop attached to this pottery and the other workers there weren't interested in it really, in the shop, they just wanted to do their work and because I was the most junior it was left to me when customers came, this was mostly in the summer season when tourists came. It was left to me to look after the shop, the idea of the shop was to sell the seconds really and because it was a rather lovely premises, an old barn, we would buy in other things to go with

that and I became very interested in display and the way people bought and the way people perceived things in different positions, it was, I mean not that I gave it much thought in terms of a future, but I found myself spending more and more time in the shop because it was pretty much left to me. And one afternoon, one very quiet afternoon, no one was around, this extraordinary man came in who subsequently turned out to be Henry but I'd never met anything, anyone, quite like that. And in those days Henry still had Primavera in Cambridge but he also had as you know his wholesale activities, so he was on a sort of walkabout partly looking for work in, for ceramic work which would be suitable for Primavera and partly to sell other things that he was importing at the time, that he was interested in so he'd come into the shop with both things in mind. The owner wasn't around so it was left to me to deal with him and we didn't stay that long but we chatted and, as I say I was completely fascinated. This was a very small, isolated village, to have something, someone - I keep saying something but the thing refers to the whole effect that Henry had - was quite unusual, so it made a deep impression on me and after Henry used to tell the story afterwards but at that time it transpired he was staying with David Leach, just for a couple of nights and he told me, or David told me afterwards, that Henry come home that evening and they were chatting over supper and David had asked what he'd found and Henry said, well I went to this little pottery in Stoke Gabriel and he said, David said, well what was that like, and Henry said, well the pots were awful but there was a young man there who'd arranged them very nicely. I then saw Henry now and again at trade fairs because as I say we were buying things in for the shop and I can't remember quite how it happened but he said to me that I might like to come and work for him, I think he could see I was interested in the business of particularly displaying things and how you do that. And by that time I realised it was going, it was probably going to be very difficult to make a living as a potter, I wasn't committed, I wasn't driven in the way that I could see others were [...] I wasn't that keen, so I thought well, I don't know what that will lead to but initially I thought well that leads to being in Cambridge which would be a much bigger pool than where I am now and this seems like a very interesting man so that's how I got to Cambridge and that's, again that's 78 when I joined Henry. And in a way I'd had the great advantage of having a boss in the pottery who was, let's say unpredictable, and you know had quite a, would blow up every so often for no apparent reason. So Henry was quite volatile too. I think he was particularly volatile, I mean he became much more mellow later on, but in those days I think he wasn't completely at peace with himself, I think to some extent he'd lost interest in Primavera, he'd been doing it a long time, he was doing the national and international exhibitions which were much more interesting for him and much more stimulating and so he was keen to have somebody who might keep an eye on the shop because quite honestly he found it, I think difficult to keep staff because he would upset people very easily. Unfortunately people didn't realise that he might have a blow up but then it was all over, it was a very continental way of doing things, it's not British, so people didn't understand that and as I say I had the advantage that the only person I'd worked for prior to that was very similar so I had this idea that all bosses were like that. So it meant that a lot of the Primavera work just evolved on to my shoulders, Henry was away quite a bit and we'd have tremendous rows but we had tremendous times as well, 20 minutes later it's all forgotten, much easier, much much easier to work that way than have some passive aggression going on. So that's what brought me to Cambridge and to Primavera and I was very interested in, by then I became

extremely interested in studio ceramics, as well as you know the business and so I think at the end of my first year with Henry he'd told me it was the first year they'd made a small profit so it, that's not to blow my own trumpet its simply to say that I found myself very interested in how the business side of things works as well as all the aesthetics. Henry was fairly inconsistent in that [...]

JB ... Just to get an idea of Cambridge at that time. There's a interview that Henry did with Tanya Harrod which is at the British Library and one of things he says [...] is that he never forgave Cambridge for how stuffy it was in comparison to London. It was obviously very different....

RP: Yes, it was very different as we were saying on the way up. I supposed the town and garden divide was a bit more pronounced, there was no Science park there was no obvious relationship between traditional town and traditional garden in the way there is visible now. It was very small town, the shopping, you know all these big shopping centres didn't exist. There were much more interesting shops in my view because they were the tail end of the family businesses. But the, I suppose the thing about that comes out in what you say about that interview is that Henry was not British. And that fact is that through everything Henry did or said, he was completely unimpressed by the respect for mores and traditions and the, within this culture, no that he, I don't mean to say that he was disrespectful, I simply mean that he had a completely different overview on things and wasn't tied by we can't do this and we can't do that. He would have come right up against the college system because of renting college property. So there may well have been some friction knowing Henry.

JB: So the site of Primavera was rented?

RP: Yes pretty much the whole of the centre of Cambridge is owned by different colleges so its still, its owned by Corpus Christi, that particular premises and always will be barring acts of God. But the other thing Henry was completely free of was a sort of nostalgia that clings around Britain which helped enormously of course in his view of design and where you can, where to look for the sorts of things that he wanted to promote so he certainly, he would be very, it's too extreme to say he had a chip on his shoulder, that would give entirely the wrong impression but I imagine Henry from quite early on and certainly being told that he'd never get a degree as a Jew so he'd better piss off, had felt that he was up against some sort of system or other and I imagine Cambridge in those days might have had a bit of that, the system vibe, if you follow me. Yeah. I don't know how, how initially supportive of his activities the colleges were, the college was, I imagine they were pleased with what he was doing. Anyway, it would have felt a very small place to him after London, yeah, it certainly would have done.

JB: Especially at that very, that busy area...

RP: Well he was right in the heart, interesting heart of London wasn't he? And he would have access to other émigrés too, I mean a whole range of cosmopolitan people which he, outside the colleges which if you're not in the university you know you don't have much to do with, he would not have, he certainly wouldn't have met, I mean there wouldn't have been anything like the population that there is now. But I think, I imagine he would have

found it a more interesting place as time went along but also a certain losses, you know the, as you know some of, when everything is Next or Marks and Spencer's or X Y and Z, you know a loss is implied there as well.

JB: Did Henry ever talk about his experience working in London, especially in the 60s? [...] Being right next to the Kings Road, you've got this new design pop art, all these kinds of things. Do you know what Henry's impressions were of that 'Swinging Sixties' as it were?...

RP: No, I know what you mean, no he didn't really talk much about that. I suppose I didn't ask him perhaps he might have done. I think he enjoyed London, he enjoyed the buzz, but from my perspective what Henry cared far more about was the position of art schools at the time and type of students that were coming through and how interesting that was. And also of course he had the furniture, he had the relationships that meant he could, there was certain amount of custom furniture and that tied with things which all would have been very exciting. I can't say he ever said, John Lennon came in the other day or anything like, I don't remember any reference to that but its probably because I never asked him Janine.

JB: [...] what struck me was that interesting thing that he was just around the corner from Kings Road and al this flamboyancy that was going on and I thought, how did he see that, because its kind of, it almost jars a little bit, but not in some ways, like you say with the art schools, because he was very supportive of the art schools so..

RP: ... Yes, he was very supportive of, or very interested in any individual, individualising movement I think so I 'm sure he, I'm sure he would have had an extremely witty composite German word to describe that. [...] You know, 1945, a lot of London was still a bomb site wasn't it? So you know he lived through this fantastically interesting period. But rather than flared jeans and flower power and so on I imagine it would be more the wonderful, you know the architecture that was coming along, the design world I think would, he would have been, well he clearly was, certainly inclined much more to take an interest and being involved in that sort of area.

JB: So what about his customer base in Cambridge? How would you sort of define the customers that were coming through to Primavera?

RP: When I first got there? I imagine much as it is now, probably many more footfall, a much greater footfall now because Cambridge is so much busier but a mix of, well, when I first got there, there was still what was known as collectors, we have collectors today, but there was still, particularly people attached to a college, who were very keen and serious about building a studio ceramics collection of some sort or other depending on what their interests, where their interest lay. So we didn't really have yuppies in those days, you didn't really have the young professionals buying for their interiors so much, as that collector type of mentality for that sort of work. But as you know Primavera's always, and that was one of Henry's real interests really, was always had a big range of things and Henry was keen to have something that everyone could buy as well as perhaps the more expensive or the collectible, what people think of as collectible things, or individual pieces or whatever the current jargon is. So the sort of higher end and the more specialist end, there was that breed which died out over

time, that collecting breed. And then there were university people who had some money but not a lot, it's not been a way to make your fortune necessarily. And tourism, which has always been there...

JB: And it's a very busy thorough road...

RP: ... Those days you could drive through it, it wasn't pedestrainised, it was a busy street, yes. In terms of competition or anything like that, that was there at the time, there were one or two places which sort of came and went, there were certainly a shop in Maudlin Street, who's name I'm afraid I can't remember, that did, that had ceramics and craft items. I can't, I'm afraid I'm going to be very hazy on names. There were one or two interesting shops that had, that sort of cross over between functional items, well designed functional items and not quite, what we would think of as individual craft work or studio work. There were one or two places selling, selling things that were fashionable at the time, like posters, you mentioning that sort of era, so they were lets say the slightly racier shops given the fact that Cambridge was fairly stuffy, so racy is a very relative term. But essentially very, very little competition for, in the way that Primavera was then but the, there was a department store that also had, a slightly Habitaty, also would have some items, it was that period when there was in larger department stores you would buy from individual workshops whereas what's happened now is larger departments stores have very nice stuff but it tends to be mass produced, although very well designed and so on, its maybe taking its lead from individual designs but is produced in quantity. But as I say Henry had lost, quite understandably really, had lost a lot of interest in Prim, so when I first got there I have to say it was not impressive. The pots were good, he had good pots, but the rest of it really was, pretty dowdy.

JB: Could you describe the layout as it was then? As much as you can?

RP: Yes, yes. In those days Henry had the lease for the whole building, top to bottom. It's got a very different configuration now but it was essentially a central staircase, Henry when he first moved to Cambridge lived upstairs then they bought, then they moved to Wilberforce Road. So it still had the remains of living over the shop feel about it, although Henry, the family didn't live there anymore, he kept his wholesale offices and stock rooms and so on upstairs so we had a sort of sliding door between the foot of the stairs to block that central stairway which is all gone now, to block it off, and we had just a ground floor with the central stairway going downstairs as well as up and one basement room, one small basement room and one back basement room. So it was pretty small, the back basement room was a sort of stock room, that was very small, but it had masses of pots in it on huge wide shelves, all stuffed on, and actually people enjoyed rummaging through that and it was one of things about Prim, people would, I remember them feeling that they'd found something that no one else had seen because it was way back at the bottom somewhere. What did we have in the back room? When I first got there, all the objects and pots and so on were all on the ground floor and the basement were fabrics and clothing, because Henry bought, he did a lot with beautiful fabrics, Indian cottons, and had a lot of silks, we had them on bolts and sold them by the metre, I'd forgotten that. Yes that was a very different place. And we had one person sitting downstairs and one person upstairs, that was often all there was in terms of staff.

- JB: So Henry was away a lot you say, because this is a time when he's off doing other exhibitions...
- RP: ... or travelling for his wholesale, yes. Away a lot.
- JB: So did you ever travel with him on any of these places or...
- RP: At that time no, no I was definitely back at the ranch then. Much later on we travelled quite a bit together, here and there, but that was much later on, when he'd retired really, more or less.
- JB: And was there a difference with what Henry would collect or buy for the shop and what he would choose for his own collection?
- RP: Well inevitably there was, there has to be a sort of commercial influenced decision there but I would, both directions would have similar starting point I think, I mean Henry, you can tell from the collection in Gateshead, that it's quite a wide range of things. So Henry would, the qualities that Henry admired could be found in a coffee cup just as much in a, to some extent given the limitations, as much as a Hans Coper pot, because the qualities that he was looking for weren't, were the things that he intuitively responded to rather than how famous the person was or but even saying that it's very difficult not to be influenced by things like that. And so by the same token it's very difficult not to be influenced by saleability of objects if you're buying for a shop. But I would imagine that probably Henry would be on his travels buying for the shop and a few, one or two things didn't see the shop. That's probably how it works for most people.
- JB: Do you know [...] obviously he was very keen on going and visiting workshops and talking to people [...] What can you tell me about his relationship with the potters, directly that he worked with? That he bought from?
- RP: Well Henry, and I learned this from Henry, that it was vitally important to be on the spot to see what was going on in studios and workshops and that's self evident to me because I was always rather surprised, or have been rather surprised subsequently that more shopkeepers or gallery owners don't do that. Henry felt, as I say, quite perfectly reasonable to me at the time and even more so as time went on, that not only to keep a finger on the pulse you can see what's happening, but also its part of how you define your role as a gallery owner or a shop keepers, in other words, Henry, I learned from Henry by osmosis largely, that you know, it's not just question of commodity, buying as cheaply as you can and piling them high and selling them as expensively as you can, the shop keeping is essentially buying at one price and selling it at another whatever it is, of course the very big difference which makes the whole actively much more interesting and takes it into a different dimension is that if you see your role as part of a continuum of that creatively, so that you're not just a middle man, you're in at the beginning of whatever process is going on, so you would discuss with the maker, if we stick to let's stick to potters at the moment, and I had very much the same experience, potter's saying, what do you think of this, going visiting them, I'm working on this what do you think, and so the relationship is quite different and much more interesting because, it's not that one opinion is the voice of God necessarily, it's simply that people, many makers like to share at that sort of level and one can have an input

not just in terms of personal taste, which inevitably Henry did, but also in terms of [...] how saleable something is or what can I do to make something saleable, then you know the shopkeeper is well placed for that too. So the visiting to workshops, his relationship with different potters could vary great deal, as I say Henry was fairly volatile so someone who was, who might have been very matey one week there may suddenly be a change in climate. When I worked for Henry I could always tell whether he'd had a bit of an argument with somebody, because I might have spent the day displaying x's work thinking, because x was the flavour of the month, and Henry would come back from a trip somewhere and storm in saying, get rid of all that stuff, its rubbish, so I learned over time that this was because they'd had a row. But essentially people had a, many people had a huge respect for Henry's eye and he could, he was the first to admit that he would make, that he made mistakes, to continue those two fronts, his personal collection there were things that hadn't lasted the course, that didn't do it for him anymore, everyone does that. Secondly he made mistakes for buying for the shop too, perhaps enthusiasm got the better for him much, in comparisons to Henry, I was by no means anything like the originator that he was on so many levels but I had a much better idea of what to do with what he had. Just for some reason, it just came naturally. We worked, it was quite a good relationship while we worked together because I could pull things into shape, and of course, as you probably know, the presence of his wife and the contribution she made was absolutely vital to the survival of, probably the survival of Henry actually, let alone the business.

JB: So I know from talking to Liz, that she was much more, as you say a bit more business...

RP: ... She was calmer, she had to be, a little bit more business minded in terms of it might be a good idea not to offend your clients type of business minded. And a rock, certainly a rock for Henry, and for the staff, what few staff there were. She personified some consistency. I didn't, I never knew her terribly well, she was, she, I think when I first arrived she was working in the basement, in the material, in the fabric bit or certainly would help over lunchtimes and that sort of thing. But fairly early on she wasn't there very much. But I do know from Liz and others that she was extremely important, an unsung hero really as many women are behind the scenes. And Henry an unsung hero too actually, very pleased that this is all happening. Because he never promoted himself in the way that we see people doing now. I mean if you look at the Primavera website now it would absolutely anathema to him, to Henry, that sort of self-promotion and the editing of history. So, the man who emerges the more you look into Henry is, as I'm sure you'll find, is just a multi faceted very gifted, very difficult, very charming and very un-English, very un-British man.

JB: Maybe just to go to that actually, as I said before one of the areas that I want to look at is how his position as a German émigré, as a German Jewish émigré, and that sort of European sensibility, and how that, you know, did he talk about his identity in that way, did he see himself as still being German or European or...

RP: ... Well it's a very complicated subject isn't it, it's a very deep subject probably beyond my brief with you or my brief generally but yes, he later on, when in the closing years, he spoke to me a great deal on very personal level, but that's probably after the period you're interested in and at the time

what I, when I first worked for Henry I was very aware of the extent to which I personally represented the sort of anathema, the sort of stuffiness in a way that you referred to earlier, you know I was absolutely the product of that system that he felt was against him, the middle-class, public school, blah blah blah, so you know that informed our relationship as well, because to some extent he wanted, he was looking for somebody initially who might you know take care of the shop and then over time, as we got to know each other, in a small way was sort of the son he didn't have or certainly someone he could pass this cloak on to. But at the same time I was the enemy. So that's partly fuelled this passion of this relationship between us. But you asked about to what extent? I mean he brought the Bauhaus as it were to Cambridge. Cambridge was never, it's a bit more now, but it was never really a centre for visual things or design much, very good music, marvellous academic things going on, but not, the visual arts had never really done much, although Brian Robertson had been here, he must have been when Henry was here. Anyway, it's the word nostalgic that springs to mind, anything that smacked of the sort of very British adherence to the ancestral furniture as it were, he couldn't bear. So he was completely unweighed down with that type of thing, but he was also coming from a situation, even now I can't really put myself in that situation, you know his, why he was in England in the first place and all that whole history that you will know by the end of this a lot more about than I do probably. I didn't really take that in at the time its only very much later when he, you know when he would talk to me more about that. So in terms of again Primavera when I first got there it was probably not indicative of the sort of qualities that we've been talking about in terms of Henry's approach because it had been allowed to sag really, there was a lot of dead wood in it literally. It wasn't the Primavera of the 50s and early 60s in London at all by then. And Henry's energies in terms of bringing the fresh air of the continent was going to the continent and the whole exhibition programme that you referred to earlier. So as a vehicle of expression as you like or of his expression, Primavera by the late 70s had, was redundant, he'd gone to something else.

JB: Is that what motivated him then to actually move completely, was just that he'd lost that...

RP: ... he'd lost that. And there was no question of my taking it over initially, he came in one day and said, I'm, no I don't think he said anything, we just became aware of people looking around with clipboards, we being the staff, and it transpired that Henry was selling the business and I then, that was, when did I, yes I got there 78, I hadn't been there long it must of been 18 months later or so and it had been certainly long enough for me to think to myself, this is really something, I could, I'd had long enough as I say to have, as I mentioned earlier, to see how the business as a business could be turned and I'd also had long enough to see how I could make a contribution to this business so when it transpired that Henry was selling the whole collision of fortuitous circumstances in the family, in my family, meant that I could, I began to think maybe I could take this over. So, that's as I say, I hadn't gone there with any idea of that, but became not just an idea but it came financially feasible. In those days there were very nice bank managers, you could talk to your bank manager just round the corner and it was a completely different, that's what we forget isn't it, it's not just one's personal trajectory its the context in which you find yourself and it was very much easier. I remember my interview with the bank manager

and I mean I was no one. I remember my interview with the college bursar who told me that he didn't think I could, the college bursars I had to see because of course it's a rented premises, and I remember him telling me very well that he thought, he didn't think much of me but Mr Rothschild had spoken very highly of me, they'd give me a chance, so that's the sort of stuffiness we're talking about. There's a whole new breed of bursar now of course but these were the old guard.

[INTERRUPTION]

JB: We were talking about your taking over and the college bursar.

RP: That right, so I was given a chance and I was very lucky because of the financing and because Henry certainly argued my case, so in 1980 I find myself taking it over and bought the shares. And then, the business of that was very, very characteristic of my relationship with Henry up to that point because on the one hand, he felt that by then I would do a good job, I think so, but he also, again I was in a sense the enemy too because he wanted to get the best price so it was very, very ambiguous sort of negotiations between us, this sort of love hate literally love hate relationship going on so it was an uncomfortable business but very typical of Henry, once the thing had been done he never interfered or you know looked back or I mean we'd see a lot of each other because he still had, he kept his wholesale company upstairs, he'd still be coming in now and again, but he never to his tremendous credit, he never interfered or said you know you're doing that wrong or anything like that and even when this new person taken over who in every way Henry found appalling, he never spoke to me about it so...

JB: You can imagine that is quite difficult to do really...

RP: ... Yes you know in retrospect I was so grateful that he, we never spoke about Primavera after I left either, I mean Primavera as it is now after I left. It was that was that and lets, and he, his attitude was well you know, which is the one I've taken, he did it in one way and I did it in another and blogs is doing it in another, you know, it's none of your business. But the name lives on, Henry was as I said earlier an originator in every way so what form it takes will inevitably modulate over time, but it's still his creation. And then when I took over I continued very much the idea that I had learned from Henry that you travel around as much as possible, that's the way, there's so many advantages, I mean that the way you get the best work because you're right there at the beginning, that's the way you build up that sort of relationship, there's some sort of mutual respect and trust therefore you stand to get the best work as well. That's the way, equally importantly, which was important to Henry too, that's the way you support as you go along. I know that Henry would buy from people to support them not necessarily because they were as good as he felt they could be, he felt they might be better but they need a bit of support now, and I learned that to some extent from him too, although in the early days I was very, I was fairly mercenary in the sense that I had a lot to prove to myself, to my backers, so I remember being pretty hard nosed to get the thing, I took something over that was on its knees and had the advantage of not being terribly expensive but it, you know I had a lot of ground to make up. And just as an indication, the bank manager would come in every so often just

to say hello and see how things were going, see how his little investment was doing. You'd never get that now.

JB: So that was a very important part of what Henry was doing, like you say, supporting the artist. Is there any particular craftsman that Henry...

RP: ... That springs to mind?...

JB: ... had a personal connection...

RP: Well there are, and I know that there were people who spoke very fondly of Henry in terms of maybe just one thing he said, or a helpful bit of advice at the right time which had really set them on their feet, or an exhibition to get them going. You know, Alan Caiger Smith for example always spoke about Henry in those sort of terms [...] Gordon Baldwin of course, Henry was very supportive of. Then there were the rather Camberwell people like Ian Auld, people we don't sort of know much about now because the way it's moved on but some of the more sculptural ceramic people. And if I had a list of names in front of me I could answer that question probably more fully but yes, there were certainly some people that Henry was particularly fond of, there was that particular relationship with, and I'm thinking probably entirely of potters now, there probably were other media but it's the potters that I remember. Bernard Forrester, lots of people who are dead of course now. I think Michael Cardew and Henry, Henry had great respect for Michael but I don't know how much they did together, same with Bernard. Lucie he was extremely fond of, Lucie Rie. But these were big names now and Hans, but there are lesser names and they're names which will be forgotten or probably already are forgotten which I'm sure would acknowledge Henry's input in that way. Because he did have a gift for, you know people talk about Henry's eye or but to flesh that, to give that some meaning, he certainly was able on many occasions to see exactly what needed to be done or what was wrong or. I mean that's a great gift. On other occasions not, I mean I, I think he also would have admitted that sometimes he had a blind spot and just couldn't get it at all. So, we're all a mix aren't we, but Henry was a particularly rich mix. So after I took over, I really didn't see that much of Henry really. I was so as I say taken up with it all Henry didn't interfere, occasionally we'd have a chat, but he kept well to one side but it was only years later that we got very close again, paths went off in very different directions. There probably were periods when he must have said to himself, what's that boy doing, but he was always very complimentary in retrospect, felt that I'd understand what he, and carried the torch forward a bit. But we were operating in very different worlds you see. I didn't know London in 1945, it's only my parents who described what it was like, completely different. Cambridge in the 60s, completely different. Cambridge in the 80s, Margaret Thatcher came in the year I came in as it were and it was the time to be a small business, not the time to be a miner or in public service maybe but certainly a good time for people like me. So there were many advantages in the timing of it.

JB: That's actually a very interesting frame, timeframe that fits neatly with Henry's time, 1945 to 1980, that immediate post war to Thatcher, it's very convenient...

RP: It's a gift for you isn't it?

JB: I know that's something that he talked about when he left his collection to the Shipley, was that he wanted it...

RP: ... yes that famous anecdote about not wanting Margaret Thatcher to get her hands on it, yeah.

JB: Did he talk to you at all about sort of his motivation for leaving it up there or ...

RP: Well I think he, probably the truth, at the time he would talk about motivation, but of course it probably wasn't necessarily the whole truth. I'm sure Henry would have been delighted if some serious museum in London had decided and said yes we'll have that. I can't believe that he wouldn't have been very pleased...

JB: ... He talks a little about...

RP: ... I don't know Janine, sorry go on...

JB: ... again in the interview with Tanya Harrod I think the Fitzwilliam did express an interest but they wanted to sort of pick and choose...

RP: yes, that's quite right, that's a very good point to have made. Yeah, he wanted to keep it much more representative of one man's career actually, in the sense that it wasn't, it's very different to someone, to other collections that you may have seen, you know, which are clearly I am only going to go for x y and z or just x or just y, you know it's a very much self conscious, almost self a grand, whatever the word is, statement, and Henry was absolutely not that sort of collector. And so it's a much more, on one level, much more interesting collection, you know, on paper it contains some fairly indifferent things if the truth be told isn't it but they're very representative because they're not there to be spectacular, they're there because of what they represent at the time and he was very mindful of that and yes, I'd forgotten that was a problem, not just with the Fitz I think but, that would have been a problem certainly because it's a very understandable one. I probably would have felt the same, although I might have been a little more sensitive to the, or mindful of the owner's requirements but anyway, again, I don't know the whole story, the truth and nothing but the truth of why it went to Shipley in the end, I think there were certain disappointments that Henry had about the attitude that he met here and there and so the, I don't want Mrs Thatcher to get her hands on it anecdote may be a little more retrospective than motivational, I don't know.

[...]

I never, you know since that first meeting in that little pottery in Devon, I haven't met anyone quite like Henry since then, and I miss him very much for the conversations now. Because, he, right up until you know the end, his, that breadth of mind that you referred to earlier, that way of looking at things, that crosses borders if you like, was with him right till the end, understandably, although some people do close up as they get older. So I would, when I visited him in Oxford, I would always come away, always come away, even if he was, if he needed to rest in the afternoon or, feeling as if I'd had the most wonderful feast because there would always be an interesting view on something. So that was absolutely the man and if it had been, if that had been consistent and his life was just that, we'd be probably

having a very different conversation, but it wasn't just that, there were so many dimensions that were cross currents, and certainly a lot of that started with his childhood and his father's attitude and many other aspects [...] will inform at the right level, some of what we now think of as breadth of, that breadth. But it's a sort of compassion which I think the collection in its way, and without sounding fey, when I said there were certain indifferent things I meant, it's a way of collecting which is very human, or a way of making a collection if you like which is very humanising, it has what I would call the dimension of compassion which I don't see in the very cold calculating way of doing things so it was to his advantage, it was greatly at times to his disadvantage.

