

# An Inspiration from Beit Shebab, Lebanon

*Jeremy Leach  
Potter, Devon*

# 37

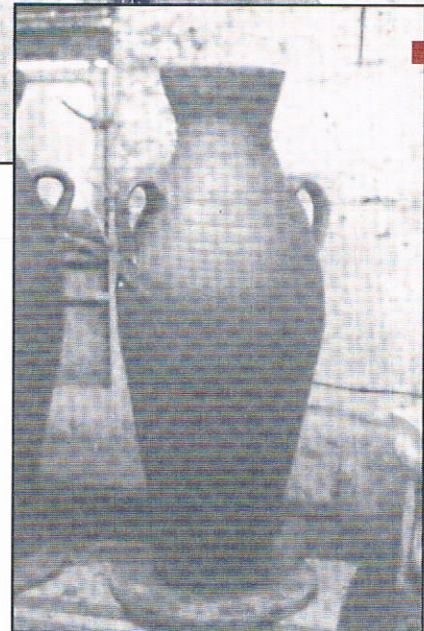
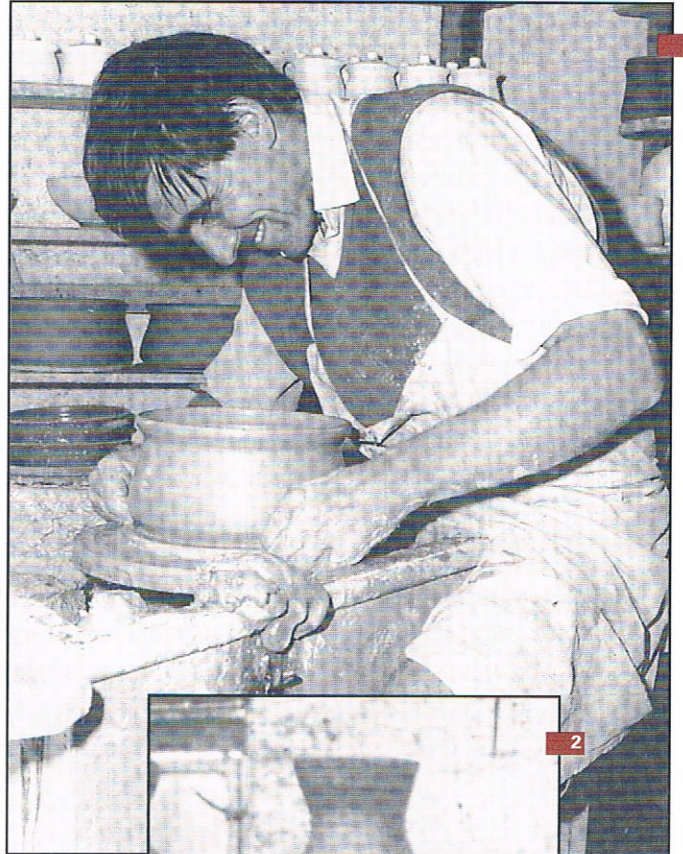
The product of a long line of English potters, Jeremy Leach had always held a keen interest in the art of throwing. His family have in fact been potters for three generations. His interest was such that he eventually abandoned his job with an insurance company to try and earn a living solely as a potter.

Having visited the Lebanon, and most particularly Beit Shebab, he returned to England around 1965, inspired by the ancient techniques used in Beit Shebab to produce large clay amphora-like pots whose wide-spread usage throughout the Mediterranean is well known.

The village of Beit Shebab lies approximately 15 miles North-East of Beirut and is known for its clay pots and for producing church bells. The original techniques involved using a low melting clay and then the skillfully coiled form would be beaten into a large bulging amphora. The pots would have been fired over a period of seven days to nearly 1000°C. There was no glaze. They were effectively vitrified and could be used for storing corn, oil or arak.

Mr. Leach has his own workshop where he meticulously reproduces the type of pots inspired in Beit Shebab but designed in a more English

style. He also produced on his return to Britain a video film called «The Urn Pottery» which demonstrates Mr. Leach in the act of throwing in three sections before he finally assembles the pot.



1. Mr. Leach at work

2. The urn