Liz Rothschild

Born in 1957, Elizabeth Rothschild was the only child of Henry and Pauline Rothschild. She works as a playwright and, with her partner, runs the Westmill Woodland Burial Ground. Greatly influenced by her parent's love for craft, Liz continues to champion ceramicists through the Henry Rothschild Ceramics Bursary awarded through the Shipley Art Gallery and Northumbria University.

Interview conducted in person, 17 April 2012:

*Henry Rothschild early life in Germany ** Rothschild family 1930s ** Jewish background ** Lisbeth Rothschild ** Family business ** Albert Rothschild ** Henry Rothschild early interest in craft, art and design ** Henry Rothschild studying chemistry at Frankfurt 1930s ** Henry Rothschild leaving Germany 1933 ** Relationship with Germany ** Rothschild family and experiences of war and concentration camps ** Henry Rothschild in Cambridge 1930s ** Feelings about Jewishness ** Henry Rothschild and community of emigres and artists ** time in the Army ** Early days of Primavera 1940s ** Running Primavera ** Important people associated with Primavera ** Significant makers ** Henry Rothschild's relationship with makers ** Henry Rothschild's character ** Views on aesthetics ** Pauline Rothschild ** Henry Rothschild's bipolar diagnosis 1960s ** Retail and exhibition ** Henry Rothschild's relationship with potters ** Craft market ** Henry Rothschild as a collector ** Henry Rothschild as a retailers ** London ** Influence of Europe and position as an émigré ** Importance of family connections ** Primavera Walton Street ** Henry Rothschild Collection at the Shipley Art Gallery ** Primavera as a shop not a gallery ***

JB: If we could just start by telling me when and where you were born, so I can use that to reference other dates?

LR: Yes, so I was born in 1957 in London.

JB: So, we're here to talk about your father, Henry, and your memories and sort of recollections of things that he's told you. What I would like to start with, if you could tell me what you know about his family life in Germany.

LR: Yes, so it was a very close family life as I understand it. They lived in a large apartment house where across the other side of the courtyard there was another similar sort of house, and cousins lived there, so there was a lot of meeting and playing in the courtyard a lot of closeness between families. And then eventually they moved out into their own house, away from that set up, but that was what he grew up with, initially. And the closeness between, for example, his mother and one of her sisters, was that they would speak to each other every day on the telephone. Every day they would speak, and they would very often meet. And two sisters were married to two brothers so there were a lot of cross connections within that family. And I know that his mother and father, it was very much a love match, they'd got together away from the eyes of their elders and they'd corresponded secretly and she'd been sent to London, England, I think she was actually in Birmingham to learn English a little and they had already met by then and she'd go to the Post Office to collect letters from his father Albert, away from the watchful eye of whoever it was she was living with. So, it had been a marriage the two of them had chosen. Although he used to tell great, very funny stories about, quite soon after that, when they were engaged and he went to visit her and he bid his farewells - this was Albert

- and he'd walk his way down the stairs, and he heard her lean against the door and laugh and say 'oh, thank goodness he's gone!' And he walked back up the stairs, knocked on the door and that was their first row! As history relates! And so, into this family comes Henry as the youngest one, and the older siblings are his brother Hermann, who he always described as very serious and studious and who used to make him recite his homework to him; he always felt he was someone who should have followed an academic career and studied history but he, like my own father, was expected, more or less commanded, to go into the business which was a steel business selling and buying and breaking up ships on a very large scale, having begun several generations before as a scrap collecting business, with the whole family sorting the leather from the cloth from the metal from big piles from where they lived and eventually it built into this really big empire. And then he had his sister Karin, who he, it appears, all of the siblings adored, perhaps not Margaret so much, but certainly the two brothers really really were very very fond of Karin, who was clearly very spirited and funny and who ended up being a language teacher in the United States. Stories about her I remember were one time the parents were terribly proud because she was going to be in a show, and she was off every night rehearsing busily and coming back really late and it was all going very well, she was having a great time and so proudly his mother booked a whole row of seat for friends and family to see Karin perform, and they arrived and the show proceeded and nobody appeared on stage, or rather Karin didn't appear on stage and I think they got even to the second half before Karin appeared and then finally she basically said something like 'Madam, your carriage has arrived' and then went off stage again, and it turned out she'd been seeing a boyfriend and not at rehearsals at all. I only met her a couple of time because she lived in the States but she was, you could see, a very spirited, lively woman. And then there was this other sister, Margaret, who also ended up in the States and who was a stylist, did a series of jobs around the sort of beauty industry and with whom he had I think much less in common. He always joked about her that he was never sure he'd recognise her at the airport because her hair was always a different colour. So they're growing up in this atmosphere of this closeness, of familiarity, of a lot of family connection. He goes to a Jewish school, which he's not very excited about, Dad. He very much, they're a very integrated family but there are ways in which their Jewishness sort of hits the deck, that's one of them. Of course he's Bar Mitzvahed - I don't know if the girls would have been Bat Mitzvahed because that's not really happening in those days - but the boys are Bar Mitzvahed. Henry's character emerges very much around that time because he told the story of how he refused the Rabbi his father proposed to do the Bar Mitzvah for him because he found him very rigid and conservative, so already Dad's sort of more radical side was emerging and he requested a different Rabbi.

JB: And what age is that?

LR: Well, you're 12, so quite young to be making that request. And he got his way. He has a few very very good friends who he remembers very clearly and of course, who tragically, he then never sees again. Though he had one extraordinary encounter with one of them; I think he met him in an airport in Brazil, he saw this guy in a wheelchair, many, many years later, and realised it was one of his contemporaries from school. He does a lot of swimming, a huge amount of swimming in fact, in my eulogy about him I think I remember in that exactly how far it was he set himself to swim. He

just decided he was going to swim this incredible distance and he did. He used to cycle across town with a friend and go to this particular pool that he liked. He had a dog that he adored, an Alsatian. They had a cook as well I think, this woman called Käthe, who he was very fond of, she was country woman who lived with them and he always used Käthe 's story as an example of his mother's kindness because when Käthe came for the interview for her job she said to her, his mother, 'I have a daughter', and she wasn't married, 'I have a daughter who I need to be able to see at weekends and if that's not alright with you then I don't want the job'. And his mum said 'That's fine'. And Käthe ... you know it was bourgeois rich family and I think in many certain ways Käthe spent lots, more time with them, maybe not more, but certainly time with them and time in the kitchen. You know, Dad always described trying to steal food and he used to go down to the cellar and lick the gherkins and all this kind of thing, which I think I also talk about in the eulogy. But he also described, I remember once, Käthe taking him away on what she thought was going to be a tremendous treat, which was back to her village because they were killing a pig - when they killed a pig there were always lots of celebrations and parties because there was lots of meat and everything - and Dad was absolutely horrified by the sight of this pig being killed, and by the noise this pig made, it just completely went through him. And that's another story about his character, because he was very sensitive in certain ways and it profoundly upset him, what was supposed to be a treat, it was a disaster. Another story I remember him describing was when they went on holiday, they used to go to these holidays in the mountains, skiing, and holidays to the Italian lakes, swimming. I mean it's very, sort of, it's like another life because it's totally unconnected to the life I grew up into, but this was the world. And his mother was with them one time and then she was brought the news that, and I'm afraid I'm vague at who it was but I suspect it might have been her own mother had died and she went away and when she came back she was all in black. And he was a little boy so of course this return of his mother completely in black was very impressive to him. Especially as he was enormously close to her and she was the parent that he was connected to. He used to create these little exhibitions for her up in the attic, in these drawers he would put together various treasures and sort of take her by the hand and lead her up to show her. And they used to go shopping in the market together and get little bargains. She obviously was an extremely sweet woman. I remember a story of when she finally got to England and Dad going completely mad with anxiety because she hadn't arrived when she said she would - I don't know maybe she was quite a punctual person which he certainly wasn't - but anyway, he was crazy with worry and finally she showed up and he said, 'what happened to you?', and she said, 'I was sitting on the bus and this woman next to me started telling me her story and it was so sad and I felt that she just needed somebody to listen to her so I went to the end of the line with her and then came back'. It's very sweet. So, yes, that's the sort of Germany he's growing up in, really rich with memories of the markets and the river and the town. Didn't particularly like studies and didn't particularly like his school.

JB: So this is sort of late 1910s, 1920s?

LR: Well, he's born in 1913, so it's really the 20s. Yeah, he does remember the inflation a bit, he talked about it a bit, but not in any sort of great detail. There's this connection all the time with Berlin, because his dad commutes

to Berlin on a very regular basis and occasionally he goes to Berlin too. So he remembers his dad staying in this very grand hotel, which still exists in Berlin and the man who was looking after him coming to him and telling him that the bath was ready, and Dad would always tell this story with great relish because he loved the Berlin accent which was very different to the accent he grew up with. And this is a very prosperous, influential family, it's got important people coming to dinner all the time. You see - actually I haven't shown you that photograph - you see all the people in the business, just a massive number of employees all gathered together for one photograph, very well dressed, and prosperous and so on. And I think I mentioned to you yesterday that when the two brothers who were working together in the same firm went together to Frankfurt or Berlin they actually didn't catch the same train because that was considered too great a risk because if they were both in the same accident it would be a disaster to the business, but if either of them were catching the train, the train would be held if they were late. I mean, I don't mean it was held for hours, but a few minutes [...] So they were used to being very influential and very well placed. And of course into that comes the Reich. Dad, however, grew up with a real distaste for all this ponderous, rather so, rich life. Having been in grand hotels continuously, because that was the way they lived, we practically never ever stayed in a hotel, we always stayed in bed and breakfasts [...] He had absolutely no interest in that lavish way of life. What he did have was a really strong feeling for beauty and for art, wherever he found that. And he didn't find an awful lot that was enormously beautiful in the furniture or the art that was in his own home. But what he did think he wanted to do, and which his father was absolutely opposed to was study art history and then do what in Germany was called Innenarchitektur, which was interior design but had a kind of slightly weightier feel to it I think than those words have in English and it was taken more seriously I suppose...

JB: ... It had more of an architectural sense rather than a design...

LR: ...House and Gardens feels to it. Yes, it was an aesthetic and a serious sort of discipline in a way. But of course he was never allowed to do that. When the time comes to study he's forced to study chemistry because that is seen as useful to the business [...]

JB: You've talked a little bit about his relationship with his mother and being very close. Could you say anything about his relationship with his father?

LR: Yeah, I think that was probably quite troubled. Dad, you know, Dad was naughty I think and a bit rebellious. He described how Käthe, his nurse, used to say to him, 'I'll walk you good', and she would take him out for a walk. So I guess he hit up against his dad's temperament which was certainly, he sounds - I mean I never knew him of course - but a bit of bully, used to having his own way, and not afraid to enforce it physically if not verbally, so Dad carried scars all his life on his two thumbs from where his dad had slammed a chair down on him in the midst of some argument. So I think he feared him more than he loved him. But I think he admired him, and as he grew older he talked more about how he admired him and what an impressive man he'd been, what a businessman he'd been and so on and so forth. But I don't think there was much closeness.

[...]

JB: So, in 1932, he's at university...

LR: ... Yes...

JB: ... and he's advised to leave...

LR: ... That's right. So a lecturer at university, who Dad always described as a Nazi but I always took that to mean a member of the Nazi Party rather than anybody [rather than a true Nazi sympathiser] well I'm sure it was because otherwise the story wouldn't unfold the way it does. So what he did, he took him into his office and said, 'Rothschild, you haven't got a future here, you need to tell your father to send you abroad'. So he went home and told his father and his father said, 'okay'. And by this point I think all the other siblings were out of the country. So Hermann is in London and the two sisters are in the States.

JB: So Hermann is carrying on the family business but from a London base?...

LR: ...Yes, there's a London office. And an Irish office, run by another branch of the family. Who are still there and still running by the way [...] A massive enterprise, huge industrial areas in former Eastern Germany and in Western Germany as well. So, yeah, this is the business that gets sold for a Deutschmark .
[...]

JB: So, he comes to the UK in 1933, is that right?...

LR: ...I think it was 1933, I don't have a document to prove that, but I think that's when it was.

JB: The correspondence all seems to be around that period. So literally just before Hitler becomes Chancellor?

LR: Yeah, but he is in Germany for the Krystallnacht [Night of the Broken Glass] - and I don't know what that means, I don't know whether that means he went back, because he might have done you know, he could have come and gone a little bit in that period, that earlier 30s period - which of course was the night of the burning and looting of Jewish businesses.

JB: He does mention in one of the journals he comes back in '35, '36...

LR: There you go, I don't know, you check. [...] But I think that was a very, very horrifying thing to witness, because it really is like, 'do I recognise this country?' Of course it was a really, really long time before he went back. And a really, really long time before he spoke German again. But interestingly, he did. And he forged those new relationships with Germany, and made all that new generation of friends with those German potters, which I think is very significant and speaks very highly of him. Whereas his brother, who is extremely materially motivated, very, very keen on being prosperous, and making money and so on - to be fair possibly because his real interests have been sort of cut off from him so he's left wanting to succeed with what he's been given which is to be materially successful, but anyway - for whatever reason, he never would do business with

Germany. Never, not in his entire career. And he could have made a lot of money, in the business they were in ...

JB: That's very interesting...

LR: He wouldn't speak German and he wouldn't deal with Germany. So you get these two brothers making very different decisions.

JB: So his brother had become a British citizen as well?

LR: Yeah. I don't know what date, but yes.

JB: So when he first came to the UK who were his connections?...

LR: Well, I guess his brother, Hermann. And then I would have to check back with the family about Hilde Ettinghausen who I mentioned to you the other day because she was one of cousins I mentioned he played with across the courtyard and he absolutely adored her and she'd been a very pretty, charming woman and I can see how he loved her. He was very very drawn to very gentle, rather feminine women, for want of a better word, to use a short hand, and so you know, like his mother, like my mother [...] So she's definitely arriving in London at some point round this time and sheltering other members of the family, from France, where the son Henri of a family, where they'd been moving from safe house to safe house to safe house, two nights at a time, three nights, three children, aged about 7 and 10 together, while the father is in a camp, the mother is in a camp, the other sister is in a camp and they eventually get to London and they come to Hilde's and eventually the father finds his way back and is reunited with them but the mother and the sister perish. So, you know, there are all these extraordinary stories and yeah. So those people are around. And so is this guy, Harold Stannard, and I don't know quite what the connection is there, but I think he was known to the family before Dad got to the UK . But he's pretty alone, really. He goes to college in London, I think only for a year, and then transfers to up to Caius in Cambridge. And then there's this terrible story of his stuff which gets transferred up and the trunk arrives at the college and they give him the digs address and he arranges for it to be taken there and he keeps asking his landlady, 'has it arrived?', and she says, 'no', and he goes back to the porters and they say, 'no it was definitely sent', and this goes on and on and on, and 'no, it hasn't come', and then one day he saw his favourite dress shirt in a window of a pawn shop in Cambridge, and then he knew something was up and went back and they inspected, and she'd hidden his trunk under her coal and sold all the stuff, which is pretty grim on top of everything else. The only good to that was he got some delightful digs next and I think they were very sweet to him and I think he was very happy there. But it wasn't an easy period for him, because he was an outsider. He was disliked by many, because he had a German accent, so it wasn't cool to be German, it wasn't cool to be Jewish, amongst the English upper-class of the time, which is, let's face it, who was at Cambridge at that time. Still pretty much! [...] And then, the only other kind of place to go was Orthodox Jewry, which he certainly didn't identify with, so he couldn't go and do that either. So I think he felt pretty marginal. What he did do, gloriously, was attend his chemistry lectures and attend art history lectures wherever he possibly could. He did manage to sneak in a bit of the art history, even though it wasn't his degree. And he started the Gramophone Society, he started a record collecting society,

classical music. He always adored music and he was rather pleased with that. And I think he had a few very particular friends. [...] There were connections that he made that did last but I think when Dad starts to really make friends is when he finds the whole craft world and the world of makers. That's when he finds his community. Yeah.

JB: In his decision to sort of become a British citizen, did he mention anything about talking to his father about that prior to sort of making these applications or...? Just to sort of get a view of what his father would of thought. [...]

LR: Well, I would imagine that if he did talk to his father, he would only have been advised to go ahead because, no issue, I mean, the issue was just trying to find somewhere where you were going to be allowed to stay, safely, at that stage. So I don't know whether he discussed it but I can't imagine for a moment his father would have opposed it. His father was just too old and too unable to uproot, I think, to move. Dad was desperate that he would because he knew his mother wouldn't move unless his father did and, of course fortuitously, his dad, whose health had never been brilliant, he'd suffered from diabetes and things, he dies just in time to get his mother out. Otherwise, no doubt, they would have perished the both of them. So, yeah, I can't see there would have been any issue about that. Because the whole question of what it was to have German nationality was just meaningless, you know, because it was stripped, you weren't a German national anymore, you were Jewish. And his Dad knew that. There was no way back. The only debate, I guess, might have been was, 'were you going to be American or were you going to be British'. That might have been a debate. And I think there was a bit of a conversation about that, about why not go to America. And I can't remember what that was, and I think it might have been that Dad always felt very European, he didn't, you know, feel drawn to being across the Atlantic in the same way, I'm not sure. I think the only question would have what country not whether to go ahead. Yeah.

JB: With regard to talking a little bit about his Jewishness, and you saying that he didn't particularly feel Jewish, what about his parents...

LR: ... Similar, I think very similar. I think they were the same kind of Jews that Christians are that go to Church on Christmas Day and Easter and obviously expect to have their children baptised, but it doesn't mean that actually they feel in anyway profoundly Christian. If you said, 'are you Christian?', they would say, 'of course', but if you really scratched the surface about what that really means. The thing about being Jewish is that there's a sort of cultural identity with that as well in certain ways. You know, or cultural values. And some of those cultural values I would say Dad certainly demonstrated. [...] It's that very complicated thing about, I think I said to you yesterday, if – and actually, I'm similar- if I'm with Jews I don't feel Jewish and if I'm with Christians I definitely feel Jewish. And I definitely don't feel totally English, which clearly Dad didn't either so there's that whole, you know, who are you thing. And Dad did always celebrate the high holidays and we went to my cousin Hilde, the one he grew up with and the one who moved to London [...] and she always kept a kosher house and she celebrated the high holidays and we went there and Dad always marked kosher, marked Yom Kippur, all his life, except until the very, very end when he started going to Quakers. So, something remained that mattered. And he studied the Talmud and the Bible with the rabbinical

commentaries and things in later life, and wanted to be buried the next day immediately after he died which is a Jewish tradition. So, it's complicated what you are. Dad didn't like rigidity, of any kind so, and he didn't identify with many aspects of English society either. Certainly not the sort of class ridden stuff from English society, he really hated all that, and he hated the sort of narrowness and the insular-ness you can find in England, which of course you're less prone to in Europe because you cross a boundary in a second and you're in a different country, and he really carried that, and he carried having been educated in European history as opposed to the history of one small island, and its impact on the world. So yeah, as his child, as his only child, daughter of a Christian mother, because he married the daughter of a vicar, so he obviously married out, so he made a big diluting decision at that point, but he did say, 'do I want to go to Hebrew school on a Saturday' and of course because I was given choice I said, 'no', which I rather regret. [...] When I was growing up I would have said my mother was actively religious in pursuing her Christianity and my Dad was just sort of marking time with it but it wasn't a serious investigation for him. A bit more later on, but not when I was growing up. But Judaism is both a religion and a culture, it's a confusing thing.

JB: You did mention yesterday, when he came over he didn't necessarily feel like he belonged with the Orthodox Jewry...

LR: No, no, no...

JB: ...but then didn't with the English upper-class. Do you think that ever changed throughout his life or ...

LR: I think he found the community with the artists, you know, who came from a range of different backgrounds. He loved that blend of craftspeople, particularly in his era where they were less concerned about being part of the fine art world. But you see it in Gabriele [Koch] when you listen to her talking, they blend this wonderful, aesthetic awareness and appreciation and preoccupation with a fantastic degree of practicality, so there she is moving her dustbin lids around and getting her Raku firing right, and you have to be quite physically strong to cart all that gear round and you have to understand about temperature and glazes. And that's where his – because he wasn't, he didn't hate chemistry, it's just not what he actually wanted to do – but actually his love of chemistry and his, that interest in what happens when these minerals burn off at this temperature, he was always asking real detailed questions about the processes, he loved to know about the processes. And I suppose they all just met in that place that's not about who you are and where you've come from or what you have, it's just about your passion, so they met in a place of passion which is outside all kind of boundaries isn't it? And it was only when I grew up much later on that I appreciated the people that had been around me actually, and realised that they weren't materialistic and they were lit with this sort of engagement about what they were doing. Which isn't how everybody is, I thought that's how everybody was, I sort of thought everybody did a job that they loved. Little did I know.

JB: Did your father talk to you about his time in the Army?

LR: Yeah, he did. He... I mean he didn't find it easy in some ways, I think, but he didn't, he always had a bit of inferiority complex that he didn't make it to

being, you know, a code breaker or translator [...] He wasn't a natural for the Army life, you know, obviously not – you know, rigid discipline and do what you're told, doesn't go together naturally with Dad. Nor does fighting indeed, I remember him describing with deep dislike what they did to the pacifist Duke – I can't remember which one it was – but one of the Dukes or Lords stood out against fighting against Germany, I don't think he was really preaching appeasement he just was a pacifist, so they dumped armaments all over his land, they used his land to store quite dangerous munitions because they had the right to do that. So, yeah, I think he liked seeing the different parts of England he was in, as I remember, I think he was in Liverpool [...] I can't remember where else he was, somewhere in the South of England. But then of course, his actual active service is in Italy and that, to be honest, I think he really loved. He was incredibly lucky to have landed in Italy, because he wasn't really seeing any active fighting at all, he was moving vehicles and provisions around and things [...] And then come all these glorious stories about Dad getting to chat to the Italians, and finding out the villagers, they're really fed up because all the vehicles have been requisitioned and they haven't got any petrol, they can't do any work because they can't get the clay they need to make their loo bowls which is the work they're involved in doing, so Dad requisitions some vehicles and gets them some clay and they say, well do you want to see some of our local pottery? So he's taken off to see these craft potters, using traditional, majolica ware, or whatever it was. Anyway, falls in love with it and that's sort of the beginning of the process really. So I think he had a very uneventful war really. And rather a pleasant one, quite comradely when he got out there. And of course he's back in Europe, and he's sort of... yeah, so I don't think it was too bad really. And he gets as far as being officer, just, whatever the first officer you can be, that's what he is [...]

JB: So, he comes back from the Army because his mother is ill...

LR: ...He comes back to see her but then he has to go away again. He just comes back because she has the operation [...] He persuades and cajoles his way onto the first boat he can get onto back, having overheard a couple of soldiers talking to each other, and one guy who's organising the transport saying, 'if you just sleep under this table we'll make sure you're the first one on'. So then Dad asked to do the same thing and he said, 'oh no, I'm sorry, that's not for officers I can't let an officer sleep under the table', and Dad explains his situation and persuades and gets his way, which is very much Dad's style. When Dad wanted to be charming he really could pull off all kinds of thing, in all kinds of places, so it's a very typical story. And the determination, he was going to get back to see his mother and he was going to get there as soon as he could. And mercifully she pulled round from the operation and she was alright so he then has to go back. And then eventually he's back and demobbed, and they're all kicking their heels in some barracks, I'm not sure where. And he goes to the officer and he asks permission, to take his money and just go off hitchhiking round the UK, looking for craftsmen and that is the real serious beginning of it all. And I think it's while he's in Italy he has the idea to call it Primavera, because of Botticelli's painting that's why it's Primavera.

JB: So in those initial visits out to places and having the idea of Primavera, the idea for a retail place, I understand there were a lot of restrictions, it took him a while to get a license to operate, is that right?

- LR: Yes, I think that's true. Restrictions on how much of things you could sell and stuff like that. I think that's what partly starts Dad looking sideways, to different, other things to stock, like baskets and ...
- JB: ...Fishing nets...
- LR: ...Fishing nets, exactly. He starts to try and think round the whole rationing and Utility thing that everybody's in.
- JB: Of all the people that he worked with, who are the names that stick out to you, that he used to talk about, potters...
- LR: ... oh, I thought you meant in running the shop, because that's another category...
- JB: ... well, let's talk about running the shop first of all...
- LR: Well, interestingly, he had a board of trustees, I don't know who they all were, but I know one of them was Sah Ovid, and Sah Ovid is a really interesting example because she... it's through Sah that my mother meets my father, because Sah was a governess who went out to Egypt with my mother's mother, who was also a governess. And when Dad was looking for someone to help out in the shop because one of his staff had been stealing from the till and he asked his lawyer what to do - he knew who it was but he hadn't caught him at it - the guy said, 'you can't accuse him without proof, you have to fire everybody', so suddenly Dad had nobody, so he said to Sah, 'what will I do?' She said, 'I'll ask Pauline if she can come and help you out for two weeks', and Mum's joke was it was the longest two weeks of her life. So the interesting thing about Sah is she also crosses the two worlds, because she's like my grandmother, a governess etc but she married a guy called Moshe Ovid, who you can tell from the name, who was an extraordinary Jewish visionary jeweller, a Jewish mystic, so he writes extraordinary books, things like Visions of Jewels, and they're in a world of people like Epstein, they're friendly with all those Jewish sort of artists in London and he became a jeweller and they did extraordinary work, they ran a place called Cameo Corner, so you've got people like that. And eventually Dad gets a manager who come in to run the place, a man called David Jewel [...] And then, my cousin in Paris always tells the story of her husband who fought in the Spanish Civil War, them coming to London penniless and hopeless and Dad giving Manolo a job packing parcels up in the shop, so you know. And there's all these people and our friends at home who are refugees. There's Hilde Wolpe she was called, she'd been a dentist in Germany, and she couldn't get any work as a dentist over here, but she was living in London. Berthold her brother is the guy who designs the font, masthead for The Times you know, and he became a very famous letterer. So you can see the sort of community we're in, and I think that's relevant, I think that's important, this Jewish artist community, refugee community, Epstein being another one. So, well in terms of people's work in the shop [...] Bernard Leach, Lucie Rie, Hans Coper, they're the big [three]. Helen Pincombe [...] she was absolutely a beloved in terms of personal connection as well as art, she's the one. She was my equivalent of a godmother, she was with us at every Christmas, we saw her really really regularly, and he loved her very simple pottery, she is an example of somebody that Dad championed, because she didn't champion herself, she absolutely kept saying, 'nothing was

perfect, nothing was good enough' and, I know she had exhibitions elsewhere but there's no doubt Dad championed her, and just believed in her. Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, absolutely. Gwen Hanssen, Robin Welch, Colin Pearson, Ruth Duckworth absolutely - Ruth Duckworth, if he were to name his greatest potters she would be further up that list it's just I don't think of her quickly, because she was living in the States but absolutely. Winchcombe, you know, the Winchcombe pottery, absolutely huge respect for him and his standard ware and everything he did there. Batterham, I mean I don't know how far forward you want to come you know, Richard Batterham and then obviously the later loves are Ewen Henderson and Gordon Baldwin and Gabriele, they're probably the ones that go in there. And I haven't named any of the Germans, so when you come into the German period then you've got, Ursula Scheid, Karl Scheid, Beate Kuhn, absolutely adored all three of them. And then there were others like Weigel and, those that are represented in the collection. But the ones, the person of all those that he probably adored the most was Beate, but he was very very fond of Ursula Scheid as well, Karl he was a bit more prickly around but you know they still got on really well, they used to come on holidays with us and things, when they were over doing a show, they'd all go on holiday together.

JB: And when did he really start collecting for himself?

LR: He always did I think. I think he would keep a piece or two. He also, bless him, couldn't bear to see somebody not sell and if he had somebody who didn't sell and he'd put them in he felt responsible for that fact because he felt that they should be selling and they hadn't.

[...]

JB: So he had quite a testing relationship with some of the potters that he worked with that I've heard - they a great respect for him but a very difficult working relationship.

LR: Yeah, yeah. How would they describe that, in what way would they describe that as difficult?

JB: [...] Sometimes it would be helpful advice, that they should make that a bit taller or try and alter this, but sometimes, if your father didn't feel they were doing their best work, then he would kind of walk away from it a little and come back when he felt it was their best work but obviously as an artist you'd feel a bit of being personally criticised...

LR: ...Yes, yes, well Dad, tact wasn't one of Dad's strong points. So you know he never, he unswervingly knew what he thought was good and he was absolutely convinced that that was it, that that was good and that certainty of eye and that conviction is what made him an interesting collector and an interesting gallery owner but it also, I really can see being on the receiving end of that sometimes won't have been much fun because if he didn't like it that he wouldn't have liked it and that would have been that. Whereas I will go to something where I look at the work and I'm just not sure, do I want it, I'm not a buyer like him anyway but on the few occasions when I've thought about it I will be not sure what to do between three pieces that I all quite like and which one should I go for, and Dad would just be

straight in and he'd just know, you know. So that sort of clarity and certainty doesn't leave a lot of room for compromise.

JB: And did he ever talk about sort of how he made those decisions, I mean was it just sort of instinct and gut feeling?...

LR: ...Yeah absolutely...

JB: ...There was never anything else operating...

LR: ... I think so. Dad I think believed in the notion of absolute beauty, there is you know philosophically there is such a thing as beauty and that you can, you can begin to describe what makes something beautiful and what doesn't. We tend to have a very relativistic notion of beauty, we think beauty is entirely shaped by our culture and our time and our experiences and therefore beauty is relative. I don't think Dad believed that. I think Dad felt there was an essential beauty almost in a platonic way you know and that you will find it and you will see the same elements that make something beautiful in a plant, in a rock formation, in a sculpture, in a pot, in a building, and for Dad some of those elements were purity of form, simplicity, and, you'll know, he goes again and again and again to the bowl as a form, there's something very fascinating for him about that but not exclusively. He's looking for a quality that I think I would describe as classical, so that it exists outside time, it's not subject to fashion so that for example, Grayson Perry would never speak to Dad or appeal to Dad because it's so kind of bounded in its time in a certain way, it's saying all kind of things that are really interesting and challenging about our time[INTERRUPTION] So he would say to me, he absolutely trained my eye, and then as I got older he would say, 'which one do you think is beautiful?' and I knew that there was right answer and a wrong answer.

JB: But did you give him the answer that you thought he was wanting or did you...

LR: ...No actually, I mean I can't say that probably my - my aesthetic has strayed from his in various ways - but by in large I probably haven't fundamentally challenged it there are ways in which I have definitely but I tended to agree with him, actually, I mean that's what I... But where we disagree is that I've got room for very many different kinds of beauty, some of which are quite, I don't know, what can I say. But you see if I was really pushed I'd probably say well actually I don't know if they are beautiful but I think they are worth having in your house for other reasons. He liked folk art for example, where you wouldn't find that purity of line, but you'd find an honesty, I suppose there's another thing that probably would have interested him was an honest relationship between the material and the form so not a great deal of interest in pottery trying to look like material like fabric. So, yeah, I didn't fundamentally disagree with him about that, where I probably disagreed with him a little bit more with, I think Dad did sometimes think that if people had good taste, what he defined as good taste, that meant that they were going to be good people. He sort of felt that if you have that sense of beauty, then you must be alright. And of course I think of the Gestapo asking for the Jews to play them beautiful music in the camps and I'm not convinced that's true. They were moved by Beethoven but they were also doing terrible things. I remember visiting some collectors with Dad in Germany and they had a magnificent

collection, I mean it was absolutely beautifully displayed and I really didn't like them but I felt that Dad superficially or initially anyway was very drawn just because if they got all that bit right, they must be alright. I mean, he wasn't dim, there weren't loads of horrid people in our lives, you know he didn't really make that mistake in a way that stuck, if you know what I mean.

JB: But for initial impressions...

LR: Yeah he'd be, yeah. But he did have a wonderful eye, and he did have a conviction and I do look at work with his, with some of his criteria in mind and I don't find it all that lacking.

JB: And with his relationship with your Mum, when they got married and she started to work [for him] did that sort of balance him out in terms of his, you spoke before of that sort of energy your Dad had and your Mum kind of helped to kind of reign that in a bit, if you could just talk a little bit about their relationship?

LR: Well you know Mum was absolutely level to the point of not probably paying enough attention to her feelings and needs, because I'm not sure they could have been met in the context of her relationship with Dad, if she'd really started to express perhaps what she really really wanted. But she was by nature very quiet, and very thoughtful, and very measured and so that's, and well organised and punctual. So everything he needed to sort of temper his tendencies. And he brought her, to be fair, a very inspiring and exciting sort of rollercoaster life, and I think my Mum, if she hadn't met my dad, and if her life had unfolded differently, after her first not very successful marriage, I could have really seen my Mum either becoming a vicar's wife or an academic. But my Mum's was a story of a woman who you know didn't have any money, who wanted to go to Oxford to study English and had to get a what was called an exhibition in those days and that meant you had to get incredibly high marks in all your results and so she got really high marks in everything except Maths so she ended up working at John Lewis, you know, that was it, bang. Because she didn't have any other resources and there were no other grants so she worked in John Lewis in London. And so there was a woman with, I mean she was very bright, she was a natural academic, and never got to go to University and wanted to be a Housing Officer, would have been an absolutely magnificent Housing Officer because she would have been so good with people and at the same time she did have a line, she wouldn't have been just had the wool pulled over her eyes; I mean one point, hysterically, she was store detective for John Lewis which I always find very funny and can't quite imagine my Mum doing that. So, it's not till many, many, many years later that - actually at a slight crisis point in their marriage - when she evaluates what she sort of wants that she decides in her 70s, to take an Open University degree, which she did, bless her socks, and she did English [along with other subjects] - in the 70s she put a solar panel on her roof because she did some work on environmental issue science, and I was hugely behind her doing that because I did feel that there was no doubt whose values and creativity were given prominence in the marriage, but not an unusual marriage for its time. And on the whole very successful. And they shared a lot of common interests, they were both really interested in history and architecture and so on and so forth but as in all marriages there were places where they missed - she was a wonderful dancer and

he had two left feet! She was more radical in certain ways politically than he was actually...

[...]

And then you know, she goes on this religious journey and she ends up exploring Quakerism and gets very very involved with the Quakers and involved in various charitable works that she does so you know she finds ways, and then eventually he finds ways.

JB: That's very much later on in life...?

LR: I mean, and also to be fair, they were raising me. Although actually because he demanded her work pretty much full time, we had a nanny, so I was brought up by a nanny. I mean she was around Mum but she came home late and was always on call for a letter or whatever it was.

JB: Do you think the business would have been as successful as it was without the relationship they had?

LR: No, I don't. Because, I think, we did lose staff quite often in the shop, he did alienate staff because he would just lose his temper and be fairly outrageously angry about whatever it was and certainly never apologised and so on and so forth, so my Mum was the oil on troubled waters. She was also just very well organised. She would moderate letters that he wanted to send that were a bit outrageous and, yeah, she made the wheels turn efficiently. Dad had inspiration about the whole direction of the business and what he wanted to do and she dotted the i's and crossed the t's. And I think he might have ended up losing money or, I don't know, I don't know how it would have actually gone in the end. But, yeah I think he was very fortunate in finding her, very. But she was not unfortunate in finding him either, you know. It was definitely mutually benefit as well as sort of costs.

JB: And you mentioned yesterday, and I don't know how much you would want to talk about this, or go into it, I understand your concerns...

LR: ...I just don't want it to be whole story. But when I was 7, so that makes it 1964, my Dad had been very depressed and I think had found it pretty much impossible to get out of bed. He'd been banned from driving, I think for driving dangerously, not for drink driving, but I think he'd been driving dangerously. So Mum had had to learn to drive which was glorious because otherwise he'd have never let her learn to drive and she was actually a much better driver than him. So there's a whole build up of stress and anxiety coming out and then I knew nothing about this because they chose not to tell me as a child, I only know this as an adult, but it reached a crisis point and the doctors working with him said that they thought they ought to section him unless the medication they were going to try worked and the medication they tried was lithium and it worked so he was never sectioned, but it shows you how serious it was. So he's always struggling with that and that is one of the reasons that we move out of London actually, that's the primary reason that we move from London to Cambridge. So the business exists already in Cambridge as well as London and then they decide to move, to a less stressful existence and that's why we go to Cambridge is because of Dad's mental health. Around that time they try to send me to boarding school, which I guess was also

probably tied up with that, but they did give me a choice and I refused to go, which, yeah. So, we moved to Cambridge and I go to school in Cambridge. But there's no doubt that Dad's volatility is in some ways connected to that I think. But it's been controlled by lithium from then on until he's in his 90s [...] But I've no doubt that the kind of energy he had is also part of the same picture [...]

JB: If we go back to Primavera and those early days, did your Dad really talk about the difference between what he was trying to achieve as a retailer and what he was trying to achieve as a patron and the exhibitions and things that he did, the sort of like two aspects of the shop?

LR: I don't think he would have made that distinction in quite that way. Because I think he would have seen the exhibitions as an extension of his retailing. So that would be the first thing I'd say in response to the question. And I'm not sure how much Dad saw himself as a patron, quite in that way, that word, in the way I hear that word. I think, I think he saw himself as a - I mean, yes maybe he would have done - he saw himself as a finder of, a nurturer of talent, without a doubt and the exhibitions were like, I would just say of like a purer form of retailing, without the clutter, with him able to focus on the things that you know he found particularly exciting or beautiful in a particular medium be it wood, glass, pottery, you know, because of course there were all these different ones and shows. And also a chance for him to really group and display things, because there's no doubt that Dad's creativity expressed itself in the way he made exhibitions, and he thought really long and hard about how he placed which potter next to which potter and how he grouped the pieces and how he chose the pieces to make a coherent group...

JB: ...and he took full control of that, there was no involvement...

LR: ...oh god, nobody else is [included] in that. Whereas the shop, I did the windows for quite a long time, and he was happy to let me do the windows, he might have a comment about it or whatever you know, and he would think about where he wanted the stock displayed and things but there was lots and lots of stuff in a small space and you couldn't have that sort of more refined spacious feel to it, so that was why he was so excited when Ronald took over because Ronald had a similar approach but also brought something else to it because he was very practical so you know he would knock up some shelves here and rearrange something here and change the space and paint the wall a different colour and Dad found that very very stimulating that each time Ronald held an exhibition in, because he held some in Primavera itself, he would make the space different you know and make an event out of the exhibition in that way so. So yeah, Dad, as a patron, you know Dad in the way I described it I suppose but not in the exhibitions. And the exhibitions suggest an expression of that relationship he has with those artists and, yes. And he was very excited when the national press started taking notice of the exhibitions, yes, it was exciting, I can remember when, oh, there's somebody, Geoffrey Weston from The Times, he was the first national reviewer I think to come and review one of Dad's exhibitions and he was working for The Times [...] But of course, the fact that those press are starting to come is indicative of the fact that crafts

are beginning to move into this place where they start to occupy fine art so you know it's a double edged sword isn't it?

JB: Yeah, it is a very complex relationship isn't it?

LR: And of course, a lot of the potters are delighted because at last they can make a living and they can make a living not by having to turn out standard ware which for some of them is a passion and a love and what they want to do like Ray Finch, I mean he made exhibition pieces too obviously, so you know you get the people who absolutely want to do both, the Marianne de Trey's, she's another, very much a friend in the early days, but then you get the people who really really want to be able to have the time to make individual pieces and to throw three away and only keep one, and the only way you can do that is commanding high prices, so it's very difficult.

JB: The whole, that sort of market for it, obviously shifts and we were talking a little bit about that last night about your Dad's reluctance to be involved with people who were looking at it as an investment...

LR:Absolutely, couldn't stand it...

JB: ...rather than as a passion...

LR: ...Couldn't stand it. So what's the difference in your vocabulary between a patron and collector then? Because the word Dad would use is collector I think, I think you're using the word patron like he would have used collector.

JB: I think collector in terms of choosing his pieces, choosing his what he wanted to look at, and I think patron I'm using in a sense of how he actually interacted with the artists themselves. You know we were talking about Bill Ismay before and he was very practical...

LR: No, no, he [William Ismay] wasn't in dialogue with artists at all in that way, that's right.

JB: I think that's where I'm coming from with that.

LR: Ok. Well in that way you see its perhaps, its partly the character of it, but also because Dad's a retailer as well, so he's looking for things he think he can sell and that have the quality that he can put his shoulder behind to sell, so that sort of changes the relationship doesn't it, he's not just a purchaser for his own ends, he's, yeah.

JB: I think there's a lot of stories about him, always going out to places to choose the pieces, he'd never have things just sort of sent to him blind...

LR: ...No, no exactly. And, that's a fair point to make because there actually would have been retailers that would have been doing that. Yes, you're quite right to make that distinction. So he's very scrupulous in that way, very particular [...] And then I think, you know, it's a bit like my friend who had a brother who worked in Africa and he was passionate about Africa and why we needed to be thinking about Africa and aware of the issues in Africa and all of this, and then he'd say to me, 'and of course I just love driving across the desert in a jeep', you know, and my Dad loved going round to all these potters and making sure he absolutely got the work he

wanted but he also adored travelling around the country. He loved to put his nose into the nearest parish church and see what it was like and check out this old town you know he was, he adored to know the country in that way, so when he, years later he's on the road selling his postcards, which for a man of his age you know, you might have thought he wouldn't enjoy it much but he does, he enjoys it and he enjoys finding a little b&b where he can put himself up and finding a nice place to eat. He actually enjoyed that whole thing of travelling round I'd say as well as, you're absolutely right though, absolutely wanting to control what he got and to see what was on offer.

JB: So how do you think he fit in to London life at that time, when the shop was still in London?

LR: Well, I mean it's a clientele of architects and actors and people like that, the word gets round a certain sort of set, so there's people like Ustinov come and [...] it's the sort of artist, designers, architects, they're the ones that are coming, and like I say, actors as well, I can't think who else he mentioned but there were, there were a number of actors who used to come. Because they're looking for something a little bit different and something a bit exciting, thought provoking, I think those are his customers and when he's in Cambridge he gets some academics and mixture of people coming [...] Another person, David Attenborough, he's a customer, he's got a major pottery collection [...] I don't think there was a huge amount of love lost between David and my Dad, but nonetheless they definitely crossed paths.

[...]

But Lucie had a ring of rather close admirers and Dad always sort of slightly stepped back from that. He didn't sort of like the coquetry. I mean, I don't think David Attenborough was necessarily one of that ring but there was a guy, I can't remember who he was, who was a bit of go between for her.

JB: I get the impression he felt that way about Leach as well, that sort of unflagging admiration that a lot of people had for him...

LR: ...That's right. well, he wasn't a man for gurus. You know, he didn't... as soon as people came a little bit too, set up on a pedestal, Dad would be stepping back slightly. But he enormously admired Leach. Coper was the one I think he was the fondest of out of those three and also the most exciting in terms of his work really. But I mean he thought all their work was fabulous, I mean so it's silly to make distinctions in many ways. Then he's friendly with people like Barbara Hepworth.

JB: Do you think he felt a particular draw to people who had also come...

LR: ... From Germany?...

JB: ... well, from Europe and had had to adopt Britain as their country? Or do you think that was just incidental?

LR: It's hard to know the answer to that to be quite honest with you because Lucie was Austrian and Dad was very anti-Austrian actually if you pushed under the surface too hard, so that wasn't particularly a bond between him and Lucie I don't think, although the fact she comes to England and she

has to make ceramic buttons in order to survive, for whoever it was, Liberty's I think, yeah, I'm not sure. Because I'm not sure if it isn't more about the fact that they just produced the work of the quality that really excites him. Because equally well you've got Bernard Leach who's as English as they come with all his Japanese links obviously, but Helen Pincombe who also couldn't be more sort of English, Raj in her background, Empire background, grew up in India sent to Australia for safety, ends up in the UK; Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, completely English upper-class, you know, grew up in this village down the road, and they're his other core people at that time. Cardew, absolutely loved Cardew, we haven't mentioned him, but loved him very much and admired him enormously, another real English upper-class adventurer went to Africa. So I don't think so, if you look at that inner circle, the émigrés are well represented because they are well represented but I don't think that's what dictating the choice myself. Because I, I mean there would have been as much distance as closeness between him and Lucie in that regard I think. With the Austria bit. Of course it wasn't her fault the Austrian's decided to do the Anschluss, but he never forgave the Austrian's for it. He never did you see, whereas he did forgive the Germans. Perhaps because he also wanted a connection with German in a way he didn't need it from Austria. I think his social circle reflects his émigré background. that's different. So the people who were coming into our home are regularly, probably 80 percent when I was a school child, émigré. Were speaking in English but they're émigré.

JB: And of that same generation?

LR: Yeah. They're a mixture of family and newly made friends, yeah. Because the family all, you know, having been scattered, then draws very close where it finds itself again. [...] I'll say one thing about family. You were asking about when he was growing up, and the fact is when he was growing up he had this real sense of the big family really around him and I think it's really significant, and I think it is within your period the first time this happens, I think in the '80s Dad organises for the first time, what's called the family reunion. And he arranges for as many of the family as he can persuade to come and spend a week together in Italy. And that's the beginning of a series of reunions, the last of which I organised.

JB: I did notice in a lot of the papers that are about the family, it's your Dad kind of putting the feelers out there to bring everybody in...

LR: It is my Dad, absolutely. He wants that feeling of a big family again. Which of course we absolutely didn't have, even though I talk about people coming who were family, we were a tiny little family the three of us, far far away from anybody. There's the brother of course but he's not very close to him and the two sisters in the States and Mum's half sister.

[...]

E-Mail Exchange: August 2015

JB: In discussing Walton Street, I am using mainly material from my wonderful interview with Fiona. However, I also talked to Anthony Shaw and he

mentions that your dad was never really happy with Walton Street and that had much to do with it being ran as a gallery rather than a shop. I know this was a central part of your recent talk and wondered if you could expand on that a little. Why was 'gallery' such loaded term for your dad? it's interesting because its used in most accounts of Primavera in secondary literature (which always draws on Tanya Harrod's essay).

With regard to the collection at the Shipley: I know it was only after your father passed that the collection became known as the Henry Rothschild Collection which led to the Henry Rothschild Study Centre. I wondered if this was something your dad had decided or if it was directed by the Shipley or indeed yourself?

LR: The naming is a simple question to answer. It was because Dad did not want to draw wider public attention to his collection at home. He never fully insured it or had full security at the house so he knew it would be vulnerable to theft but he was clear he did not want to live in a high security prison instead of a house! He was also not wanting that much personal attention. So he came up with Eagle in memory of his Father and Germany and so on. Once all the pieces were safely housed away from home and when it became clear the collection was going to get its own dedicated space he was asked again about the name and happily agreed to allowing his name and history as a collector and with Primavera to get properly acknowledged.

As for the second I can only answer this more interpretively from what I know of him. We never discussed it in all that much detail. But [it was a] shop it was not [a] gallery definitely so it was strangely disturbing to see him described as a gallerist in some of the obituaries. I suspect he found the gallery world quite pretentious and materialistic and only serving a narrow band of wealthy customers. He liked the broad base the shop attracted, the fact that beauty could be purchased for less than a pound and a lot more. He valued a wide range of objects as beautiful as I hinted at in my talk which would seldom if ever be found in a more formal gallery. He liked being on the high street and for the shop to feel accessible and varied not austere and forbidding (my language). He liked running exhibitions which had the feel and quality of the gallery experience but keeping the tone of the shop different. He loved seeking out a wide variety of lovely things, wrapping paper, shells, stones (before they were everywhere) art postcards toys (tiny handmade felt mice etc etc). They profoundly appealed to him to his sense of beauty, of design, of function and of fun. In the end the purer end of ceramics, glass textiles etc called out his deepest response but these things were also vital and he wanted people to have access to them as much as the other knowing that not everyone can consider buying a Hans Coper etc.

This is my interpretation of what I repeatedly heard him affirm. He always said the shop, I am going over to the shop. Guess who came into the shop today etc.

Cleo Saunders and Karin Walton

Bristol Art Gallery and Museum's studio pottery collection was created to lend out to schools so that pupils might be inspired by seeing examples of the very best. The collection was largely made by Bristol Education Committee in the 1950s and 60s. Alongside his other activities, Henry Rothschild advised and helped a number of Local Education Authorities on the purchasing of ceramics and craft. Cleo Saunders worked at the Museum from 1971 to 2012, with Karin Walton joining in 1973. Both recall working with Henry Rothschild, most notably on the exhibition of his collection held in Bristol in 1976.

Interview conducted in person, 16 January 2013

*Cleo Saunders and Karin Walton early career at Bristol Art Gallery and Museum ** Meeting Henry Rothschild 1970s ** Henry Rothschild exhibition at Bristol ** Experience of Henry Rothschild selling or gifting pieces to collection ** School Arts Service ** National Electronic Video of the Arts and Crafts ** Henry Rothschild's character ** Exposure to different makers through Henry Rothschild ** Significant makers ** School loans ** Henry Rothschild approach to selling ** Bristol Guild ** Ken Stradling ** Craft in the 1970s ** Primavera Sloane Street ** Items from Henry Rothschild in Bristol collection ** Craft in the 1970s ** Craft and art ** Craft now ** Domestic and sculptural ** Important makers ** Craft networks ** Differences between Henry Rothschild and Ken Stradling ** Collection in Bristol ** School collection ** Studying ceramics ** Craft now ***

JB: So when did you first start here then?

CS: I started here in 1971 as Assistant Curator and I became Curator in 1973, which is when Karin arrived as Assistant Curator and took over. And so I had been a Decorative Arts Assistant previously and I hadn't got much experience of ceramics at all so I learnt it really, because this is an amazing collection of 18th century porcelain and delftware primarily but there were odds and sods of contemporary ceramics that the Contemporary Art Society had given us over the years, and I got very interested in that. And I think that Henry approached our Director, Arnold, because we had a policy of showing collections and showing some contemporary art but it was always stuff that wasn't local, because it avoided all that problem with local people coming to me saying "show me, show mine show mine" so it tended to be outside people. So Henry I think approached Arnold and then we began to kind of negotiate how to do it and how to put it together and he really controlled most of it, he controlled the catalogue, and he came and looked at the space and then went and chose it and it was absolutely his choice. So I spent quite a bit of time with him setting it up and I had some contact with him and he was very clear about what he wanted. So when we were setting it up he was quite interesting to talk to, listening to him talking about the potters as he was holding the pots and moving them around. And I was struck by the fact that there were a number of foreign potters like Beate Kuhn who I had no knowledge of at all because they didn't feature on my picture of the contemporary scene at all and he had some quite rare things. And we were arranging well into the night because as always it became a last minute thing, and he had a lovely early Lucie Rie, a '50s one, and we had cases of which you took the ends or the sides off and you could take either off, and at one point we had not taken a side off and he walked into it with this pot and it shattered into a lot of fragments and I was really pleased that it was him that was holding it and not me. So

that had to go away and be conserved. And the final arrangement was all about him, but he spoke - it was quite interesting because he had a very clear idea of the kind of strands within contemporary ceramics so there was a case of Dan Arbeid and Gillian Lowndes and those sort of quite '60s expressive pots. And then there was a case of Lucie Rie and Hans Coper and that was my first contact with significant amounts. Actually no there was a case of Rie and there was a case of Coper that I remember, and it made an absolutely stunning set of narratives within that Gallery. So after that he used to come, and it was a successful exhibition, after that he used to come every now and then and say "Now listen darling, I've got something really lovely" and bring a handful of pots and say look I think these will fit into your collection, and we gradually built up a collection. Sometimes, most of the time, we didn't have money to buy all of them so I would buy maybe two or three and then there was an occasion he bought me a Lucie Rie pot. It was quite a late pot and the throwing was not that great and I rejected that one. He kind of left it with me to see if I liked it and I didn't want it so afterwards I thought perhaps I should have had it. But he would just come every now and then and bring me pots and try and persuade me and sometime I would buy and sometimes I wouldn't. And I suspect that's probably what he did with the Schools Art Service.

KW: Yes just brought things along.

CS: Yes. And he would come along on spec because he was very energetic. [...] But I went to see him afterwards a couple of times at his house in Cambridge and I would call in and Pauline, his wife, was there, who was lovely, and she felt like a very strong part of the partnership. She was very, very strong down to earth character and very welcoming and very friendly. I always found him slightly intimidating because he was very clear about what he thought was good and what wasn't. There was no ambiguity at all. And he would come out and he would absolutely just say "Well that's terrible" or "I think that's awful" he would say, and just like that, and you would think "Ooh!" So they were very hospitable and they would make you very welcome but you didn't exactly feel - you felt slightly tense because they were people of such strong decisions. I'm just trying to think what else. So one of the other interesting things which I think throws light on him is I was involved with, have you come across NEVAC, the National Electronic Video....

JB: Uh-huh.

CS: Yes, and the person who started that, Mike, there were two people who started that, Mike Hughes and Wally Keeler, and Mike was an extraordinary and lovely person down at UWE and I used to teach related studies, I used to teach history and theory with him [...] And so I did that from the '80s, I suppose, for several years, and I am trying to think why am I telling, oh that's right, when he started he and Wally were sitting down in the staff room at UWE, which was then Bristol Poly, one day, and they started talking about potters they knew who were getting on and "chronologically challenged" was the way he put it, and he thought there ought to be a way of videoing these people, so they rang up the V&A and said "We are the National Electronic Video of the Arts and Crafts, can we have some money?" and from that it all started and we had a really lovely video person, Bob, who was actually a retired cameraman from HTV, and Bob was really great at doing videoing. So we began to interview people,

and I came in on that, and it was presented in various places because they were absolutely great, great videos. They started Marianne de Trey and then they went on and on and there was a complication at, I think now was it Aberystwyth? Anyway Mike was talking about this archive and Henry got up and was very anti it and said he thought it was absolutely wrong to have public access, because of course this thing was going to go online and it was going to be accessible to everybody, and he thought it was very wrong to interview people and have their private lives accessible to the outsiders, and he was extremely anti it, and I felt very cross at the time because I thought we don't need this because this is the most amazing activity. But he was absolutely it was something he just didn't agree with at all. So that was a typical example of him taking a very strong stand on something I thought in that case the wrong thing. So those are the kind of things I remember if you asked me what do I remember.

JB: It's strange you say that because he has an interview there. It got done for the art gallery, for the Shipley Art Gallery.

CS: Interesting. Well that must have been after that because he was riled.
[...]

Yes because it's such a German voice isn't it, such a strong. And yet he felt very - yeah, it's interesting, I think it did make me feel, perhaps it's just his voice, it did make me feel that there was actually an interesting continental sensibility there though actually he had to step back outside that English, the whole issues of English traditions and Leach and all those sorts of things. But he was outside it in a sort of way. I don't know how true that is but I was very struck by seeing these German potters. And who else was there, I'm just trying to think? Karin will probably be able to find the catalogue, but certainly there were a number of German, and I think there was a Francine...

JB: Del Pierre?

CS: Francine Del Pierre.
[...]

There you go. Francine Del Pierre. But yes and she died young, and he talked about her most affectedly [affected by her death], you know. He was very passionate and very... You are a star, you are. There you are, you see what an up and coming cover.

KW: '70's recent yes.

JB: It's that '70s brown that you don't see anywhere else.

CS: You don't see anywhere else around and I remember thinking that whoa, that's very sharp. But yes there's a Francine Del Pierre. You see a lot of this is, you see, I think that's Francine Del Pierre, yeah. I was just saying he had such a, it seemed to me, a more detached view of - because things like Ruth Duckworth and those sort of things and he had the continental background as well.

[...]

KW: You wrote it.

CS: Yeah, absolutely. I remember drawing up the potters' marks. '69, Beate Kuhn, that's right, foreign you see. And that one, yes you see, that's just it's much more sculptural isn't it and conceptual.

JB: It is quite, it is interesting to look at the collection and I am sure it's...

CS: '76 yes.

JB: And I'm sure it's the same here with those Cardew and Leach and is very traditional.

CS: Yes.

JB: And then having a really sculptural and...

CS: Gritty.

JB: Yeah. It was one of the interesting things talking to Gordon really about this difference between craft and art.

CS: Oh that old, that [...] thing. Absolutely.

JB: That old, yeah. So it was quite interesting to see where he sat.

CS: Very firmly, yes very firmly where he sits, yes. You see that's lovely that Ruth Duckworth.

KW: Is that one we bought?

CS: No we didn't buy that one. We bought a very...

KW: Yeah a very similar one.

CS: He trotted along with a very similar one shortly afterwards.

KW: Yes. Yeah just like he has of the 12 Ruth Duckworths in this school, so there's 7 came here, Primavera.

CS: Yes. He was such a marvellous, not apologist, but a marvellous proponent of people that he really admired, you know. He would be really "You must", "You should have this". Really, really strong, really, really strong and yet, of course, he had the Leaches and things. Did he sell any Leaches in the School of Arts sense, what did he sell?

KW: No Leaches came. Oh yes, yes he did, yes. Bernard Leach.

CS: Yeah. You see the later Leach would be what he liked.

KW: '58.

CS: Yes.

KW: A lot of Gwyn Hanssen.

JB: Yeah, I think that was another, talking to his daughter that was somebody else that he kind of championed to.

CS: Yeah.

KW: In fact your Mr Wilden came from him. Duckworth, there was a lot of Cardews as a group, and Dan Arbeid, yes.

CS: Yes, now Dan Arbeid is interesting. You are going to talk to Ken tomorrow, aren't you, Ken Stradling.

JB: Yes.

CS: Ken gave Dan his first solo exhibition outside London, Dan Arbeid, and actually he has had a retrospective recently at the Guild but he knew Henry for a long time because he went to the Guild in 1949, Ken, and he has been there ever since. But I'm sure he will know lots, yeah. Yes, I should have asked him more about Hugh Whitehead actually, Henry.

KW: We don't know much about him.

CS: No.

KW: There's very little in the historical files.

CS: Oh it was an extraordinary idea really, wasn't it, to actually send around Lucie Ries to people and send them around to schools. And I don't know if he predates Leicester or not.

KM; It was early '50s wasn't it, '51 or '52 I think, the Bristol one was set up. I think most of the Lucie Ries got damaged, of course. In fact most of the Hans Copers I think were damaged as well.

CS: Really?

KW: As always.

JB: It's such an interesting idea. What was the main drive behind doing that in the first place, from your point of views?

CS: Well I think it's interesting, the first museum I worked at, which is in the '70s, we had a school loan service and the one thing about it was that it was actually prints. The bloke who was in charge, Brian Blench, he wrote round to people like John Bratby and Hockney and all those people and said can I have print for my art service quite cheap, and sometimes they would give it to him and sometimes they wouldn't. And they were prints okay. But he said the most important thing was that it would be an original work of art, it wouldn't be second-hand. And so when I left there it was always with the feeling that actually a loan service shouldn't be a model of a Saxon village it should be something real, and my job was part education and part museum assistant at this museum, and we had a loan service, we were building up a loan service because we were a very young museum, and it was we categorised everything in the collection that we accepted into A, B or C, and A was 'top rate' and could only be displayed. B was 'could be handled' because it wasn't so great. C would go to the Education

Service. And so we were building up a collection but everything in the Education Service was actually an original object, and that seems to me the philosophy behind that. Now I don't know where that comes from. I suspect there is something museological or cultural that these are all coming from, but I couldn't tell you what it is and I wouldn't be able to. But I think there is something in the museum air about that, about the primacy of the actual object. And I came here and it's full of, the Education Service, was full of models of Saxon villages and all sorts of stuff, and working models of canal things so that you could see how a canal worked, but actually not necessarily giving people access, children access to the real thing. So it's a different philosophy and I think it still very... I mean in Somerset County Museum Service still send out Lucie Ries. They've got about 2 Lucie Ries and they send them out beautifully in a box but they jolly well send them out.

KW: Yes because it stops in the mid '60s doesn't it when they suddenly start...when you start finding Laura Ashley fabrics being collected and things like that.

CS: And ethnic fur and feather and tassels.

KW: And ethnic fur stuff, a lot of stuff brought from Global Village. So it's just the '50s and early '60s where the pottery lingers on a bit and there's some Robin Welch pieces from the '70s, but the quality goes downhill.

CS: When does he retire? When does he go?

KW: He goes quite early on I think actually, and then it's Graeme Alexander who takes over. But we were just lucky that there were two people who had a good eye and were collecting quality.

CS: But also they had Henry Rothschild coming to visit them saying "You must buy this darling".

KW: But the interesting thing is that we weren't buying at the same time.

CS: No.

KW: Very little. So whether we assume that because they were collecting we didn't need to, I don't know. But there was very little studio pottery in the '50s and early '60s.

[...]

JB: In terms of budget and things like that, the dreaded budget word.

CS: Yes.

JB: How important do you think that it was to Henry to actually get these objects out so people could access them, or was there an element where he was trying to make a profit? That sounded quite base but I am sure you understand what I mean.

CS: Yes, well I think it would have been hard put to distinguish with those. He loved the whole business thing. He loved that whole being a successful business but he also, there was a strong crusading element for, I'm not

sure if it's modernism or craft, he would have called it craft I think but some people didn't. When you see Ken tomorrow, Ken didn't distinguish at that time between design and craft, it was all one. It was all an attitude, of an attitude to making, and I would have thought that that's probably true for Henry as well.

KW: He enjoyed making a sale.

CS: He did enjoy making a sale, but its more persuasion really, it's more of persuasion, bringing the force of his personality down on you knowing that you had a thing that you really should have because he knew your collection and how it was and that you really should have this piece, and it's a lovely piece and it needed a good home and it should be you. And that was the feeling I got from him. But actually going to Primavera when I was a student, it was amazing because there was nothing else, there wasn't anything else like it in Cambridge and I didn't know anything much else like it in London, and I bought some black glass plates, how good was that. I'd never seen anything like that for sale where I came from, and I came from suburban London, and I bought some studio pottery mugs and it was a really major thing to start your new student life and to buy these lovely fresh things, and they were actually cheap enough that you could buy them. That was the other thing that you could look around and you would be terrified about the price of ceramics, but actually there were things that you could buy and that was a large part of it, that sense of something. The whole shop felt completely fresh and different from anything that you would see anywhere else because all of it was different and I remember the textiles particularly were very, they would come slightly Bauhaus, you know, they were very abstract and lots of texture and rough wool slubbed things, all that kind of... Really strong. When I look back it feels like a really strong modernist agenda, really, really strongly modernist, and again just not very British.

KW: And the Guild was a bit like that in the '70s because when I first came to Bristol I remember going to buy a brown mug, and that was something totally different. I had never come across anything like it before.

CS: No.

KW: So and I think Ken's intense influence there.

CS: Absolutely.

KW: It's gone downhill a lot.

CS: Oh do you think so?

KW: Well it hasn't the same quality of crafts.

CS: No the crafts, but then the crafts has changed so much hasn't it really.

KW: Yes, I suppose so.

CS: And a lot of crafts have gone zipping off to directions the Guild doesn't want to know because the Guild is still very...

KW: No it's not the fashion to be functional.

CS: Have you been to the Guild?

JB: No, not yet, no.

CS: You're going tomorrow to go and see Ken. Well go a bit earlier and have a little look around. Because the...

KW: There's 25% off everything.

CS: Everything, even the chocolates, Charbonnel et Walker chocolates, how good is that. But it's interesting because that's the other thing that in Bristol its very interesting because Bristol in the '60s is a place where there's an interest, there's a lot of modern architecture, some of it not very brilliant, but particularly in the '70s there is a very strong kind of alternative drive isn't there. There's women's lib. They were going to concrete over the docks.

KW: Yes.

CS: And there was a community reaction and one of the Amenity Societies took it to the House of Lords and stopped them concreting over the docks and there is - really there's a cycle bank and Sustrans and all that kind of alternative stuff is happening in Bristol. So actually the Guild is the focus for that isn't it?

KW: Yeah in the late '60s they wanted to get rid of all Victorian housing.

JB: Yes.

KW: That's when they drove the ring road through and everything so it was very much.

CS: So I wonder if that's one of the reasons why he came to Bristol. I wonder. It would be interesting to know, wouldn't it, how he made contact with [29.30 unclear]. I wonder if Graeme Alexander knows. Sorry that's probably wandered off.

JB: No, no. I get the impression that he just, I don't know, he wandered a lot when he came back before he started Primavera in '46.

CS: Yeah.

JB: He did spend a lot of time; he was kind of hitch hiking round the country and talking to potters.

CS: Really.

JB: And going to meet people and I don't think he was, what's the right word, didn't feel the need to be invited to go and talk before maybe in that British way where you would wait for an invite.

KW: Yes.

JB: I think he just kind of...

CS: Dropped in.

JB: Dropped in and made [30.15 unclear].

CS: That's interesting because Ken used to go and visit people. He used to go out and he didn't drive, so people would take him out and he would go out with Marianne de Trey and so he was always welcomed because everybody went "Oh Marianne [30.25 unclear]" but he would do a lot of outreach, again during the '50s and '60s and '70s, and he would go and be proactive with people which is interesting because there was a person who did some research in the 1970s at Bristol Poly into whether crafts people could make a living and she found that a lot of them had the attitude that they should make their stuff and people should come to them and that any time spent on being trained in business management or anything was a betrayal of their art. And this was about 1970. You found the average turnover was £3,000 a year which was absolutely nothing even in those days. And I think that that fits in with the narrative of people having to come and find them, if you see what I mean.

JB: Yeah.

CS: Though you would have to document that by individual people. Yes.

JB: No it is interesting how those networks would have really worked. Especially in the pre-digital...

CS: Because there is no crafts magazine. There's no crafts magazines, there was no Crafts Council until 1972 but and the only thing, I mean somebody said we have been interviewing Ken as well, and he said there may not have been many books in the '60s, there was the Year Book, the Design Industries Year Book, but there would be magazines like Good Housekeeping that would do a little article on design and he has got little snippets from that where they did a little article on the Bristol Guild. So there would be articles because design was an interesting subject. There would be little articles and things which are not necessarily design magazine so it wasn't totally without networks if you see what I mean. But a lot of it was word of mouth I think. Things like the Dartington get-togethers and so on and the Craftsmen Potters of course were very important, the Craftsmen Potters Association. He had such energy Henry. I see him barging in and coming in and he would just come in and he knew we were in the room, he would have something in his head he wanted to do, he would be right up there, in there as soon as he came into the room. He would be...

KW: Because he must have been what, in his 70s?

CS: Yes he must have been I suppose. When was he born?

JB: 1913.

CS: 1913. About 76, oh he felt older. Yes. He did have a lot of energy, yes.

JB: It was strange we were working out; Cheryl and I were working out the dates for when he would have started Primavera and how old he would have been, so he would have been, I would say he would have been 33 when he started Primavera but it was because he had been in the army at Cambridge and then in the army, it was his first real job really.

CS: Where did he get the capital? Did he have capital?

JB: I imagine there must have been some start-up money but I don't know where it's come from.

CS: Family?

JB: His family were sort of middle-class industrialists and he had a scrap metal business in Germany, but his dad died in '38 and then his mother and his siblings had come over to England after that so they had just got out in time basically. And his brother worked and continued to work in London banking and the scrap metal business so there must have been a little start-up money then.

CS: Little bit. Yeah.

JB: I know there were, I think it took him a little bit of time to get started because of the restrictions.

CS: He was in Sloane Square wasn't he, first of all? Yeah. Because I can remember going into Sloane Square and seeing the shop there. Yeah, yeah.

JB: Well I went to see where it is.

CS: King's Parade, is it still King's Parade?

JB: Well that's in Cambridge.

CS: Yeah. Oh you went to see where it was in Sloane Square.

JB: I went to see it in Sloane, well Sloane Street isn't it I think, and it's quite a very small, especially compared to the Cambridge premises, so it's just sort of very small space.

CS: Right.

JB: I had a very awkward conversation with the woman who was there. It's this very boutiquey little place where you had to buzz to be let in, so then I had to kind of buzz and then explain that I wasn't really there to buy anything, I just wanted to have a look around and she didn't really understand what I was talking about but a very, very little place but in such a good location in terms of...

CS: Yes. Because Elizabeth, would that be about the time Elizabeth David was in there, and David Mellor, because they were very nearby? I went into his big shop, but it was - I mean they were really quite key for kind of modernism weren't they, and David Mellor is still there.

KW: He's still there.

JB: We are trying to network all these shops and places but...

CS: Elizabeth David is key because the whole Mediterranean food thing and Majolica that all goes with it and people become interested in Majolica and they begin to travel. And also John, who is it who does her graphics, the neo romantic, John Minton? Anyway if you look at the original designs they are done by this artist John, oh he's so well known, and you've probably read – so there's quite a strong kind of narrative there about modernism and about pseudo pottery and of course the other thing that Ken would say is that into the '50s that you still couldn't get anything but white rejects because all the coloured pottery was being exported. So all you could get was rejects or white pottery, so that's why it was so brilliant for places like the Leach standard ware and that guy in Stratford-on-Avon, Peter Dingley, and those sorts of people they did really well because there was a market there and the people were desperate to have some sort of colour and all this pottery filled that need. So there is a kind of a narrative there. But I think it is quite interesting the fact that it was in Sloane Street, I really do, because it's near those two galleries, modernist beacons. I'm trying to think of anything interesting I can tell you. What else have you got?

JB: I think maybe we could just talk a little bit about the collection that's here then the...

CS: The [38.17 unclear]?

JB: Yeah.

CS: Have you got the, presumably the other ones are in storage, the ones that he sold me?

KW: The ones that he sold you. Let's see what he sold you.

CS: I won't say what I bought; it might be he sold me. Moon Pocket.

KW: Was Moon Pocket one of them? That's on display.

CS: Liz Fritsch.

KW: That's on display, that's on display upstairs on the balcony. Oh quite a few, in order. Yeah, Moon Pocket, a Janet Leach, the Ruth Duckworth form which is next door somewhere.

CS: The Ruth Duckworth, yes.

KW: Colin Kellam.

CS: Oh yes, that's a porcelain one isn't it?

KW: Oh two Ruth Duckworths. That's on display as well upstairs. Lucie Rie, that's on display as you go up to the Ceramics Gallery. And Robin Welch, that's in store. That was that lovely big...

CS: The big one.

KW: The big one on the very small foot. It's a lovely thing. And a Mary White.

CS: Yes the Mary White...

KW: Which is next door.

CS: I'm just trying to think.

KW: Oh the Peter Leyton glass vase on display.

CS: Oh yes. So not very much really, but...

KW: Nine.

JB: But apart from the glass that was all ceramics?

CS: Yes.

KW: Eight ceramics. We weren't really collecting anything else really, textiles or anything were we?

CS: No we weren't. I really think it was ceramics and glass if anything. We didn't really start collecting glass until you got into it later on. But we used to have Contemporary Art Society pieces before that but not any for ages, and then they've revitalised that again didn't they, later?

KW: That's right, yes, there was a big gap.

CS: So there was, as it were, there wasn't a motive for collecting really. There wasn't a kind of continuous strand.

KW: We collected very little in the '50s and '60s contemporary and then, well you started with the jewellery then.

CS: Oh yes. That was because we had a Gerda Flockinger exhibition.

KW: Yes, that's the first piece.

CS: And then we continued from that.

KW: Wendy Ramshaw, David Watkins.

CS: Yes. That's, I think it's partly because [41.15 unclear].

KW: Granted its availability too isn't it, because the jewellery came from Arnolfini [Gallery] [41.20 unclear].

CS: Yep. That's right.

KW: So it was either the fact that we had an exhibition here like the Flockinger or the Arnolfini Gallery in Bristol had a very good jewellery section at that time

CS: And the other thing was that people, there was that Gerda Flockinger and Sam Herman exhibition at the V&A.

KW: Oh Sam Herman.

CS: Sam Herman.

KW: Those were early pieces, though not Primavera. That was...

CS: And I think that suddenly, it was very strong the crafts wasn't it? '68 that was Sam Herman and Gerda Flockinger but there was some really lovely radical work and it had a freshness about it being... And then in 1972 the Crafts Advisory Committee and then the Crafts Council and then there was money, there was money towards it, as it were, and that helped a lot. Yes it was, it was lovely and just...

JB: For the collection and for the artists presumably as well?

CS: Yep. Absolutely. And there were start up grants and all sorts of stuff they hadn't had before. And there was the exhibition, the Craftsman's Art, 1972 in the V&A, and that was really influential and all sorts. I can remember 1977 there was an exhibition of fun things for the Queen's Jubilee and there were things like there was a biscuit picture of Westminster Abbey all in one large biscuit, and it was lovely. And there was Bassetts Allsorts, Liquorice Allsorts necklace in wood, painted wood and playful things like that, and it was lovely and it all seems to have vanished now.

KW: It seemed easier then too because there wasn't so much choice. I mean now there is just so many contemporary craftsmen. There's a lot of crap, yeah.

CS: And also there's an awful lot of crap art around. There's a lot of really crap art. It was much more better quality. Perhaps it's just there was less of it.

KW: Less of it I think, yeah.

CS: And then there was Crafts Magazine. I remember we had a Liz Fritsch exhibition, and she said "I deliberately don't look at Crafts Magazine because I don't want my work to be diluted because everybody is looking at Crafts Magazine and they're all doing the same, they are all discovering that other people are doing the same things." and she just wouldn't. And typical of her really. So the whole craft picture is really interesting. And then I was teaching students and eventually this whole business of artists, crafts people, just took people over and it just became a real pain really, I think.

JB: Do you think that being a bit obsessed with that issue of whether you were an artist or a crafts person do you think it just kind of muddied the waters of what they were trying to do?

CS: I do think people spent a lot of time talking about it and thinking about it and I can remember lecturing, having a seminar group at Bath, and the artists, it was a mixed group, and the artists were saying we really envy you ceramicists because you've got the material to work with and you've got skills and techniques from that material and we haven't got anything, because they were just off doing nothing really because they weren't taught skills, they were just being asked to express what was in their little heads.

And at 19 or 20 that's kind of quite a big ask really. So I think it has muddied the waters really. But now people tend to say 'makers' don't they?

JB: Yeah.

CS: But it is interesting. I am involved with a stitch group. Karin is – the upstairs is the great exhibition, and they're interested in the whole business of stitching, Stitch and Think it's called, and they would all call themselves 'makers' and they just ignore that whole dimension. But what they do is they start from making and then they reflect and then they start from making as opposed to picking what's in my head. I'll do it, and there is a very distinct difference between them. That's a big debate there. And I think one of these issues, it was quite interesting, was that if you're Tracey Emin you've got to stitch badly because that shows you're an artist. You mustn't have skills because that confuses people to think you might be a craftsman and you simply don't want to be in that arena at all. It's got to be really bad. So say the stitchers. Yeah. When I look back at an exhibition it all seems as if it was so much simpler because there were these people and if you look at that catalogue, there are such strong individual creative personalities represented by that. A real strength of expression. And if you're going to go behind the crafts they're lovely and pretty and really delightful, but actually there is very little that's got that punch.

KW: Yes it doesn't hit you [46.13 unclear].

CS: Or that power. I don't know why really.

JB: Do you think it comes back to being taught those kind of skills in art schools and things, is that sort of diluted or...

CS: I think it's quite a critical audience you know, critical audience, that people don't really know how to look at craft work. A lot of people go along to the Clevedon Art Centre, wash my mouth out with soap and water, and they'll buy something that's a bit crap because they don't understand. They won't say that's terrible, but they just, you know, a lot of it is so derivative and so mediocre and I think that it's because a lot of people have set up under the craft umbrella and they thought well I'll set up my little pottery and I'll do it and I think there's really no substitute for a rigorous Art School education. Should we be rigorous? Well I do think and a lot of people, a lot of the buying audience, don't have that and don't know how to look at it and don't appreciate it so they buy the rubbish and that's how people can survive. They ought to be winnowed out. I really do think that. Tell me a craft gallery where you would go and see good craft.

JB: I don't know to be honest.

CS: Shipley?

JB: Well yes the Shipley is but it's looking back historically, it doesn't...it does buy some new pieces.

CS: What about a place where you would go to buy something for yourself. Where would you find really good quality?

JB: I can't think of anywhere really in the North East I have to say.

CS: What about elsewhere. Where would you go?

KW: Well there's the shop in, oh gosh, on Tottenham Court Road, what's it called, Contemporary Applied Arts, they usually have some good.

CS: Yes.

KW: They are all sort of County Craft Guilds but a lot of that is...

CS: The Devon Guild.

KW: The Devon Guild is one of the best. Actually Gloucestershire Guild.

CS: Really where are they?

KW: I haven't seen them lately but they used to be good. They always had their exhibition at Painswick. They were pretty good. Somerset was pretty awful.

CS: Bluecoat Gallery in Liverpool was good when I last went there, which is a while ago. And I suppose the Crafts Council, Crafts Council?

KW: Do they still have a shop? I don't know.

CS: They used to have stuff in the V&A.

KW: It's in the V&A anyway, yes.

CS: So actually you can count the fingers but you can tot up the crap craft shops very easily, and if you go to Devon or Cornwall, oh! So I think it's a really interesting question. And there's a collector in Bath, a lovely woman, Charmian, and Charmian is loaded and she's lovely. She buys, she supports young silversmiths, and she has Lucie Ries and she has good contemporary ceramics and she has excellent silver and lots of little silver [49.20 unclear] boxes by people and all sorts of stuff. Really cutting edge. And she supports the Young Silversmith of the Year at Goldsmith's Hall and doshes out serious money and collects. But I took a group of the Friends of the [49.33 unclear] to see her and we advertised it and it didn't go. That's right; we advertised it and she said...I said I'll run the advertisement past her for the newsletter and it said craft collection. She said "No, I think I'd rather have applied art collection, contemporary applied art", and she wanted nothing to do with craft, the whole idea of craft, and contemporary applied art was for our students and we've [50.00 unclear] was out. And I thought that's really interesting.

[...]

KW: Yes. Craft has been debased.

JB: It becomes sort of the hobbyist, I suppose, isn't it? That's when...

[...]

KW: I always live in hope. I was going in an optimistic frame of mind and you think 'Oh no'.

CS: That's the moon, yes. There's got to be one thing here I could buy.

KW: Yeah. No.

CS: But you're right it's the amateur and the hobbyist thing. You're right.
[...]
Waterperry.

KW: That's the one, Waterperry, yes.

CS: In Oxfordshire. And everybody goes round and you can go and do things. So you can go and engage things or you can send your children off and there will be an activity. And it has the unfortunate by-product that a lot of its crap because if you going to do that then a lot of it will be. It won't be very high priority.
[...]

JB: I think what I was struck when I was looking at the various parts of the Collect show, I talked to Sim about this, is that I find it to be much more accessible than contemporary art.

CS: Absolutely

KW: Oh yes.

JB: Much more affordable. Not for me.

CS: No, no. Generally.

JB: Yes, generally more affordable.

CS: Yes, yes, oh lovely.

JB: So it seems strange that it's not out there as much.
[...]

CS: There was a little pop-up shop in Bath recently which had a little Lucie Rie cup and saucer for £1,200.

KW: £1,200.

CS: I thought maybe not.

JB: I'll pass.

CS: I'll pass, exactly. You see that's what it is. Back in the '70s it felt like that, that actually people were collecting it because there was content and ideas and expressiveness but affordable. So why, well I suppose this is what they're doing now, but they're calling it contemporary fine arts.

KW: But it's not affordable.

CS: But it's not affordable. No. Well your task is clearly to set up a gallery.

KW: Clearly.

CS: I mean it would be wonderful to have a good gallery but I will be really interested, have a look at Ken's gallery because I think you will be interested in just, and there's an awful lot of it, there used not to be a lot of it, but there's an awful lot of everything. So I think when you've got an awful lot of everything it dilutes the effect.

KW: The effect, yeah.

CS: But it is interesting. Any more?

JB: Well I think just what you said there about with the Lucie Rie being £1,200 for this cup and saucer, that's another aspect of it that quite interests me that I went through the Lucie Rie archive at Farnham and Henry was buying from Rie sort of every month, pretty much, so quite big orders, which was remarkable in itself thinking how much she must have produced on a monthly basis, thinking what she was selling to Henry.

CS: And he's only one.

JB: Times by how many other people that she was selling to.

CS: Yeah absolutely.

JB: That's my train of thought. But obviously that was selling for affordable prices and it was to be used in a domestic setting. It wasn't to be put into a museum.

CS: It wasn't a...

JB: Yeah, it wasn't to be hallowed in that way that it is now.

CS: Yes. Other thing that Ken says is James Tower, have you come across James Tower, '50s and '60s.

JB: No, no.

CS: James Tower always showed in an art gallery in a dealer in Bond Street or somewhere because he was an artist and so he would never show somewhere like the Bristol Guild whereas the Lucie Ries and Hans Copers they showed in craft galleries and that was a big difference. And it's about, with Rie, I'm sure it's about the kind of humble, really humble sense of herself as being, as serving people, because there is such a strong element of that and probably comes from having had such a tough start. And even Coper says that his work is functional all the way through, you know, there was this beautiful - but he says "No, it's a vase".

JB: It is interesting though the way things have just sort of shifted, showing their use and...

CS: You see if it's a contemporary applied art it's less likely to be functional isn't it? It's more likely to be something you would put on your mantelpiece don't you think?

KW: Sculptural, yeah.

CS: Yeah. It's interesting, because if you look at Henry's exhibition then there's a strong sculptural to be worshiped element in it, isn't there?

JB: Yes, well I think there is, but at the same time it was something that would fit into, maybe not all of it but some of even the sculptural pieces would fit in a domestic...

CS: It's meant to be for a domestic interior, yes. And the Lucie Rie he is buying is for people to use. I used to know someone who had a Lucie Rie coffee set.

KW: Oh.

CS: I know what a thing to have bought. But that's right and actually when you went into the Primavera shop your sense was that it was a place to buy things for your house and buy things to use [58.13 unclear].

JB: The Lucie Rie orders were the coffee sets with the coffee pot and mugs and saucers, tea pots, casserole dishes, cups and saucers.

CS: Lovely.

JB: And it's quite interesting, the invoices as well are quite interesting because he has always said I want so many of these, and instead of writing it's just kind of just like it looks like that, that's what he wants. So it's like a little cup, or it's a taller cup with a bigger handle. So she's just sort of...

CS: Really?

JB: ...she's obviously got a stock in her head of how, what kind of things she makes basically.

CS: What's available. Lovely.

JB: It was interesting, especially thinking how much she must have just been working constantly.

CS: Yes. I will tell you a nice story. Do you know about the Tanners, Robin Tanner? He was one of the Trustees in the Crafts Service Centre, and when his cottage, which is near us in Wiltshire, was sold up when the last member of the family, Heather, died, they sold all that was left from the house and there was a big, big casserole and somebody I know in Bath, Pat and John Carter, who collect, they went to the sale and said "I'm sure that's Hans Coper" and it went for £50 and they bought it because nobody knew and it wasn't marked. And then afterwards Margot Coates came to tea a short while later and she said "That was the casserole that Hans made for the Tanners to go in their Aga" and he'd made this casserole

especially for them so it would fit into their Aga. Isn't that just wonderfully, just wonderful.

JB: That's great.

CS: You see that's just he's a jobbing potter as well. And when we had the exhibitions of the School Art Service stuff here in the 1990s I borrowed from Writhlington School, which is near Radstock in Somerset, and that was near where Hans Coper lived, and the school had helped him out with his goats and he had made them a pot that high and it had on the bottom 'With thanks for your help with Gennea the goat' and subsequently they sold it and got a new swimming pool.

KW: How amusing they were using it as a doorstop, they didn't realise what it was.

CS: It was the most beautiful - they were using it as a doorstop, that's right. And it was just the most amazing, amazingly beautiful thing, it was just wonderful. Here it is, they were using it as a door stop.

KW: Yes just looking at what we will pay for Lucie Ries, something for 5 guineas, I don't know what that was, £26, £35, £38.

CS: So when was that, 1970 something?

KW: That would be, let's have a look.

CS: I'm just trying to think what else. What were we being paid? That was the question.

KW: Probably late '50s I would have thought, wasn't it? I'm not sure.

CS: And you are a whizz at that thing.

KW: No, this is just the date that we got it, when it sold we don't know.

CS: What does it look like?

KW: I think it's '50s.

CS: I can't remember. Don't those lamp shades look like mountains?

KW: That must be one of them going around.

CS: The one you prepared earlier. That's lovely.

KW: I can't read, what's that? 289.

CS: Lovely, isn't it? The cup and saucer was this little manganese one with the incised lines around it. Lovely.

KW: It's not on the list. That one. That will be early because that's 289 so that's an early number.

CS: Lovely. You won't miss it will you? Delicious. Lovely. Well do you want to have a look at some of them?

[...]

It's such a good subject, Henry, because it's the history of English interaction with craft and design isn't it? But it's interesting because Ken, who you will see tomorrow, his collection was built up because he was buying for the Bristol Guild. From 1949 he was in sole control of buying. He came out of the army having done engineering and there he was and his mother used to collect antiques, his father was a timber craftsman, so he had this, he had a kind of eye but otherwise he was completely self-taught. But he would just stick to something that he was selling if he liked it, you know, he would just think "oh well I'll have that for my house" and suddenly he's got this huge collection and it's all done by someone who was buying and selling and those two are really unusual I think for collectors, those two factors, that it's somebody who's interacted with the market and whose also got a bit of a mission. That's exceptional and really, really interesting.

JB: Yeah.

CS: Because it's such an interesting period, the post war period, because the whole design thing is so suddenly wonderful, but it's taken us so long to get into that actually what they do is really, really important. Shall I show you my Primavera pot that I bought, my little mug?

JB: Yes [01.05.37 unclear].

CS: Yes. Because I think it will give you the kind of [01.05.42 unclear]. There is only one left. This was 1965 because it was the second year. The first year I bought ash glazes and then they had some more that were a lovely tenmoku, very dark brown glaze so I bought those. So there we are, so I had three of those.

JB: Oh that's lovely.

CS: I wonder if they are, I can't remember what they are, what do you think that is? I think, certainly I think the other ones were, [01.06.10 unclear] but that could mean anything. But isn't that a lovely glaze?

KW: It looks like [01.06.13 unclear] doesn't it? It actually does, it's just been squashed a bit, because it's gone into the glaze.

CS: Yes. So that was my excitement.

KW: Leach. Leach pottery.

CS: My excitement. My stylish excitement from my room in college. I must admit that I really regret those black glass plates. You know sometimes you really cleave to something, you really love it.

KW: Did you break them or just gave away?

- CS: They just went over the years. I think I must have broken a couple at uni and then you know how things just float off and you only notice a long time afterwards.
[...]
- KW: Right, well basically from here around it's obviously [01.09.08 unclear] collection.
- JB: So did most of these come through Henry or is it things that [01.09.15 unclear]?
- KW: About half of it. About half of it came. Quite a bit came from the Guild, locally, and quite a lot from the Berkeley Gallery in London. Is it in London?
- JB: Yeah.
- KW: I think [01.09.27 unclear] looking up. And these are the Ruth Duckworths, [01.09.43 unclear] Duckworths I think. It's just astonishing the quality now the [01.09.49 unclear] isn't there.
- JB: So the idea was for just people to get a feel, to imitate or copy or...
- KW: To get a feel or to I think to imitate and to use it to inspire them probably in drawing or in potting, and there was a lot more potting going on in [01.10.07 unclear] than there is now. There's very little going on now I think.
- JB: Oh [01.10.12 unclear].
- KW: And I think it was just this feeling that they should be surrounded by quality tasteful objects. I don't have a record of what the kids made of it but...
- JB: Yeah. It would be nice to see the other side [01.10.29 unclear].
- KW: Yes a nice bowl. And it's a combination of grand things like the Copers and then the Harry Davis ground pottery in a domestic way.
- JB: [01.10.43 unclear] beautiful.
- KW: Yes that is.
- JB: I don't remember anything like this when I was in school that was the '80s.
- KW: No, it's sad in a way that it stopped. They were going to sell the collection because it was collected by Bristol and then when Bristol was subsumed by Avon the county all the education stuff went over to Avon and when Avon was abolished they wanted to sell everything and they got as far as having an evaluation and I am not quite sure what changed their minds, but at the last minute it wasn't sold and we got it. Quite a lot of Cardews. Ray Finch and a South African Cardew piece.
- JB: As you say, they're not – its quality pieces that could easily have been part of a sort of collection isn't it, and it's not.
- KW: Oh absolutely. And especially things like the Duckworth. There's a lot of Janet Leach, which seems to be particularly popular, and then quite a bit

of Leach in the St Ives schools. The Three [01.12.08 unclear]. And there's a nice Leach pot there. And then the Lucie Ries are down here. But there's a good spread of – and it is a...we had it looked at by Paul Rice, some dealer and he came and looked at it and said it was probably, with Paisley's collection, it was probably the best of the 1950s, '60s collections. And they seem to have gone to town on certain...so there's a lot of Dan Arbeids, a lot of Waistel Coopers so why they particularly home in on those I don't know.

JB: Yeah. It would be interesting to know how much of it's how willing they were to put their work out there, what the relationship was maybe?

KW: Uhm, you wonder what the potters actually thought about don't you? I think that's the latest, that's the lodge, [01.13.32 unclear].

JB: They're wonderful. That was very interesting.
[...]

KW: It's the way the things go. I mean it was inevitable if you send things out to school they going to get damaged. But if you know you paid £30 for it it didn't really matter so.

JB: No. It's just a really interesting concept to me that they do that and you just [01.14.31 unclear] happen now. You can't imagine Damien Hurst pitching something out to a school [01.14.39 unclear].

KW: I don't think, they were mainly ceramics and prints. Later on there were some textiles. But it was principally in the ceramics for some reason. I don't know why that sort of caught on.

JB: It's the feel of them though isn't it? I think. Something very tactile.

KW: Yes I suppose so. And the prints, I mean, you can get things like the school prints, don't you, where the famous artists produced prints for a series for stores and that was all so that the children would be surrounded by the best artistic endeavour around. It's a nice idea. It would be interesting to know because that's - well I was at school in the '50s but I don't remember anything quite [01.15.27 unclear]

JB: It's very – I'm just a curious I think [01.15.41 unclear]. I don't think they'll invest in such things now to be honest.

KW: No, I don't think many schools do potting anyway though do they?

JB: No.

KW: Which is a shame.

JB: I have a vague memory of doing something with clay but it was the, I don't know, when you don't really need a kiln for it, it's just.

KW: Yes it's probably...you've got to have all the structural thing.

JB: I think it just set.

KW: But then it's happening in colleges too isn't it. Because Bristol, what used to Bower Ashton and now UWE, used to have a fantastic ceramics section. Kate Malone, well Walter Keeler taught her her major. But that's all been, well it's still vaguely there but it's now called applied arts and incorporates enamel and all sorts of other things.

JB: I know Sunderland, my third, my technical supervisor, is one of the tutors at Sunderland at the Glass Centre there but I don't think they do it as an undergraduate course. I think it's just on a Masters you can do ceramics and glass. And they did, at Newcastle College they would do like a Foundation in ceramics, but apparently that's been stopped which will no doubt then affect what gets fed into these sort of Master degree programmes.

KW: Programme, yeah because there's no - exactly.

JB: And the initial training.

KW: Gosh. So where do they go.

JB: You don't really pick something up like that at Masters level do you?

KW: No

JB: You don't go suddenly I will learn ceramics now.

KW: No and you suddenly – no evening classes, no.

JB: But there just does not seem to be anything like that or not as much.

KW: No, what will happen?

JB: We'll see. We need a revival.

KW: It's not the sort of thing you can start in your back room is it?

JB: No but then...

KW: So it's a hobby.

JB: At the same time there seem to be quite a few people doing that in the '60s and '70s. Were doing it as a sort of would have a little home set up as well.

KW: Oh right.

JB: There's a few articles, like things in crafts magazines, talking about how to set up a kiln and things like that.

KW: Okay, right. Did any of them go on to achieve greatness?

JB: Oh I am sure the majority didn't. It was maybe a few perhaps. But no that's a really lovely collection.

KW: I suppose then it reflects the situation with commercial potteries that there aren't many left in this country, it's mostly importing now isn't it, from China and Korea.

JB: Yeah.

KW: We are no longer manufacturing.

JB: We need a good revival.

KW: It will come.

JB: We'll see.

KW: Most things go full circle don't they.

JB: So is there much of the ceramics, I've not been upstairs yet, I might have a little wander round, but is there much of the collection out on display upstairs.

KW: Not much contemporary. There's some pieces as you go up the front stairs, on the top balcony there's a group of pieces and there's a Lucie Rie as you go up to the ceramics gallery and ten new cases as contemporary but it's mainly your historical ceramics.

[...]

Anthony Shaw

Anthony Shaw's first memories of Primavera are visiting with his mother in the late 1940s as a young child. Initially set up as a tailor, Shaw exhibited some of his work at Primavera in the late 1960s. He purchased what would become the first piece of his ceramic collection from one of Rothschild's shows at Kettle's Yard in 1973. As with Rothschild, Shaw began to consider the possibility of donating his collection to a public institution; as of 2015 his collection can be viewed at the Centre of Ceramic Art, at York Art Gallery.

Interview in person, 21 November 2012:

*Early memories of Primavera Sloane Street with his mother ** Going to exhibition when he was a child ** Exhibiting in Cambridge late 1960s ** Primavera Walton Street ** Buying from Kettle's Yard exhibition 1973 ** Starting collecting 1970s ** Approach to collecting ** Henry Rothschild's character ** Craft in the 1950s and 1960s ** Primavera Walton Street ** Exhibition at Primavera Walton Street ** Henry Rothschild as a collector ** Early career in clothing and textiles ** Craft outlets in London and Cambridge ** Henry Rothschild as a buyer ** Collectors and collecting ** Craft and art ** Craft in the 1970s and 1980s ** Henry Rothschild Collection at the Shipley Art Gallery ** Henry Rothschild as a collector ** Pauline Rothschild ** Craft exhibitions ** Henry Rothschild Collection and archive at the Shipley Art Gallery ** Primavera Cambridge ** London in the 1960s ** Henry Rothschild as an émigré ** Collector behaviour and instinct ** Craft now ** Primavera Walton Street and Primavera Cambridge ** Henry Rothschild's character ** Exhibition in the 1970s ** William Ismay ** Own collection ** Primavera as retail and exhibition space ***

AS: My connection in a sense is early because my mother, who used to work at Victoria, at airways terminal, she used to walk down Sloane Street on her way to work, and she was doing this when Henry opened his gallery and I had always assumed that was in the sort of mid '50s and now you're saying it's sort of '48.

JB: Well '46 when he first opened.

AS: '46, yes. So she literally saw him setting up and enquired, I think, and when he realised that my father was an architect he said she could have a discount so from that time on we used to go to private views and I can remember being very young, I possibly was 4 or 5 or less, scampering all over the shop at private views. And we met once by chance in the Isle of Wight on a holiday, but from then on there was a sort of connection and my mother bought a number of things, not a lot, from him, but then in '68 he offered me an exhibition and I did a thing called the 'shirty look' and made a lot of a collection of shirts, which was very unusual for him because he didn't deal in clothes very much although he did laterally do a little bit more but he wasn't...he was very uncertain about it.

JB: Where was that exhibition held?

AS: That was in Cambridge when he still had the – he moved the shop to Walton Street, he still had that there. I think...did that close '71 was it?

JB: 1970 so only just a short time at Walton Street.

- AS: Yes. He wasn't terribly happy with it. It was run by a manager who was very keen to run it more as a gallery and not as a shop which didn't suit Henry so well, so. But it was a nice space and it had nice exhibitions. I can remember going from it to the V&A '69 when they had the Collingwood Coper exhibition. So he was my entry into sort of craft work, craft art work, and in fact I think the first piece I got came from Henry, the first ceramic piece I got. He had an exhibition in '73 at Kettles Yard of German craft and I liked a wall hanging and he couldn't sell anything that was hanging on a wall so he said well if you like that, and I liked a pot, he said well if you have the hanging I will throw in the pot as discount. So that was my first, almost my first purchase I think.
- JB: Do you remember what the pot was?
- AS: Yes, it was by a couple, Karl Scheid and...
- JB: Ursula?
- AS: Ursula Scheid. And it had a very tall neck, a long neck, which got broken, it got separated. Luckily it was separated very cleanly so it's been restored. But he [...] made me interested in the fact that you could buy, you could create your own, you could have art in the house, you know, you didn't necessarily have to go to a gallery to see art. So he was the beginning of my collection to an enormous extent really and I used to, after the exhibition in '68, or it might have been '69, and I made all their ties for a long number of years, because I started out making ties from school and then I used to go and fit people in Cambridge and make clothes for a number of years, but the sort of collecting bug started due to Henry.
- JB: And did he offer you, just to get an idea of the time frame, talking sort of '67, '68 for when you start collecting, is that right?
- AS: I didn't really start until '70 because I started my business in '71 and I was working from home before that and all the money I had, which wasn't very much, I ploughed into the business, into buying material. So as I say I didn't really start until this first purchase, which was an enormous purchase, because the hanging was £100 and something, £120, which in those days was an awful lot. I think the pot was about £24 and the hanging was £120 or £110 so I don't know how I persuaded myself. I was brought up to be very frugal with money and we travelled because of my mother's job, she worked for an airline, BOAC, so I was very lucky we travelled and went to a lot of museums and churches and Roman remains and that sort of thing. So I had a passion for ceramics from then but I didn't start, I was ploughing all my money into the business, and so as I say the first purchase was about '73 from this exhibition and then it happened very quickly after that and I was using, because I have a workshop with a couple of windows, and I was using those to make displays of ceramics from '75. In fact I closed my gallery, I mean I closed my workshop, cleared it and had an exhibition of four ceramists in '75. Then from '75 onwards I had about 3 displays a year, 3 or 4, in my windows until about '81 and then I was collecting from '73 onwards. I don't think I bought anything else from Henry, it was the one and only.

JB: But did you start with, when you first bought that piece, did you have it in your mind that that was going to be the start of a collection?

AS: No, no the collection formed really because of two people, Gordon Baldwin and Ewen Henderson, who I met in '76, met at private views, not Gordon – I went to see Gordon, but I met Ewan, and because I followed them from then on. Otherwise I don't think I would have collected, I wouldn't have stuck with it. So they formed the backbone of the collection and it's only because they have gone on, in the case of Gordon who is still alive, developing, that I have gone on buying and added a few more people, but not... There were quite a number, about 50 to 60 in the collection of people, different artists, but principally there are only about 8 major people.

JB: So you have built your collection around individuals rather than...

AS: Yes, and I started out thinking I was going to maybe and the collection was developing and I thought I was going to try and get something from a lot of people, which is a great mistake, just trying to find something I liked, but didn't necessarily like the whole of an artist's work but I would find something I liked which is a bad not a good way to collect really. I was learning very quickly and stopped doing that and so it ended up I stopped buying...adding artists from about 1980, I didn't add an artist, '81 possibly, for about 18 years. Latterly, I've started. I have 2...3 new artists in the last 3 or 4 years but I don't find a lot that I like but I still go on collecting from existing artists I like. But no it was never an intention to collect that just happened.

JB: And did Henry offer you any advice then when you were turning into a collection?

AS: I don't think...no, not particularly. I mean he did in the very first, in the sense that you could, you should buy art, you could buy art and if it was affordable but not...after that no. I think he came once, I wasn't there; I think he once came to see one of my displays in my windows. We used to meet at private views. He was a very jealous character and after a while he couldn't understand, well he didn't know what I had, and he sort of attacked me. He really turned on all the people he ever helped and showed, at some stage. It sort of got his...and he was a funny character. He was very special in the sense that he gave openings to so many people and was very supportive and he managed to sell work to some of the councils, get the councils and all the interesting collections around the country that they started around that sort of time. I don't know why. It was a very good time from the sort of late '50s onwards for a while. There was a lot of interest and it was a good time for the ceramic art and he managed to sell - he possibly actually was the seller, he managed to persuade a number of councils to buy work so it sort of starts from that period.

JB: I know he was very active in getting art into schools and local education authorities so.

AS: Yes. There was a lot...there was another person that he possibly knew and that my father knew, Henry Morris [...] he was the Head of Education in Cambridgeshire, and he was very much into starting these schools that were very out in the districts away from the cities and it had a very open syllabus. I think they were called - no I can't remember - I think it's Henry

Morris, it's worth checking out, and that was at that time, and he was very interested in getting the children to decorate their own spaces and to get art into, and he was slightly involved I think in Digswell. Have you come across Digswell?

JB: I don't think so, no.

AS: It was a house that was turned over to making studios for artists and Hans Coper was there for a while. Elizabeth Fritsch was there. It was Trust, a sort of Trust and I think he was a Trustee for that. So there was a lot of that going on at that time. Certainly Henry was very keen to promote, and he was the beginning of the end in a sense. It sort of died with him as he stopped. It hasn't been progressed by anyone else I don't think, to that extent. So he was quite a mover and shaker and he put on exhibitions at Kettle's Yard, quite a few, and abroad as well. So his shop was very much a shop, it was full to the rafters with stuff.

JB: This is the Cambridge one yeah?

AS: Yes, and I suppose less so, because it was so small, the Sloane Street one, so he wasn't able to. I think he would have loved to have done what he did in Cambridge in Walton Street but he wasn't allowed to by his manager who had it very nicely set out and it was very much a gallery.

JB: There's a lot of a sort of an absence of material about Walton Street to be honest before I've been...

AS: Because it was so short.

[...]

AS: I've got a lot of invitations to private views there but I don't remember going to on because it was when I was at school. I only remember the earlier ones in Sloane Street when I was tiny. I remember a Sam Smith exhibition there.

JB: They were beautiful, they were wonderful things.

AS: It was creating havoc. Yes.

JB: I can imagine they would have just been irresistible to small children to play with.

AS: Yes, and it had a sort of well the shop, do you know anything about it?

JB: I went to visit where it is [15.11 unclear].

AS: It probably hasn't changed very much.

JB: Well it's quite exclusive...

AS: It went down at a lower level; I can remember that, at the back, I just remember climbing over it.

JB: There are a few images but not very many.

AS: I've got price lists for exhibitions for a number of them, an invitation. He always did very nice invitation cards.

[...]

I have kept them; I've kept all the price lists. [...] But I have kept the others so I've probably got most of the Primavera stuff. There was something I was going to say - yes, thinking about the cards, he had a printer who my first business card was done by him, Christopher something or other off Baker Street. So he possibly did his printing I think. And I can remember I've got a letter, I've got a little bit of correspondence, mostly from Pauline, and when I was trying to get labels for my clothes, and he suggested the firm that I used, Weathering House or something, to do my working labels. But he wasn't involved, he didn't really give me - we would meet occasionally in private views and he had a very good eye for things. He was very Catholic with his choices. He did finally come to the house, because I had a collection in my parents' house for a while, and he came to that. I suppose it must be 5 or 6 years ago now, and he was quite surprised as he had never really...I had an exhibition at Anita Besson's gallery in '91 and that was the first time because why he attacked me, this was in '86, because he had never seen the collection, and I suppose at a lot of collections people...I started in a very small room and after that most of it got in storage or it was in other places so it was very difficult for people to see it, so I never invited Henry and he was a bit miffed I think and his attack was "what do you do, are they all under the bed?". So he never really - then he saw some of it, about 70 pieces in Anita's gallery, and he was very impressed and he sent me a nice card and then when he saw it at the house he again wrote and I think it took him quite by surprise because you never know what people collect until you've seen it and so. But I don't think I would have done it if I hadn't come across Henry, and the family hadn't known him, hadn't had that contact, and I don't know whether... I left school, I sort of walked out of school and decided what I wanted to do, but I had written to Ernestine Carter [of the Sunday Times] some time in 1967 or 8, and she wrote me up, and because she did that I decided that clothes was going to be a possible thing to do. I had other avenues - I wanted to do photography - but because she deigned to show interest I went down the clothes route and then Henry, it must have been '68 I think Henry gave me this [exhibition]. The other thing was that I made the samples for exhibitions and I couldn't make the orders, if there were going to be any orders, so he got a theatrical costumiere to do them and they were hideous. I was horrified actually when I started to see what was being made and it was just horrifying. Never again. I have still got, I gave one away, I have still got them all, the samples, so one lives and learns. He didn't...I don't think he thought it was going to do anything but in fact I got something like £600 which was an enormous amount. He was absolutely astonished. So. I can't remember how he said, I mean he must have just said why don't you make me some shirts for an exhibition and I will give you exhibition, or something, I don't know, I don't know what it was, I can't remember that bit.

JB: It would have been I would imagine, thinking of the exhibitions, that it would have been very atypical.

AS: It was. I think he had done one other thing with clothes before that which I don't think had been a great success. No, I think it was because we knew

each other a little bit I think part of the attack was also was that my mother never bought much so he didn't like that. She was always going to exhibitions but not buying. But I think she bought more than he thought, but there was this thing I was brought up to be very careful with money and my sort of revolt as a youth was to buy, to buy art actually, that was my revolt, and at any price.

JB: Do you remember some of the other similar type premises to Primavera that were around at that time?

AS: There weren't many. Amalgam in Barnes run by Tim Boon, that was more of a pure art gallery and it didn't have all the other bits and pieces that Henry had. I can't think of...but it was craft. But Tim Boon started out working for Marjorie Parr who had a gallery in the King's Road and she was very much, although she started, it was quite interesting, she started selling on a stall in Portobello Road selling glass and her husband walked out and so she had to make a living for herself. So she got this gallery, this shop in the King's Road, and she was still dealing in glass, and she had an interest in art and she started to sell art, and she got quite good connections with the Cork Street with fine art galleries. She showed Ewen Henderson first, and Tim went to work for her and she really wanted him to take over the gallery but he wanted to do his own thing. So he opened in '74 I think, in Amalgam. But there weren't...I got a lot from him...there weren't...I just don't think there was any - in London I don't think there was anything similar to it Primavera. There was more out of London, one or two. There was one, something - is it off Old Kensington Church Street, there was a gallery there which mixed ceramic and textile.

JB: Okay.

AS: A very small gallery. I've forgotten what that was called. That started around the same time as Henry it must have been.

JB: So whereabouts was that sorry?

AS: It was off – there's a little street off Kensington Church Street.

JB: Kensington.

AS: Kensington Church Street. I'm trying to think. It will be, if you are looking up any of the outlets for ceramics it will be listed there.

JB: I will have a look.

AS: And I think that might have been that closed in about '50, early '50s.

JB: Right. Because Henry talked, when he first opened a lot of those kind of pre-war galleries hadn't survived, like Muriel Rose's Little Gallery [...]

AS: Muriel Rose, that was the one.

JB: Okay.

AS: That's the one, so that was before the war and then didn't restart.

JB: No. Henry talked about the - is it the Mansard gallery at Heals? That was where he saw his competition.

AS: That's true.

JB: He didn't really mention anywhere else.

AS: No that's true. I didn't know it in those days but I did know that Heals did sell things. Yes, there wasn't much. Peter Jones, for instance, was selling the odd things. They had very early [Frink?] ceramics. She made little figures and I think they sold Lucie Rie buttons, but no sort of real continuation of anything. Heals was the only one I think that had a continuous – no, he was on his own really. It's a very small world anyway, it still is, in fact it hasn't grown at all. It's smaller now if not anything else, for all the work that's been made and all the fairs and so forth. Did Henry start more sort of as a rug shop?

JB: Well I think...

AS: When he very first started.

JB: In '46 it was really a case of what you could find, yes, so I think he sold, he dyed parachute nets and things like that to sell as wall dividers and a lot of found antique ware that he would source. But then very early on he does start selling Lucie Rie. I've been through her invoices and that started very early.

AS: Yes. He was one of the few, he was the only really outlet for her wasn't he?

JB: And some textiles as well.

AS: Yes, because the other thing was that in the early days Helen Pincombe used to help Henry and my mother was buying Pincombe from her not knowing till much later because she helped out, everyone helped out in the very early days. It was very much hand to mouth.

JB: I think, I mean that friendship was maintained I think throughout.

AS: Yes. Yes he said to me he was very put out because he didn't take to Paul Rice, but possibly because he was a competitor. You've come across Paul Rice?

JB: No.

AS: He is a dealer in ceramics and, as often dealers do, he went to Helen shortly before she died I think, and bought a whole lot of work and I think he offered whatever she wanted for it, but Henry felt that he was getting it on the cheap an awful lot of pieces. So he started, Paul Rice, started in about 1980 I think. He had been a picture dealer but he's now it's purely ceramic.

- JB: And what about, are they collectors? I know I was talking to Helen about Bill Ismay, the comparison with how people collect and obviously he is quite unique in how he collected.
- AS: There weren't a lot of collectors and what I felt was that there was nothing behind me, there was nothing coming up, there were no young people, I didn't sense. All the people, most of the collectors I knew, were considerably older than me when I started. I knew Bill. I used to meet him at private views. They were all that much - they were all at least 10 years older. I moved on very quickly. I started with pots but within, because it was a very exciting time and it was a lot of hand building starting, I didn't know, I was just buying what I liked and it transpires that an awful lot came from Camberwell Art School, or connected to it and so within, certainly by the very late '70s, I was really not collecting pots as such, it was much more sculpture.
- JB: So who were the main stays of your collection then, that kind of core group?
- AS: It's Ewen Henderson, Gordon Baldwin, Gillian Lowndes, Sara Radstone who was a student of Gillian and Ewen's, but then I have got reasonable holdings in Godfrey, but Ian Godfrey came - I came to him too late. I came to him in '74, '75 and he left England for Denmark in '75, end of '75, and he was never the same. He was ruined by the Scandinavian sense of design so he was never the same. So I bought one piece, my fox box from '75, from what he described as his last exhibition in Islington, and had to buy everything else at auction, because I was buying early work, but again Henry showed Ian from the early days. He was the one - Amalgam became...because it started well relatively soon after Henry had shut - were you saying shut in '70 or '71.
- JB: '70.
- AS: He started in '74. He was the real gallery. He sold ceramics, he sold prints and pictures but he principally had exhibitions of ceramics and they always had something on the wall, but he was the main outlet in London, and Marjorie Parr sold a few ceramics, she sold Lucie, she sold Bernard Leach and Coper and yes, she was the other one but didn't sell as much as Amalgam and didn't sell very domestic ware with [32.58 unclear].
- JB: So did you feel there was a shift between the kind of traditional craft ceramics, more sculptural that could be termed as more art ceramics? Did you feel like you had to choose where you were going to go? I am just thinking.
- AS: I just went wherever I could find it. I think it was a lovely period because it was a period when there were very few rules, and that's why the work got made. There were artists who were just making using clay as a medium rather than paint or carving so they didn't treat it in the traditional pottery sense and because of that there were no rules and regulations right across the board so it would be shown all over the place. The rules and regulations started to come in fairly quickly. It was a very short period, I didn't realise at the time how brief it was going to be, it's gone now and they have gone back to pottery. The whole thing's been a loss of confidence really. It was a period when they were - all my makers that I liked survived on teaching, they didn't survive on the making. I don't think

you can unless you get a great name and that still you would start out teaching. So I just bought where I could and I got to know most of the artists. Well I got to know the ones I liked, and so I bought directly if I could from them, if they were London based. Gordon was at Eton so I used to go on the way, because my parents had a cottage in Hampshire, so I used to go on the way there to see him. And I also bought from exhibitions and I bought from wherever I saw a piece I liked but it was very London orientated, I didn't have to go elsewhere.

JB: I just wonder with Henry's collection, for when he started he seems to have adapted quite easily and happily, so his collection at the Shipley Art Gallery up in Gateshead, there's Leach and Cardew then there's also Lowndes and Brittain and so it's...

AS: That's what he was showing. As I said he had a very Catholic taste and he very easily moved. I mean he said on that film, you've seen the film he did, the interview he did for York, he said, I think as I remember it, that he was very surprised in fact, he had come to the conclusion that Ian Godfrey was almost a better potter than Coper. He was a very good thrower, Ian Godfrey, but he built his pieces around thrown objects and no, he moved on very easily, he was much more Catholic than I am and so he didn't tie himself to any particular... He was unusual in that sense. [...] He had no divide, he moved across the board and he showed them all together. It was more Catholic in a sense of what he actually collected, than what he necessarily showed. And he travelled a lot, all over the country, would go to fairs and go to exhibitions right until the end I think. So, and he was very keen on glass, which I am not. So no, he was very keen right to the end. The pieces that York have, they are the pieces that surrounded him aren't they, I think, pieces he'd lived with finally.

JB: At York or at the Shipley?

AS: Yes, at York.

JB: Yeah there's about 20 or so pieces at York and then the majority of his collection is at the Shipley. I think he started to pass things on because he went into a nursing home, well he went into a retirement home, so he started to pass things on.

AS: Yes he had to clear, had to have some clear out.

JB: I think the few things that he kept with him have gone to the Shipley I think. I would need to check the acquisition dates. I know of a couple of the pieces at the Shipley which I think Henry had with him while he was in...

AS: I think he was very - I didn't realise that they were still a loan to Shipley. In the end he wasn't very happy with what he had done to Shipley, that but I think that was because as it was a loan to Shipley and it only became a gift on his death, they didn't feel they could do anything with it, because they hadn't done a lot I think, everything happened after he died of course, and so that was partly why he felt they weren't...nothing was happening and I can see why. And he was giving to the Ashmolean and Fitzwilliam a little bit.

JB: Yes, I think there's that element of it.

AS: Just helping them because they were starting to get interested in contemporary ceramics.

JB: I think when I visited the Fitzwilliam they had some Coper and Rie that I think came from Henry.

AS: Yes.

JB: And I think he had wanted to leave his collection to the Fitzwilliam. He talks about them wanting to cherry pick.

AS: They probably didn't want it.

JB: I think they just wanted to pick and choose and he didn't really want that.

AS: Yeah, no, they didn't, and they're like all the rest of these institutions. That's why I feel very lucky; it seems to have worked with York. I have very strict terms for York and it's still a loan at the moment. Because it's the council, I didn't realise the council owns it and runs it and I am very reluctant to give to a council so it's a 15 year loan at the moment but the intention is to make it a gift. And I wanted it to be displayed, some of it to be displayed in this sort of space, which is going to be like it was in my parents' house, it's going to have the books and furniture and domestic space, like Kettle's Yard. That was another thing, he introduced me to the Kettle's Yard. He said at that stage, because Jimmy was still there, I should just go and ring the bell and of course I didn't have the courage to do that so I didn't make it until Jim left. But that was an inspiration to what I wanted to do. So having done Shipley he wasn't very happy with it, that's why they didn't get any more. I didn't know why he didn't get it back because I thought he had gifted it, I didn't realise it was a loan and it wasn't a gift but and when we last talked about things he was very unhappy with it.

JB: I imagine it's very complex. It shows up at so many other [41.43 unclear] I suppose.

AS: They didn't get everything because, I don't know, a lot was sold. For instance I bought a Godfrey which was his, beautiful Ian Godfrey. They picked as well and I don't know - and he sold, who's the person who took over Primavera?

JB: Ronald Pile.

AS: Yes he had, which I never made, he had two exhibitions of Henry's collection which presumably Shipley wasn't going to take. All sorts of nice things, and then Henry put something's into Bonhams but they didn't take everything which is a pity really. But it's often the case that museums feel that they can do that and I think it's a great mistake because the collections are a collection, they should be kept together, and if it's at the will of the person who is dealing with it at the time you can lose the best pieces. So, I'm very thrilled with my little Godfrey cup which I got and I knew there were other things.

JB: I shall have to, I have a fair understanding of how it was working but...

AS: He was still buying at auction. As well as selling he was buying. I remember he was very excited by a Godfrey, another Godfrey, a black Godfrey dish which he wanted once. This was at the same time as pieces were being sold and he went on. I know he had an allowance to keep on buying and he bought from Tatiana, she will tell you, he bought a number of pieces from her up to the end, and some of those were destined for Ashmolean or Fitzwilliam because I don't think he could cope, he didn't have the space for them. So I had always said that I wouldn't give to a museum because they just put it in store and that's the end of it. But as it happens it's worked very well just by chance, because the Ismay is at York and [Milner-White] They were covering pretty well the 20th century very well and I like that the fact that Milner-White collected pictures as well. I think it shouldn't be just ceramics; it should be right across the board. And that I suppose was inspired by Henry, the fact that you don't just - because a lot of collectors, as I say in the ceramic world is very much pots, and they don't even look at walls, and then I'd have people coming and they just ignore the walls completely which is very sad to be so restricted. And a number, like Ewen Henderson and Gordon, were both painters as well as ceramists so you should have the two.

JB: Do you know much about Pauline's role in...

AS: She started this as a shop girl. I don't know when they got married but she started out as his sort of helper, but she was very much - she ran the show. Henry couldn't have done without her and he could just leave her to do it, she did it really, she ran it. So most of my letters are - sometimes I get a Pauline letter and there is an added comment from Henry but she did all the organisation and so he was able to go off and do his thing. She kept the ship steady.

JB: Like the perfect partnership really.

AS: Yes.

JB: I have contact with Liz, their daughter, and she is very supportive of the project and I know that she is quite keen to make sure that Pauline isn't edited out of the [47.00 unclear].

AS: No, no. Henry could not have done, like a lot of these marriages, and particularly with artists, could not have done what he did without Pauline because he could just go away and put on exhibitions and do what he liked and the day to day was controlled by Pauline, and she would let him really do what he wanted to do, a great supporter. And then they had, I don't know he managed it, but he had an accountant, a live-in, well working accountant who was there at the top of Primavera for a number of years so he must have been turning over quite a lot. He had a contracts company and he had fingers in pies all over the place. But he was very much a shop keeper but put on these exhibitions, but it was piled high with things.

[...]

Yeah that would be fairly...well I didn't know that there was the Barclay Gallery and of course there was the beginning, in Hay Hill, there was the beginning of the Crafts Council, British Crafts Centre. So that was competition. That was '51 I think. So there were all those and there was one other gallery, I think, around Mayfair that did do a little bit of ceramic

sales. Because in the very early days Staite Murray, Leach showed with Nicholson with painters, so there was a little bit of cross but again there weren't the rules [51.08 unclear] so often Leach will have also have shown with [51.16 unclear] painters. There was no problem. But there weren't that many places, they were mostly around Mayfair. I think it was the Berkeley gallery.

JB: There was a Berkeley gallery [51.30 unclear]. I know Henry had some issues in those early days with the Craft Council or whatever it was referred to then, Craft Centre.

AS: Well the Crafts Council started in - so the British Craft Centre was before the Crafts Council.

JB: Yeah that's right.

AS: The Crafts Council I think was round about '71.

JB: Yes, that's right. So when it was the Crafts Centre of Great Britain...

AS: I don't know how that was - that was funded by the Arts Council. The Crafts Council was a separation from the Arts Council, major, you know they sort of handed over there, but they had funded, before they had the separation, they funded the Crafts Centre so there were topical issues with them. [...] So in a sense Henry had to find what he wanted and he had a very small market for it and it wasn't growing, it just didn't grow. Bill Ismay was very rare, someone who literally - he used to get on the milk train because he couldn't afford, well he couldn't afford anything really, so he had to save money so I think he just got to know all the milk trains and he would just get on and they would treat him like a milk churn. So it's a tiny world.

JB: Helen Walsh was showing me some early pictures of Ismay's home and it's just amazing to see how...

AS: It was crammed, and he just had a space on a table for putting a plate on and then otherwise it was just piles of - I never saw it - and he filled the windows up with shelves and...

JB: There was a letter that Helen found for me from Henry to Bill saying how Henry was very sorry for the breakages. He had obviously been round to visit him and had knocked a few things which...

AS: Henry was not, yes, the most... I used to bump into Henry at private viewings and once at the Craft Centre for a Gordon Baldwin exhibition, we were waiting out, we used to have to wait outside, they wouldn't open the doors until, in those days, until the actual - you could go beforehand but you couldn't necessarily buy, but you could...the doors would be kept firmly shut. There were a lot more collectors. I think there still are in the pottery world, pots world, but for more sculptural work you don't have to rush, you don't have to make decisions before the private views. Things are very slow there. But I remember meeting him outside in Earlham Street. We were talking, I was talking about I'd bought a Gordon at Bonham's very cheaply. And I met him at Fritsch exhibition at the Royal College; I remember talking to him walking through the Mews' behind there and talking and him about the past. But he was still, I don't think he was buying,

in fact he picked up a bit more of buying laterally of more sculptural work. He wasn't buying so much for himself in his own collection, I think. I have never been to Shipley and I don't know what - do they have an archive that you can see of his collection?

JB: Sorry do you mean the collection itself or associated material?

AS: Yes.

JB: The collection, yes, what they've done they have the Henry Rothschild Study Centre, as that's called, so the majority of the collection is in there.
[...]

AS: Yes. So I don't know, I seem to remember - I never went to his house in Cambridge - but I seem to remember that some of the collection was around about the shop, the shop was the whole building in King, Queen's Parade was it?

JB: King's Parade yeah.

AS: King's Parade. So as you went up you came across things.

JB: I went to visit, because it's still Primavera.

AS: It's still there. I wonder how little it's changed. I went back after, once I think I seem to remember, I don't know quite why and it was very different.

JB: I think when Ronald took it over, from what I gather, I did talk to Ronald, he made it quite minimal and then I am not sure when he finished. Maybe it was sort of '94, '95 and then I think whoever has it now has taken it back.

AS: Has taken it back, more back to what it was.

JB: So there is...but it certainly has that sort of cluttered feel to it, but it's an immense space compared to what he had at Sloane Street.

AS: Oh yes, yeah. It's just the front of that is what he had in Sloane Street.

JB: Yeah.

AS: My exhibition was in the basement, I think, my "shirty look" I seem to remember, where the clothes were. I don't know what else was on then. I think it was the only, on its own. But no, I was horrified by what the costumiere made, the copies, awful.

JB: It's a learning curve, isn't it?

AS: Absolutely. Absolutely. And literally I had just walked out of school the year before, or that year I think. It was all very quick, it was all very quick. I did a major wedding the next year and I was sort of semi trained.

JB: It is interesting to think how if that could happen in quite the same way now for somebody to do that.

- AS: It couldn't. And I got this article and I started to get other people were writing about me and so Ernestine decided she better write her article or she would miss the boat altogether. Because she was the one who picked me, as I say, picked me up in about '67 I think, I started writing to her. Well I wrote to her, I wrote to other people about other things I think and she replied, you know, she was keen. But from her article there was another shop but it was slightly different, and a bazaar. It was one run by a couple; she was a designer, mostly of textiles I think, and they wanted someone to do - they didn't have menswear, and they wanted someone - they were in Brompton Road, what is now Brompton Cross up near the Michelin Building, in that parade there, and they wanted to do a men's section. They were just women's clothes and textiles and from the article they approached me, but they realised that I knew very little and so they realised that I couldn't do it there straightaway so. But yes in those days it was, because there wasn't a lot, so it was just the beginnings of things. Mary Quant had started; she started in what, sort of '58 I think.
- JB: Yeah I always think it's surprisingly early when I think about it but yeah.
- AS: And it was the fact that the war, I think in '51 there was rationing, '51 or even later still so...
- JB: It was an interesting thing; I visited the exhibition at the V&A in May, the British Space and Design 1948 was part of the Olympics, as everything is part of the Olympics.
- AS: Yes.
- JB: And it had never occurred to me as I was walking through, I think it was the second room, and it's all this kind of pop art and Mary Quant and all this kind of swinging '60s London look and it occurred to me how did Henry fit into that.
- AS: Not really.
- JB: Because he's just round the corner from the King's Road and it's just...
- AS: No, no. Because it wasn't in that vein, it was very much the craftsman. All his things came from the craftsmen and they tended to be rather traditional, although he did show Godfrey who made a lot of these what he called tanks. They were like, if you imagine a sort of dish, flat dish which potters did make, but he raised it on little feet and he had animals and vegetation and things going round it and he just put in glass into the base of the dish so it looked like a tank, literally like a water tank and it would just crack and craze up. So he was the first to show those things of Godfrey's but they were much more still in the tradition of art rather than pop art and craft so I think Henry was completely, not necessarily oblivious, but that didn't interest him, that part of the world. Although he would sell things printed with Union Jacks and that sort of thing so and he would sell printed Union Jack aprons and that of thing I'm sure. It's like more the - because that's what Laura Ashley started out doing. She was doing tablecloths and washing up and drying cloths and aprons, that's how she started.

JB: I think it struck me, and especially I think I'd just been to see where Primavera had been, and just that proximity to the King's Road and just thinking well...

AS: I think it was, I have a feeling it is still there, the shop next to him was a little café. I think it still is, isn't it?

JB: I think so, yeah.

AS: And the shops were very traditional there. The one right on the corner as you start going up towards Harvey Nichols, that corner, that last shop which has now been obliterated, but for instance it was a second hand shop, because obviously with all the wealth around there people buy their clothes for the children and they're useless a year later but they are beautifully made, so you could go there and get second hand children's clothes, so they were very traditional shops. So he was very out of his...out of it. He was both out of the King's Road world; it wasn't like the King's Road at all, although it's a stone's throw away. It had little traditional jewellers and very traditional shops as did Walton Street of course, it didn't have all those galleries. In fact he was probably the only gallery in Walton Street that was then. I can't remember what sort of shops were there. It's very different now. There was one other in the King's Road, further down the King's Road, there was a restaurant called the Stock Pot, no, the Chelsea Kitchen it was called, and opposite it was a tiny little gallery, mostly jewellery but they sold other things and that was the parents of the two Manheim jewellers. There's Catherine Manheim and another one, and their parents ran it and that was slightly along the lines of Primavera. I don't know when it started. I think it started, it went on until the mid '60s possibly early '70s but they sold other things, mostly jewellery though, and their two daughters turned out to be jewellers. And they obviously were German originally, presumably, Manheim. And the other thing is I have always felt that England is not...the English are not particularly interested in art and Henry was very much an outsider and what he was showing was of much more interest to people, foreigners really, than the English.

JB: Did you get the sense, meeting with him or talking with him at these private views, of him, it sounds obvious because he wasn't English, but did you get a sense that he really was outside of that?

AS: Yes, absolutely. But as I say I think the English are so little interested in art and they have very set rules on what is art and pictures have to be either landscape or ships and they don't need it. Whereas I have a great need for art. [...] It's a part of as it is of the artist the air they breathe, it's terribly important. But the English, if they've got to put something on the wall it's got to just fit a particular stereotype and they could do without it. And it harks back to very much the tradition that you do it because it's a traditional thing to do.

JB: So any sort of choice is...

AS: There isn't a choice from the heart. It's not a gut choice. Or occasionally it's a revolt against what your parents or your grandparents had, but there just isn't a natural choice to buy art or to be interested in art really. So a lot of his customers weren't English, they were foreign. In fact he introduced me to, he got me a number of clients - I hadn't realised but the

Wolpe family, I think they were to do with Faber, I think he was, one of the Wolpes, was a designer for Faber. It was a very German Jewish one-hood. I did some things for her, his wife, I seem to remember. So it was a very, very small world and Henry did as much as he could to break out of that by getting the Councils to buy things and to set up, start collections, but as I say it's got smaller. I assumed it was all going to get bigger. It's turned on itself, it's shrunk.

JB: Yeah. There is a quote of Henry's and when he is talking to Tanya Harrod for an interview, it's at the British Library, he said something about how the English are no good at exhibitions because they can make a big bang but then there is nothing that comes after it kind of thing. I am not sure which particular exhibitions he was talking about but yeah.

AS: Well they don't feel there is a need to follow through with anything. I think it's because there's a tiny amount of people who are really interested in art. And we did have, at that period, we had some very good curators, the V&A which we haven't got now, major curators. [01.13.33 unclear] writers, and they don't exist now. I don't know, there aren't major collectors in the crafts world and the ones who do, the well-known ones, tend to have been buying very showy work which they donate to the V&A or they buy for the V&A. It's a very different sort of world. Because ceramics are still very reasonable compared to other art forms, but they are much more than they were.

JB: I went to the Collect Show in May with Sim who is the curator at the Shipley, and obviously they had got special first evening preview tickets, and that did strike me that there seemed to be some of the pieces there were very accessible and you could see how they would fit into your home as opposed to pieces, particularly contemporary art pieces, where you can never see them being anything but in a gallery or not even really a museum space as such but a gallery space, and as you say quite reasonably priced as well compared to...

AS: Other art forms.

JB: Other art forms. It was very interesting. Still slightly out of my budget.

AS: Yes. Did you notice that most of the collectors there were foreign?

JB: I don't think I really noticed that actually.

AS: Perhaps most of them. See the Americans, there seems to be much more interest from Americans. And the other thing is that this divide that is almost more than it ever was between our craft and art really does create barriers in this country and they are worse than they ever were. So people who do collect art won't collect craft but in America it's almost the other way round, there is a great demand for craft but occasionally, only occasionally, is it art but at least there is that demand for it.

JB: No it's an interesting area to look at, that whole craft art and how it's defined and whether it should be...when it gets defined if it should be nailed down, if you know what I mean.

AS: Yes, it really shouldn't be nailed down. I think the disaster was separating the Crafts Council from the Arts Council because ever since that the Crafts Council people or artists want to get back in the Arts Council and that world and then the Arts Council looks down, and the fine artists look down on the crafts people so we are back to where we were. It's a mess. Henry started at the right time, and I started at the right time, I didn't realise but he started at the right time because there was so little and there were the practicing and it was the beginning of studio ceramics and there were all these people starting and they had to have an outlet and exhibitions were the best form of outlet.

[...]

JB: [01.19.04 unclear] say that the Walton Street, those 3 short years, because obviously Cambridge was already up and running.

AS: Yes, and he was mostly in Cambridge.

JB: So I know the exhibitions that were held there but that's fallen of the map though.

AS: It was a pure gallery, I can remember it. It was set out beautifully, very minimal and very little stock. It was just it always looked like an exhibition was on. He wasn't - I can't remember whether he was upstairs as well - but it was a similar size to Sloane Street, but a little bit bigger, possibly twice the size of Sloane Street.

[...]

All I know is Henry poo poed that, he thought it was far too much, he didn't the idea of it being a...so he liked putting on exhibitions but he didn't like, he felt that was too grand to have a gallery as such. He'd much rather have a shop and just fill it with stuff. In fact I came across some letters just the other day, because I am sorting my things and it was in the very early days when no one was quite certain who was going to make these things, the shirts, but he finally came up with this costumiere chap.

JB: That sounds like it's possibly a good job Henry didn't pursue that textiles and clothing rather...

AS: Well he did somewhat. He must have had other people making things because he pursued textiles a lot and he got me to make the ties and he must have got other people because they had kaftans and things which someone had made up in the fabrics that he had got. He got some nice Danish printed textiles which were really for interiors, you know, furnishings but they were used for clothes and ties, I've still got some. So he always had some clothes there so someone was making something. As I say mostly kaftans, or kaftanesque things. I can't remember how, I didn't do it for very long, I went 2 or 3 years, I used to go every month or so to Cambridge and do fittings and things but I seem to remember thinking about it I was sometimes fitting people in their own houses so I must - whether, I don't think I was giving him any commission, so I don't know what...some of it was getting, or maybe they were clients from later I would have made something for Henry. It's all rather hazy I'm afraid. And then it stopped, I had too much to do. But he helped enormously getting me off the ground as he did a lot of people. But he fell out with everyone at some

stage. Henry liked the idea of raising people up and then knocking them down a bit, which was sad.

JB: Yes he does seem to be somebody who divides opinion I think, putting it politely.

AS: Yes. He was quite a character, a very strong willed character.

[...]

Yes. He did a lot of his exhibitions abroad. I think because I imagine he got very little, he had a following of collectors but it wasn't really growing. His private views were very busy. I don't think he got much...there was a much greater understanding of craft as art abroad.

JB: Yeah. He had a lot of connections in Holland and Germany and bringing German potters' work over here as well.

AS: As I say this exhibition in '73, which I have got the price list for, was quite an exhibition and...

JB: And Kettle's Yard has quite a...so was it in the...I'm not sure how it works because there's the house and then there's the gallery.

AS: The gallery I think has been extended since I've seen it, but it was in original part of the gallery, it wasn't in the house. He couldn't cope.

JB: Because it has a very modern feel to it really. The building itself has got very long windows, or is that the extension part?

AS: Yeah.

JB: It has a very European feel, the building.

AS: Yes, and of course he was doing big exhibitions and he couldn't cope with them in the shop but he was determined to do it I think. He had one in the Fitzwilliam as well, in the museum. I was very naughty because I used to - because getting Gordon Baldwin's work it didn't really sell that well so chances are when I saw it in an exhibition I could say to Gordon if it comes back I'll have it because Gordon very kindly said after a while that he would let me have things half price. And that was a piece - I got a piece that Henry had which didn't sell, because they didn't. He showed the work, which was very good, but he pretty well knew that it wasn't going to sell, so he was very good in that sense, he wasn't just showing work he could sell. He would show what he liked. I don't think at that stage he was actually collecting Gordon's work. I think that all came a little bit later. I don't know. It would be interesting to know when his first acquisition of a Gordon piece...

JB: It would be lovely to know. That type of record archive is sadly not there.

AS: Is not...ah!

JB: There is a few pieces that I can work out.

[...]

- AS: But he had a lovely piece which is at York now, a lovely Gillian Lowndes wall piece, which was going to Germany when he went to see her. He said I would love that, and she said that's fine. She'd rather, I think, know someone who was here and was going to have it rather than sending it to Germany for an exhibition. But that was again more recent. He became much more adventurous relatively late because excitement remained. He was much more Catholic than Bill Ismay.
- JB: My impression of Ismay's collection, from what I've read and heard people talk about, is the filling in of gaps, it's kind of like a library type collection.
- AS: Well he was a librarian. But he had to buy, he told me, and I was very shocked, he said...or he was buying about 3 pieces a week which horrified me because I can't find, I would be lucky to find one a month let alone 3 a week so it's very much across the board collection and it's 3,000 plus but possibly major pieces, so possibly 150, and he has got 300 plus artists, perhaps 350 artists. So it's a very good study collection in that sense and it's very much orientated to pots. There are a few sculptural pieces but he really loved pots and I find that very, very limiting. But yes, it's a library of ceramics. You can't buy, you can't find 3 pieces for collection a week, 3 or 4 he was buying.
- JB: Yes it does seem rather immense.
- AS: And he was lucky, again time wise, he was at the right time, and he had the sense for instance to ask Hans Coper at this opening at the V&A whether anything was for sale and Hans pulled...because, you know, these museums are very difficult about selling things, they are not supposed to be, or they feel they are not supposed to be selling things. So he asked Hans is there anything for sale and Hans pulled a list out of his pocket and so he got his major pieces from that exhibition because he asked Hans. But that was lovely and I will never forget that, going from Primavera just walking through Thurloe Square to the V&A and seeing the show. And again there was that business of you would go into a museum and you see this work and you have just seen it for sale. It's not - well it's still rare now, it's like going into a major show here, it's still quite rare to then go into a gallery where you could actually buy a major piece. So I got all fired up. I was waiting to buy Coper. I wanted a Coper and I saved up £90 and in the Crafts magazine they listed an exhibition in Chipping Campden in '76, and I had got my £90 and went there and they'd reprinted, by mistake they'd reprinted the exhibition of the year earlier. In fact that was his last exhibition in '75 in Chipping Campden so there I was in Chipping Campden on a Saturday and it was bare. But, it was one of those things.
- JB: You're not to blame.
- AS: No. No. I got one later. I got a much earlier piece later at auction for way more money but I got what I wanted. It was a piece from '66. But no, so when I was seeing this in '69 I didn't have any money to spend but gradually the appetite got to the stage where one had to have something so it was that growing period, building up to the point where I actually put my feet in the water and started.

- JB: I just think it's interesting to look back on those things retrospectively and think where all those beginnings were and whether you really...
- AS: Where you see things and how you see things and...
- JB: Yeah, how you saw that was then going to then be a case of you discussing with your gallery that you were going to be depositing this collection there at some...
- AS: Absolutely. The whole thing is destiny I think. It's all been destined; I am just following the path that's been set. From the time my mother walked past Primavera and it was being set up all just seems to have been a destiny so it's that. I have had the same thing with clients, for instance I had Anita Besson, there was a shop in New King's Road which isn't so far from my workshop and I think they...no for some reason I got to know of them, possibly from a newspaper article, and I went to visit them because they sold batiks fabric and I left some cards with them which I think was the one and only time I ever did and Anita and her partner went and bought some fabric there and they picked up a card and they contacted me and I didn't know Anita collected, or sold ceramics, didn't know anything about her. So they came as clients with their fabric and I made it up and I went to see them 6 months later for a fitting and walked into this room which was Lucie Rie's and Hans Copers. And we had never talked about ceramics and so from '74 she became a client. In '75 I realised that, or we realised, there was a connection but she was almost going to go into - she suggested one time why don't we open a gallery together and she did a little bit of selling ceramics but she had, because of Dora her partner, had known Lucie for years and used to get presents, Christmas presents and birthday presents, from Lucie so this was how their collection was built. [...] she said why don't we go into partnership and run a gallery, ceramic gallery, and then she finally did in '88 but yeah so how odd, so odd, this tiny little ceramic world.
- JB: It's very interesting.
- AS: Yes. I can just hear Henry now, I can just hear him, whenever he appeared I can hear him. It's like the voice at York when they had it on, you could just hear him, full of life, excitement. I think he found it pretty dull in this country really. He had a number of German exhibitions. I don't know how well, they did reasonably well, but certainly the ones with the hangings by Lotte Hofmann and he wasn't selling anything that was on the walls at all.
- JB: I just find that the longevity of what he was doing was...
- AS: Well he had all his other things which I didn't know about, this contracts company, and presumably supplied a lot of the universities with things.
- JB: Yes, yeah. Beds and desks and...
- AS: Yes, to have employed an accountant full time he must have been doing quite well. So it was all ticking over. He wasn't just like the normal little gallery, you see, and probably the contracts thing was so much larger than the shop.

JB: I think I have an impression or got an impression that once the shop was established and the day to day then he went 'we'll do exhibitions' and then...

AS: You see Pauline ran that and he was very happy, he was bored, he was very easily bored.

JB: It seems to be that he is looking for the next thing to get a hold of and then the next thing so the contracts and the exhibitions and then going abroad and doing exhibitions.

AS: Yes, that was all Henry. And he spent a lot of time, even when they finally moved into that home, he was often away, he was travelling and going to see exhibitions all the time all over the place and had a little allowance to buy a few things. But he couldn't have done it in the shop days but for Pauline because she kept it all going. But yes, he was very quickly bored. He was very bored most of the time. If you were with him he soon got bored. Yes, and so the exhibitions, they outgrew the gallery and the shop so they were always in Kettle's Yard, at home or somewhere else.

[...]

Ken Stradling

Born in 1922, Ken Stradling joined the Bristol Guild of Applied Art shop in 1948, following his service during the Second World War. Like Rothschild, Stradling sought to encourage post-war British craft and has amassed a collection that includes furniture, glass, pottery and industrial design. In 2007 he created a charitable trust and gave the Collection a permanent home at 48 Park Row, Bristol.

Interview in person, 17 January 2013:

*Early life in Army ** Bristol Guild 1948 ** Early interest in art and design ** Time in the Army ** Henry Rothschild and Primavera late 1950s ** Beginning of own collection ** Important makers ** Exhibiting crafts ** Primavera Sloane Street ** Interest in design as well as craft ** Henry Rothschild Collection at the Shipley Art Gallery ** York Art Gallery ** Anthony Shaw collection ** Relationship between Henry Rothschild and Ken Stradling ** Craft, art and design ** Changes in craft 1960s 1970s ** Important makers ** Effect of WWII on crafts ** Council of Industrial Design ** Furniture ** Design Industries Association ** Utility ** Workshops and studios ** Craft now ** Approach to collecting ** Collection in Bristol Guild ** Craft now ** Collecting craft now ** Gane Trust ** Furniture ** Showing his collection ** Folk Art ** Sam Haile ** Glassware ** Furniture ***

JB: This is Janine Barker talking to Ken Stradling on the 17th January 2013. Just to begin, just to get a good reference for dates, if I could ask you when and where you were born, just to help me with dates as we go through.

KS: 2nd January 1922.

JB: Thank you very much. So if you could just tell me a little bit about your career background.

KS: Well I was at the Grammar school here when the war broke out, then I went into the Army and I came out of the Army in 1948, and this is when I joined the Bristol Guild, which was a very small gift shop there, only employing 2 people or 3 people, and I've been here since 1948 and building this up into what it is now. So that's my career as you might say.

JB: So you started working in the store here. How did that develop into what you do now?

KS: Well I've always been interested in design, and when I was at the Grammar school we had a very remarkable Headmaster called JE Barton, and he was the kind of a master if he was giving a lecture or something like this you got carried away with enthusiasm for what he was doing and what he was saying and the interesting thing is he was lecturing on design before the war, just as a civilisation programme, you know, on television after the war. He was doing the same kind of thing on radio before the war. He was lecturing on modern design in Sweden before the war, and he wrote a very good book called Purpose and Admiration and I suppose he helped inspire me but I was destined to become a civil engineer. If it hadn't been for the war I would have gone on to Bristol University and done civil engineering. But when I came out in '48, because although the war ended in '45 I didn't come out till '48, you were demobbed by number, and the war gave the opportunity of changing direction. I felt I didn't want to be a civil engineer and so this is how I came into this business.

JB: Oh I see. So where were you stationed during the war?

KS: I was stationed in Catterick. Well I was stationed first of all in the Black Watch at Perth, and then they found that I had done some training in the OTC [Officers Training Corps] and the STC [Survey Training Centre] here in Signals, and they sent me then to the Headquarters of the School of Signals which was Catterick in Yorkshire, and I stayed there for five years first of all teaching wireless operating and then teaching maths up to my own level, which was A Level so.

JB: Oh I see.

KS: So that's that.

JB: That's interesting because Henry was Signal Corps as well, during the War as well, so it's quite interesting. So in '48 you start here.

KS: I came here.

JB: When were you first aware of Henry and Primavera in London?

KS: Well in the late '50s I suppose.

JB: So do you remember visiting Primavera?

KS: Well what happened was I married the art teacher at Clifton High School here, and at that time she was using clay for modelling and moulding, not throwing, but just to show children how to handle clay, and she suddenly found that a lot of people were breaking away from the Leach tradition, like the Central School people, like Dan Arbeid, like Gillian Lowndes, Ian Auld and Robin Welch and so forth, and so she said we must go and contact them in London and the first one we contacted was Dan Arbeid, he was at the Abbey Art Centre then, and that's it, my introduction to ceramics really because my first interest here really was furniture and glass but then with her enthusiasm... And the other thing is Rothschild had given Dan Arbeid his first exhibition I think in 1959, and we gave him the first one outside Bristol in 1961. And also I am quite proud of the fact that Gillian Lowndes, we gave her first ever exhibition here, her first solo exhibition in Bristol, and if you look at her CV it starts off at Bristol, Leipzig, Norway, all over the world, and we were the very first one. So there was that tradition and I have been involved with all those potters all my life really and unfortunately two of them are dead now. And gradually we managed to get extra space here and I concentrated on quality design and picked out quality things which I enjoyed and I loved, and that's really how it built up. But besides that I have also been involved with Dartington in Devon because in 1990, I think it was, I was approached by the Chairman of Dartington and Devon to say we like what you've done in Bristol we're having trouble down in Dartington, we started off in 1970 with a completely new thing which worked for a bit and now it's run down, can you come down and help us. And so for nine years I went down there every 10 days and worked down there, whilst still running the shop here, and reorganised Dartington and so that was another activity that I was interested in.

JB: So how did your collection here develop? I mean you said before you consider yourself an accidental collector.

KS: Well some people decide to go out and collect something. I know somebody who was in Australia and when he went out to Australia he decided he was going to collect books about Australia, so he collected books about the history of Australia and then he sold it and then he got it about something else, this kind of thing. [...] What I have collected here are things that I have had around me all my life and I've accumulated things which I like, I like to see good things around me, and first of all, of course, I was buying for my home when I got married first of all and then of course when we had a series of exhibitions here I could see what some of the young people, newer people, were doing and so I might well keep, you know buy one for myself or this kind of thing, and that's how it gradually built up. But in the early days we were agents for Lucie Rie, we used to sell Lucie Rie pots here, and I haven't got a piece of Lucie Rie because I sold all the pieces and I was, you know, we would buy a collection of Lucie Rie, 15 pots, maybe twice a year or something like this and the last time I went to see her was going way back now in the '70s and the women's editor of The Telegraph there was interested in meeting Lucie Rie. She was writing about crafts in Britain at that time so she wanted to meet more craftsmen and so for two years, and I should say I don't drive a car, she and I used to drive around together and I used to introduce her to craftsmen. Her name was Liz Ben, still alive now, and she was one of the Ben publishing family, and she was women's editor of The Telegraph, and so I introduced her to Lucie Rie and the last time I went to see Lucie Rie she had very few pots there, she had only two or three pieces and I picked out a pot there and I said I would like to have that. "Oh" she said, "no Ken, it's not worthy of you, forget about it, come back another time when I've got more pots." And somehow I got involved with other activities and I didn't go back, so in spite of all my collection of pots, and I've got about 450 of them, I haven't got a piece of Lucie Rie, so there you are.

JB: In terms of bringing the exhibitions here what was the motivation about branching into the exhibition side as opposed to retail?

KS: It was complementary really. We don't make a lot out of exhibitions but the final arrangements we have now is that we have a well fitted gallery at the front of the building on the upper floors and we let it out for a three week period and we charge for that and we charge for the publicity but the person that's showing, or there may be more than one person, maybe two or three, they have to man the gallery themselves and it seems to be working out very well. We built this up over the last four or five years and there is quite a demand for it, so I think we got something right, and they're happy to pay us this amazing sum and that includes some publicity, some printing for a catalogue, well there's one here, this kind of thing, for every exhibition we put out, and so that is how it's working at the moment and it's already booked up two years ahead, so it's successful in that way but we just cover our expenses and make a little modest profit and we don't charge any - you just charge the basic hire fee for the thing, but we don't charge any percentage on the sales, that's the essential thing. We don't charge percentage on the sales but they have to man it themselves. And of course a lot of people buying like to talk to the person making the thing and so forth.

JB: Yeah. It's an interesting way of doing it, because obviously a lot of galleries now will have the sort of commission of sales which can be quite steep, I think, in some places.

KS: Quite yeah. That's right yeah.

JB: So coming back to Henry and Primavera, so you started to visit in the '50s, what was the sort of feel of those premises in Sloane Street it would have been at that time? Do you remember much about the shop itself?

KS: Here you mean?

JB: No at Primavera.

KS: I can't remember it in detail. I just accepted it, a place to go and see [11.56 unclear] but I honestly can't remember in detail. I've stayed with Henry and so forth, and we've been around together, but I can't give you, you know, or say I can remember a particular item right now.

JB: So your interest has been design as much as it has been craft?

KS: Yeah. Well this is why I was particularly interested in Shipley because there was the design element there, and this was before Henry Rothschild, and I don't know whether...but why did he give it...do you know why he gave it to Shipley?

JB: Again there's a few different versions of events. He wanted to keep it together. The Shipley had some of his collection, which was known as the Eagle collection prior to his death. There is an account where he says that the reason he gave it to the Shipley is he wanted it outside of London and far away from Thatcher.

KS: Far away from?

JB: Far away from Thatcher land.

KS: Well this ties in because he was very Labour orientated and apparently Gateshead is the most Labour place in England, so I was told, at this time. And we are very annoyed with Gateshead, I can tell you about this, in Bristol, because we had 70 million put aside, lottery money, for the building of our new concert hall here and at the last moment they changed their mind and they gave it to the Gateshead centre, the Sage centre in Gateshead, precisely the same amount, 70 million, so we're very annoyed about that.

JB: Yes. That whole area in Gateshead is just totally transformed from what it was.

KS: Yeah I know, yeah.

JB: But talking to Ronald Pile, who took over the Cambridge Primavera in 1980, I think Henry had been quite keen on donating to the Fitzwilliam in Cambridge, but they wanted to pick and choose, which he wasn't happy about.

KS: They wanted to what, sorry?

JB: They wanted to have some of it but not all of it.

KS: Oh. I see, yeah. He wanted to keep it together.

JB: So I think there was an aspect of that as well. So...

KS: But of course it's not all in one place now is it?

JB: Well no, not really. There is quite a bit at York, so it is still kind of spread about a little bit, but the majority is there. But I think that was his motivation from what I gather.

KS: Yes. Well that seems to tie up. Yeah.

JB: So it is curious that it's so far away from where he was really based.

KS: Yes there's no connection physically is there really. No.

JB: No. But very fortunate. It's good to have a collection like that outside of London.

KS: But I mean going back to the collection, of course York has the fantastic collection now and David Whiting curated the big exhibition of pots which went up there last year, and so forth, and I went up to the opening and so forth and at that opening the Chairwoman, or the Chairperson, of the local council announced at that time that they had just got 4 million quid from the lottery to build two new galleries for the ceramics.

JB: Yeah. Helen showed me, the Curator there, she was showing me the plans for those new galleries. I think it will be quite something when it's done. Because I think they may have just closed now for their refurbishment. I know it should be quite impressive when it's done.

KS: Because it was the big collection of the Gordon Baldwin which belonged to Anthony Shaw, which was shown there last year, the beginning of last year, that's when we went up to the [16.39 unclear].

JB: Yeah. I saw that when I was up. And I spoke to - I did an interview with Gordon in December last year which was very, very informative.

KS: And David Whiting who did the book on Gordon Baldwin, and so forth, yeah.

JB: But I think it really needs that kind of, with pots when you're exhibiting them, and I don't know what your experience has been, is you really need that kind of custom space to get a feel of it because the pots, Henry's pots in Gateshead, are in cabinets but they're not, you know they're against the wall so you can't walk around them. So the Gordon Baldwin at York was really impressive because you can see it from all angles.

KS: Well this is one of the things because when we applied for and we've talked about things, people say well what cases do you use and we don't use any cases, and I'm very keen on this. All these pieces, and I'll show you

upstairs, they're all out and if somebody handles them and drops one as well, it happens sometimes, you know. So we don't use cases at all.

JB: Okay, very brave.

KS: Yeah. Well its life isn't it. But I mean you can't really appreciate a pot unless you handle it really, and that's my opinion, yeah.

JB: Yes, there is something very tactile about them. So what was your relationship like with Henry then, collector to collector or...

KS: Well it's funny where we were just two, working in two parallel ways. You might say there wasn't much contact between us and I suppose in a sense there wasn't and we just talked generally and this kind of thing but I don't think I influenced him and he didn't influence me and we were just good business friends really.

JB: So would he sort of say oh I've seen such and such or there's this new potter, there was never anything like that?

KS: No. No. Nothing like that, no. We didn't, no. We talked in very general terms really, not about specific items. I remember one thing, I think it was one of the times when it might have been when the exhibition we were going to do here didn't work for some reason or other and as a little momentum he gave me a little piece of glass about that size, produced by two people, a husband and wife, he had found making glass in Germany, and he was very impressed with the glass and said these are the people that I really recommend. I'm afraid I never did follow it up but I've still got that piece of glass, you know a piece of glass and it was a present from him. But that's all.

JB: So did you share similar views on how craft, I mean how has craft changed in your opinion over the years in terms of the market, in terms of what's being produced?

KS: Of course it's gone through so many different ways really. I'm amazed now that you have these ceramic colleges closing down and yet there's more publicity about ceramics than ever there was before in magazines and catalogues and things. The thing which has always impressed me about Scandinavian, and this is why I like Scandinavian things, it was so different over there that you might read about Guy Frank, for example, a lovely piece of glass for him, and then you go a bit further and you find that last year he was designing furniture, the year before he was designing ceramics, or at the same time. In Scandinavia they seem to be able to go from one discipline to another and I can quote you 4 or 5 people who have worked in at least five different media, this kind of thing, it's common over there and this is one of the things I like about Scandinavia, and it doesn't seem to happen here.

JB: No. Do you think that - I'm trying to think why that would be, but do you think there's an element where people make their name in a certain medium and then maybe are a little wary of changing what they're known for?

- KS: No. I think they had this feeling that a good designer can work in any medium if he wants to. He may not want to but some of the top designers they were all trained originally at say Copenhagen College of Art or trained as architects, Hans Wegner was trained as an architect, you know, and then went on to furniture and a lot of other things. So, I don't know what I can say about crafts here, it's gone through so many stages.
- JB: You mentioned before, with your wife encouraging you to look at these new artists that were coming out of Central.
- KS: Yeah, that's right yeah.
- JB: And do you think that really marked a shift in what was happening in ceramics?
- KS: Yeah, definitely. And as you know Leach used to call Bill Newland and Margaret Hine, that one down there, the Picassoettes because there were three of them, Margaret Hind, Bill Newland, the bull at the top, and Nicholas Vergette, there's a piece of his around somewhere, those were the three people working in that way and I don't say he sneered at them but he didn't appreciate, they weren't his cup of tea, so he called them Picassoettes because they were working in that way.
- JB: Yeah, there was a lot of tension there, wasn't there?
- KS: But the funny thing is, reading Lucie Rie books, now this I didn't realise was that when he met Lucie Rie he was introduced and he said well, and she was doing very fine work, he said you want to make your pots thicker and heavier and so forth and he didn't really appreciate her work but he did appreciate her as a craftswoman, just she wasn't doing the kind of work that he was interested in or liked. But this is what did surprise me with the Lucie Rie book, he was very friendly with Lucie Rie all her life there, and used to stay with them a lot during the war, and I didn't know that
[...]
- JB: I did read a little, I skimmed through the Emmanuel Cooper book. I think it was something - her and Janet didn't get on very well.
- KS: Nobody got on with Janet. Well it was his third wife and his first wife died and the second and third wife were both rather disastrous, yeah.
- JB: So it is very interesting.
- KS: Because Marianne de Trey didn't get on with Janet and they were, you know, pretty close physically in the area.
- JB: Interesting.
- KS: But the person I would have loved to have known was Sam Haile because I think he would have been the greatest potter of this generation. He was doing things like Picasso, but doing it 10 years before Picasso, and I've got one very good piece of his which I spent quite a bit of money on, because it's very rarely that a piece comes up in this country because at the beginning of the war he was working in America and made a name in

America more before he came over here and then just as he was beginning to make a name here he was killed. And Marianne was pregnant at the time, and I'm not sure he even knew she was pregnant, and then she had the one child and she had to establish the pottery herself at Dartington. They met at the Royal College and she wasn't doing ceramics, she was doing printing and fabrics I think. Illustration.

JB: Obviously from what I've understood, the war interrupted, it seems to have spelt a bit of an end, not an end for, but a change in what was happening before with Leach and Cardew and then it just seemed to spark, I mean, across so many things, but it did seem to spark in ceramics this type of thing.

KS: Well you know, I came here after the War and it was a very difficult time to run a business and Jack Pritchard and people like this are quoted as saying it was a very disheartening time because you couldn't get any ceramic, any pottery tableware unless it plain white, periodically twice or three times a year you might get a case of export rejects, a big crate of export rejects, and if you got export rejects everybody went wild, you know, and people forget that although the war ended in '45 the rationing went on to the mid '50s and it was really the end of the '50s and, of course, the '60s when everything got much more exciting but of course there was an effort to do something about it in 1946 with the "Britain can make it" exhibition and it was the '51 that really gave us new hope, you know, colour and it started people thinking about things but it still, because of the restrictions, and there were restrictions at the time of the '51 exhibition, it didn't really take off till the late '50s. But I went to both those exhibitions. The '51 exhibition was quite an eye opener, yeah.

JB: In what way did that change your...

KS: It was exciting. You saw colour, you saw things there that you hadn't seen for, well if you were a youngster you hadn't ever seen and if you were an older person you hadn't seen since before the war. There was a lot of you had people like Lucienne Day and people like this doing some fantastic fabrics and leading the way. Yeah, it was exciting. Good architecture too.

JB: It's quite interesting as well because Henry's first exhibition wasn't till '53, and I do wonder how much he branched into that. I know he had been to the '51 exhibition so I wonder how much that influenced him to make a go of doing exhibitions.

KS: Oh he must have been influenced by it just as I was influenced by it, yeah. But only in sort of a general way. It was an eye opener, a new step forward really. We were so cut back by restrictions. It was just a release that's all. But I couldn't say that a particular pot or a particular thing influenced me in particular, it was just the whole thing.

JB: Just the idea of something being a bit fresh.

KS: That's right, yeah. And of course you have things like the Council of Industrial Design setting up. There was this feeling about design really and up to then of course you had your basic furniture design by Gordon erm...

JB: I know who you mean.

- KS: The furniture maker in the Cotswolds. Sorry.
- JB: No his name's gone, but I know who you mean.
- KS: I've got his piece of his furniture just there, but at any rate, and that was all really, so yeah. And also, of course, especially in furniture, there were new methods of making. Marcel Breuer, for example, we've got a collection of Marcel Breuer furniture here because he worked at Bristol. He was working with different material and so forth. And Ernest Race of course, who did the famous chairs, the Antelope chair for the festival, I've still got two up there, so he was working with laminated temper and metal rod. Marcel Breuer was working with aluminium and yeah.
- JB: Yeah, Gordon Russell.
- KS: Gordon Russell. Yeah, that's right.
- JB: Where you very involved in these various organisations, the Council of Industrial Design and the Craft Council?
- KS: Yes. Well I was involved in the Design Industries Association; you know about that I'm sure. Well I've been involved in that for many, many years and I've been Secretary, Chairman, and all this kind of thing. Unfortunately because really the Council of Industrial Design took over the job of the Design Industry Association, you took over the *raison d'être* really, and so the Design Industry Association after that became more of a club, as you might say, of people interested in design, without Government backing of course but then of course as regard design you had the Design Centre, and always the problem there was that the Design Centre people would choose something which, tableware for example, they would choose tableware by all the leading makers, and they weren't happy about it at all. They said "well we don't want that pattern, it doesn't sell" and there was always this conflict between what the pottery could sell and what the Design Centre would think it was a good design to show and that's one of the reasons why there was all this conflict that the Design Centre eventually faded out.
- JB: Because it was trying to enforce this idea of good design?
- KS: Good design, yeah. And a lot of the manufacturers at that time were very, very traditional and it was only, and in furniture I mean I don't really know before the war you didn't sell furniture by the name of the manufacturer you saw it by the name of the retailer, they wouldn't tell you, the retailer, you know, and it was only people like - well I suppose there was Gordon Russell because that was - the complication with Gordon Russell is that for about 10 years, from the 1920 to 1930, the furniture was virtually handmade, purpose made and so forth and that table behind you there, which is not a dining table, it's a library table, was a piece of Gordon Russell, and then he went into production in the '30s and we used to sell his furniture here. But it was people like G Plan, that's a piece of G Plan furniture, G Plan broke away from the tradition and sold under their own name G Plan, and they were one of the first people to do that. Otherwise you bought a piece of furniture from some local shop and it was under that name. So that was quite an unusual thing to happen, branding of the furniture. So, when you say what's happened in the design world or the

craft world, there are all these strands which interweave. Some of them are going on at the same time.

JB: It seems to be as well what you're affiliating yourself with because Gordon Russell was very involved with one of the councils wasn't he, one of the councils or organisations?

KS: And also he produced utility furniture, that's right, yeah. Yeah the council, yeah the Council of Industrial that he was a Chairmen I think, or a prominent person, that's right.

JB: So it was kind of who you were affiliated, which branch whether you considered yourself just a designer?

KS: No I never involved, no, with that, no. It was just the Design Industry Association that I was involved with. Yeah, and then later on with Dartington. I can't remember what I was going to mention there. I'll think about it. You'll have to cut all this out.

JB: It's fine.

KS: Of course the other thing where you talk about crafts, and I can say about this, after the war when there were all these restrictions on tableware, you could only get white, this was a great help for the studio potters setting up there, so like Marianne de Trey did a lovely range of handmade tableware, for example, and there was a big sale of that because you had something colourful and nice handmade which you couldn't get from the commercial boys. So there was a big feeling about that and that helped a lot of people and that's why after the war a lot of people, a lot of potters, started up and now so many of the potters now are not doing tableware they're doing more individual pieces. There was certainly that trend, definitely. And the other thing is of course that in those days the only people who could make glass had to be working, as they do in Scandinavia, as part of a big glassworks so you would be working with Whitefriars Glass, for example, which was a big organisation, you could do a certain amount of individual work. But when Sam Herman came over from America and brought the small furnaces which were suitable for glass making, that's when the Royal College started up a glass making course in the late '69 I think it was, '70, and then 3 of the students, they encouraged the students to go out and set up themselves and they set up the glass works in Long Acre in London.

JB: I see.

KS: And 3 of those students established quite a reputation, Pauline Sullivan, Catherine Howe and Sam Herman himself.

JB: So in a sense what that introduction of the practical side of how do you produce this on a small scale.

KS: Besides studio pottery you had studio glass, which you didn't have originally.

JB: Yeah. I think that's one of the elements that I find very interesting about ceramics is that much about it is about the finished piece, that mode of

production is very important and how people can set up their own small scale business, not very easily but it's within the realms of possibility.

KS: Well if you are setting out as a craft person you want to do something now, well you look at the trade fairs which you have periodically you will find that the thing you get more of than anybody else is jewellery because you can set up jewellery from home quite easily, can't you, on a small scale, so you'll find more jewellers than anything else. Then you'll probably find potters, then woodworkers and so it goes and you're now finding as many glassmakers. There are a lot of glassmakers throughout the country now. But the other thing, of course, is that when I came here first of all there was no private gallery in Bristol at all, so it might have been easier for me to set up from nothing as you might say. The only private gallery was the Finn Barrass Gallery in Bath, in Queens Street in Bath, so when they had an exhibition it was run by Wally Pool. When they had an exhibition we all trooped over there to an opening evening and then you would find about 30 or 40 people in the shop, small shop, spreading out into the street, then we would all go the pub afterwards. But now of course you've got 10 galleries in Bristol, you've got 15 galleries in Bath, it's an entirely different ball game.

JB: It's just a different landscape.

KS: Different landscape, yeah. And when you think of - well then of course when you think of St Ives for example, the number of galleries you've got at St Ives all producing the same sort of thing, you know, harbour scene, nice blue sea and a few boats around, sort of a commercial Alfred Wallace. But on the other hand you see when it was suggested that Tate St Ives might open there there was great opposition to it. We don't want an art gallery down here St Ives, although they had a small coterie of art people from St Ives going way back to Bob Hepworth and Ben Nicholson, the commercial boys didn't want it. But now of course they welcome it because it brings so many people down there. So these are the things that happened I'm afraid.

JB: Yeah. I think speaking to Cleo yesterday, she was saying a similar thing in terms of you have, perhaps because there is so many galleries now, what she termed as being bad craft, people sort of setting up, I don't know whether that's something that's always existed but maybe a touch more obvious now or is it just the way the markets are?

KS: I think they've got the opportunity of publicising their bad craft a bit more, yeah. But yes there's that element I suppose yeah.

JB: Are you still active in your collecting?

KS: Yes.

JB: You're still adding?

KS: Yeah. Well I'll show you a bit I've just bought is this one here. This is Terry France. And what I didn't realise was he is well known for his work down at Penzance and so I was down what 2 years ago and he did a lot of prints, very fine quality prints and so on. But I didn't know that he did this on plates and apparently they were supplied by a firm called Haxby & Wallace in

Norfolk or Lincoln, I can't remember what. Haxby & Wallace were a firm that used to do a nice range of kitchenware and some years ago kitchenware was all the rage and they used to do nice kitchen pots and things and big platters and that was one of their obviously big meat dishes. And he obviously bought them and painted them, but he didn't do it in a big way so there are not many of them around. So I'm quite happy to get that. And what I am doing, I don't know whether you know, that the biggest place now outside London for modern design is William Wallace at Salisbury, the Auction House there. And so if I want to fill a gap, now when I say fill a gap I don't fill a gap because I've got to have somebody or fill a gap by name or buy somebody because of the name, but I do fill a gap when I haven't kept something for myself from the things that we used to sell here. So I will in due course buy a piece of Lucie Rie when I find a good one because we used to sell Lucie Rie. But I wouldn't buy just because it's Lucie Rie if you see what I mean, and so. Bonham's in London have given up their design sales and here's the firm William Wallace but - well there is the thing there but you can see it. Well have a look, and they have exhibitions every month, but they have three design orientated ones a year.

JB: That's of William De Morgan.

[...]

But when I spoke to - I went to the Collect Fair last year, with Sim and she knew Henry towards the end a little bit, setting up the collection there. She said that he would get very annoyed if people asked him what should I buy as an investment.

KS: Oh yes. So would I, yeah.

JB: Are you that same, yeah?

KS: Absolutely, we would agree on that.

JB: And that seems, I spoke to Anthony Shaw about this as well, that seems to be a shift in how people collect now, they see it as an investment.

KS: Henry was a bit of a touchy character as you probably have discovered. Some people couldn't get on with him at all.

JB: Yeah.

KS: But he would never hold grudges against you and he would change his mind about something if he found that he made a mistake or something like that. But you see this is the kind of stuff I don't like at all, Moorcroft pottery, that kind of thing doesn't, you know.

JB: Yeah, the very highly stylised.

KS: Whenever I went to the sale with a friend of mine normally I don't go to the sale I just put a bid in beforehand, and that's when I see something I really want I will put a bid in beforehand, and there wasn't anything like that in the sale but if it's a sale where there's half a dozen things which look interesting you think well if I got one cheaper and this kind of thing, and that's the kind of sale I would go to. And that might happen once every two years or something like that but this was, yeah I remember, and a friend of

mine, an architect friend of mine, had never been to a sale before so I say well when I do one of those sales I'll take you, and so we went down, I do remember, and he was absolutely staggered because the sale started at 10.30, we didn't get there till about 12.30, because well I was interested that thing was later on, and just as we were getting into the sale room there was the, it was a woman actually on the rostrum selling, and he was, because he had never been to a sale before, and it was quite extraordinary because as we turned the corner there were all the people sitting in front, it was going like this and she was selling a piece of Moorcroft, £4,500, £5,000, £5,000, £5,600, £5,700, and it went up to £22,000.

JB: Wow.

KS: The next one went up to £17,000, the next one £22,000 as quick as that. But in the sale room now they have to be very quick because not only are the people bidding at the time but you have on your screen the previous bids that have been left before so you have got to watch those. You have 4 girls at the back taking 4 different telephone calls and you have somebody on the internet as well. So you've got 4 things, you know, you've got to be – an auctioneer have got to be pretty on the ball now.

JB: It is. I've never been to an auction but I've seen televised ones or whatever and I think I would be frightened to move, in case.

KS: I don't think you do, you don't need to worry about that they can pick it up alright.

JB: But it is, it's so quick isn't it and it's so fast.

KS: Yeah but it's amazing how quickly they – and if you watch, I'm sure at times you'll watch Flog It or the other things and there's - I can't remember where it comes from, he always wears a bright waistcoat or something like that, I forget which [49.28 unclear] in, he is the quickest auctioneer I've ever come across. It's amazing, yeah. I don't know what else to say really.

JB: It is interesting how much it's all changed.

KS: The connection here with the Gane Trust is the fact that we had in Bristol this remarkable man called Grafton Gane who he inherited a traditional furniture manufacturing and retail firm called PE Gane and he got involved with Geoffrey Dunn of Bromley and Heals and so forth. There were the 3 of them Geoffrey Dunn of Bromley, Heals and Gane in Bristol, and they went on to the continent with the Design Industries Association so they were familiar with what was going on on the continent and Gane got the idea that he didn't like the old fuddy duddy firm that he had inherited and he wanted to build up modern furniture, and he built up, just as Geoffrey Dunn did in Bromley, the store for selling modern furniture. And because of his travels on the continent he got to know Marcel Breuer who came as a refugee to this country, but he only stayed in this country for 2 years, 1935 to 1937. But Gane got him in 1936 to design, to redo the whole of his house in Clifton, Towns Park West, up here, and also to design a Pavilion for the Royal Show which happened to be in Bristol that year. The Royal Show, you know, the annual show, but the Pavilion was only a temporary building for the length of the show, the month's show, to show Ganes furniture. But it was an interesting building and it was designed by

Marcel Breuer, and Marcel Breuer says that his two favourite buildings are the UNESCO building in Paris, and the Gane Pavilion in Bristol. Because it was the first time that any of that group were using natural stone, they were all using steel and glass, and concrete and he used naturals. I've got some photographs of it upstairs. So that was quite interesting. And when he died, or when he retired, he set up a Trust, and I'm Chairman of the Trust and we give money to craftsmen starting out, it's usually grants of £500, occasionally £1,000. We give two or three travel grants a year of a £1,000 and the rest of sort of £500 to buy a kiln or buy some tools or take a course, that kind of thing.

JB: And has there always that connection do you think with people such as yourself, organisations that collect or exhibit and the artists themselves, in terms of supporting?

KS: I think if you are doing it properly yes, I do. Yeah. For example, going off the crafts a bit, other things which, you know, mass production things, for example, which you might be buying for the shop we would never buy through wholesalers or anything like that, we always want to go to the manufacturer or the craftsman direct and some people of course with the crafts buy on sale or return. A lot of galleries do, we never do that. I think sale or return is a waste of time, the paperwork and the arguments when you get "have you sold it" and this kind of thing. If you are not convinced about it don't buy it. But what you can do, and I've built up good relationships with all the people that we dealt with over the years, if you buy say 20 pieces or something and you find 18 of them sell and two get stuck, if you've got a good relationship they will always take two back and swap it for something else. So that's my form of dealing with them rather than sale or return. But I think any good dealer or shop owner has to build up a good relationship by the suppliers. And the other thing is that the influence, particularly the modern design influence, especially in furniture, came from Scandinavia originally. It's now coming from Italy, well it's gone through various stages, but the best manufacturer of furniture now is in Italy and not in Scandinavia. That's called Magis and just North of Venice. And again this is doing what the Scandinavians did. They are not manufacturers themselves, they employ top designers to design and then they locate the right manufacturer for the design and so this is how they work and it's very, very successful. Thomas Heatherwick, does that name mean anything to you?

JB: Yeah.

KS: Well they used Thomas Heatherwick for example and the spun chairs is his, which they employ, anyway. And it's a highly organised firm and I've got great admiration for that firm. Set up by the man, the older man, who was working years ago for a metal working firm, and they were producing something and he thought well I don't think much of it or I could do it better or cheaper and started out on his own, and he has built this up and it's a very big organisation, but the lovely thing is that there are only 3 of them in it. There's the old man, his son who went to Venice University and did a degree in management, and the daughter in law who also went to Venice University. And I said to the son how did they meet? "Oh we met at University" and I said "how the hell did you pick the right girl?" because it's marvellous three of them you know, they just work. There's the old man who's sort of the Chairman, there's this bright young man who's really

selling the thing, and the girl is fantastic, multi lingual, very presentable, good dealing with visitors and so forth, can put on a good exhibition and this kind of thing, and they haven't got any shareholders at all, they are just supported by a bank. So they haven't got to worry about satisfying anybody with what they do and it's great.

JB: That sounds amazing. I have to look into that a bit more.

KS: So that's the kind of furniture we're concentrating on now rather than going back to these reproductions really of Scandinavian. It's the same people and they're still doing the same thing but it's old hat really. And then of course you get cheap imitations, of course, and then that ruins the whole thing really because, well those chairs there, those are [57.02 Anie Akison] chairs there, for example, which I've had for years and if you bought that one new now, [57.09 Arnie Akison] chair I think it would cost you £400, £390. But you can get a chair which looks exactly like that for £10 you know, that's the point.

JB: Yeah. It is just filters down, doesn't it, so it's affordable at every level but obviously the quality decreases.

KS: It's a different ball game. Furniture is very difficult and that's why our main furniture is Maskreys in Bristol, at Bristol and Cardiff, they closed last year. They had a staff of 60 and of course Habitat have gone. It's a very different ball game really. Do you want to have a look quickly upstairs? I'll show you upstairs.

JB: I'll just bring this with me then.

KS: Well there's two floors up here. This is the first floor, and I've got one person who I employ one day a week who is doing a cataloguing and this is where he stays here and we're gradually building up the cataloguing now. There is a mixture of pots and glass. This is what I meant about Gillian Lowndes.

JB: Oh I see, yes, the first exhibition there.

KS: And you see where the next exhibitions are.

JB: Yeah. So do you find as you've collected have you had phases where you've...over a period of time it's all been about glass and then it's all been about – or has it just been like a mixture?

KS: No, no. But one thing I did, for example looking back on our records, we were the main agents for Orrefors glass in the West Country and I never had any. I've got modern Orrefors glass because we sell it but not all. And a lot of this came up, this range came up, and so I bought it and these I kept back these things, and this was designed by Simon Gate in 1919 and we were selling it in the '30s here and so I bought this because to represent what we were selling here before the war. So I do that kind of thing to tie in with, you know the business.

JB: So there is a sort of ethos behind it.

KS: That's right, yeah. This is Kate Malone our potter who was born in Bristol, mother still lives in Bristol and has got an international reputation now.

JB: So you have some favourite pieces, personal favourites?

KS: Well there's a favourite, 2 favourites are upstairs. I will show you those in a moment. The favourite craft person is somebody called Eleanor Glover. She did this and the birds and so on the bird cage. One of the early crafts pieces who I know Henry was a great admirer of is Sam Smith. Does that ring a bell?

JB: Yeah.

KS: It does, yeah okay. This is a Sam Smith.
[...]

JB: I think they're wonderful.

KS: Very wonderful, yeah. But you see Sam Smith wasn't appreciated in this country. It was in America that he made his name because in America they have a much better feeling of, what's the word, country craft, unsophisticated - I'm trying to think of the right word but...

JB: Well it's almost like a sort of folk type, folk.

KS: Folk. Yeah, folk. We just don't seem to have it in this country.

JB: No I think they're really interesting. He designed a few of the early advertising things for Primavera as well.

KS: That's right. But Eleanor Glover is the girl who has taken over from him. Here this is - in fact I think she still uses Sam Smith's work bench and so forth, because he was a friend to them. And she had a big exhibition, touring exhibition, going round for two years and she's finished now and there's always an emotional context. I should have her description of the things on the back I think because this is a family having an argument in here and things are going all wrong and there's a bird looking down at the top saying "what in the hell is going on there", you know, that's the gist of it. But there is always a story behind her work.

JB: Yeah. They are very interesting pieces. Is that another there?

KS: Another one there, that's "Waiting for the Doctor". When I talked about glass, you know I mentioned Sam Herman coming over from America, that's the kind of heavy glass that kind of thing there. From Glassworks this is one of the Glassworks people, one of those started out and they also did these chappies as well. This was a Glassworks in Long Acre in London.

JB: What's this here?

KS: Yeah. That's, just forgotten the name of the chap, he was exhibiting in Aberystwyth, the big Aberystwyth Centre. This is a piece of Holmegaard glass, hand blown Holmegaard glass from Denmark. We used to sell a lot of Holmegaard glass, well we still do I suppose. But the interesting thing

about, just as you had people breaking away from the Leach tradition and so on, and you also had people breaking away from, in the glass, from the very delicate Scandinavian, well this kind of thing, they were breaking away from that and then they were doing chunky things like this and that was the equivalent of what was going on in the pottery world.

JB: Almost the sort of opposite isn't really, when you think Leach was quite steadfast and then you Lucie Rie doing these very fine pieces.

KS: Yes that's right. Yeah. This is a piece of Ian Auld again, one of the Central School people breaking away. I've got catholic taste. For example I bought this recently, do you know the Gold Mark Gallery at Ryland's?

JB: Yes I've heard of it.

KS: It's amazing, have you been there?

JB: No. No.

KS: Well it's amazing, it's the biggest gallery outside London, they employ 22 people in the gallery and they do publications for every exhibition, and this is a young Danish girl who has worked with some of the potters over here and they gave her an exhibition recently, well, yes last year, the beginning of last year I went up. So I bought that, which that kind of shape has been around a long time, but I think she's just got it right you know. But at the same time I bought this within a week of each other. Except that it's been moved. Well it was a Royal Copenhagen bowl, which you couldn't imagine anything more different, but he's just moved it somewhere else, [01.06.20 unclear] fine detail.

JB: That's okay.

KS: Well come and have a look at the furniture upstairs. There's some amazing furniture up there.

JB: This tables lovely as well.

KS: Now this is Marcel Breuer's furniture. This was designed before he came to this country for a German firm and you can't imagine that being made before the War [01.07.18 unclear] new materials and exciting new things.

JB: Yeah. But it still looks modern. It's not something that you can imagine if you said that was a few years old I wouldn't be surprised.

KS: That's right. Absolutely, yeah. This is one of my favourites, this is Sam Haile's bowl, this is my most expensive piece, and this is the kind of thing that you see photographs of Picasso having down there. He was doing this, he worked very quickly Marianne told me, and he used to work during the night so she would come down in the morning and say "what have you done". I don't know how their married life went, but anyway. And the other favourite one is this one here, he taught at Corsham, and that's lovely. So I have my favourites in this kind of thing. But this, I see why they're moving things around here. This is a piece of Dan Arbeid pottery again, heavy pottery. You couldn't imagine anything more different from Leach than that, could you?

JB: Yeah, it's very thick.

KS: But this is the piece of furniture, this is Gane furniture designed by Breuer, and what happened, when the Gane house was sold here when he died I was asked to help distribute the furniture, the Breuer furniture in there. Two pieces went to the V&A, the wardrobe and a radio cabinet, the dining room furniture, there was a sideboard, the dining table and the chairs went to the Bristol Museum. I bought some pieces, those chairs for example, and a table and then one or two pieces went to the family. And we thought we knew where those pieces were but somehow 2 years ago I had an auction catalogue from Nottingham and there was, again it must have come through one of the family, there was this desk, which was there, and this is a lovely thing because although it's on castors it's the same level as that and you can move it either side. So that, and that went with a, there's a chair gone with it somewhere and they've put the chair somewhere. Oh there it is over there, that's the chair which goes with it, and it's deliberately cut back at the front you see, the legs, so that when you are working at a desk it is more convenient to use, that was one thing. There was this bookshelf and there was also a small coffee table, which again they've moved around. And the desk was estimated at £1,000 to £1,500, and in the trade they say "come and get me prices", they put a low price on to encourage you to go, and we knew that that was going to be much more expensive than that. But in actual fact that desk cost us £20,000 because Marcel Breuer is a big name in America, we were bidding against America, and so that's how it goes.

JB: Wow.

KS: Those yellow chairs of course from a '51 exhibition, Ernest Race, and this was the Ernest Race rocking version.

JB: It's just so light isn't it compared to what people were expected to have before that big, chunky, heavy.

KS: That's right, and the idea of the 3 piece suite and so have gone completely. You will buy individual pieces of furniture. That was one of the big sales point of G Plan, for example, that you didn't have to buy a suite, you could buy it individually under name again from them. But this is my favourite chair, this is designed in the '70s by the Italian Giò Ponti and so light you can pick it up with one finger.

JB: Yeah. Wow.

KS: And it looks like a handmade thing but it's not, its machine made to the highest degree. It's very carefully worked out where the pressures are so it's a very, although it's light it's a very strong chair. And this is a Gordon Russell piece, one of the individual pieces made in that period in the '20s before it was mass produced.

JB: That's lovely as well.

KS: That's by Alan Peters, he died a couple of years ago, he worked down in Somerset and you could probably see, he got a Churchill scholarship to Korea, so you can see Korean influence there can't you?

- JB: Ah yeah, that sort of swoop.
- KS: This table by Robin Nance, the son in law of Leach. He had a shop down in St Ives. And of course here in Bristol we had, we've got a tradition of pottery in Bristol going way back to the 17th century but the last pottery here was one called Partners and we used to sell their tableware. They closed in late '60s and that was some of their hand painted ware, and they were completely freehand painted and well you've seen pictures of girls working in these factories painting away, and it was quite amazing they could, 5 or 6 of them around a trestle table while they were painting, and they could hold a conversation, they would seemingly doing it blind folded and saying "how did you get on with the boyfriend last night" and all this kind of thing, you know. This is a little mirror there; it was designed by Colin Beales, the chap you've been talking to, my Trustee, he won the Duke of Edinburgh's Design Award for it in 1970.
- JB: Oh wow.
- KS: The pottery there with the dry thing sticking out, by a local Bath pottery called Peter Wright, and we have a big collection and we have all his archives actually. And just like we have the archives of the other Bath potter, which was Dick Freeman. So we are building up quite a lot of that.
- JB: And it is important that those archives are kept.
- KS: Absolutely. That's Whitefriars glass of course which we used to sell a lot of until they closed down. This is going back to the Central School people. This is Robin Welch for example, these pieces here. Robin Welch went to Australia and worked in Australia for a long time, enormously father of ceramics in Australia. That's another piece of his. It has a landscape of sea, sky and if you like that kind of thing. But then I'm interested in commercial pottery as well. This is by Bob Jamison, a friend of mine working for the Poole pottery, this is a piece of ovenware for Poole pottery, this one here. And again there is this here which I'm just interested in because this is Welch, the Oriana shape, he designed the stainless steel for the Oriana ship and he called the range the Oriana, and we gave him his first ever, well first ever big exhibition anywhere, of his work here in Bristol. And here's some classic pieces like the Wedgewood bull.
- JB: So you've never been - I will only deal with things that are handmade, studio or...
- KS: Sorry?
- JB: Said that it will just be handmade, you are quite happy to have commercial made pieces?
- KS: Oh yes. And people say well why don't you make something yourself? Aren't you interested in making something? And I'm not; I'm in the other end. I'm the receiving end. Roy Strong, I think, always said something very important to me, he said "you know from the educational point of view it's just as important to put money into helping people to appreciate things rather than just making things." He makes the point there is a limited demand for producers, there's an unlimited demand for patrons for people

and I think it's a very good point. So I'm on the other side I'm the patron side.

JB: That's very true. These are very interesting little...

KS: That's one of our crafts people, yes. This is one of the very well know pieces, often illustrated, by Gillian Lowndes, one of her first pieces. These two pieces by Dan Arbeid, they are in the same period, Central School.

JB: This is quite a curious little piece as well.

KS: Yeah, that's a new chap on this. I've just forgotten his name at the moment, I'll remember in a minute. He has come to the fore in about the last 2 or 3 years, working in this country. One of the first pieces - oh this is another woman I have great admiration for, Betty Blandino, these two pieces there. John Ward is the same period and he's better known, and I think she's been overlooked a bit really.

JB: I think there's one of her pieces up at the Shipley in Henry's collection, the name definitely sounds familiar.

KS: I'm sure they've got a lot of these pieces. This is my first ever piece I bought which is Elton pottery, art pottery at the turn of the century made in Cleveland near Bristol, and in the '50s when I went with my mother at that time to one or two sales, auction sales, I bought that there. So that's my first acquisition. And there was only, I don't know if I can put my hands on it now, they've had some students working here and cleaning and he's been talking to them about it, so that's why I'm a bit lost where things are. No, I can't find the other piece I was going to show you.

JB: So is this open to the public so many days a week?

KS: Yes, well it's open now by appointment. We get regular appointments and usually one or two a week but we've put in for an application for Heritage lottery money and we hope to build it up, have an administrator and open it much more regularly and work with. But we've had visits from Kettles Yard. We had two visits from the museum and two more this year. We've had, somebody has just come down from Manchester, their local representative of the 20th Century Design Museum, somebody from the Kelso Pottery on the borders in Scotland were here last week so we are getting quite a few people. But with extra money and doing more we can, we want to be more proactive, put it that way, and so that's what we're hoping we're going to get.

JB: Well fingers crossed. I'm sure you will.

KS: This is a piece of Gane furniture again, but not designed by Marcel Breuer, designed by his in-house designer, but obviously influenced by Marcel Breuer and typical of the period.

[...]

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