

NPA News



Northern Potters Association
www.northern-potters.co.uk

December 2020 to January 2021
£2, free to members



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The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent those of the editor or the Northern Potters Association.

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Front Cover: Judith Glover, Landscape2, H 27, W 23, D 11cm, stoneware, 1220°C
Photo: Carol Clarke

Back Cover: Drew Caines, Goliath, grogged stoneware with underglazes and oxides approx. 65cm tall, fired to 1280°C

Next issue

The copy date for the next issue of NPA News is 18 January 2021

Articles should be between 200 and 1000 words saved as text files or written in an email.

Images need to be high quality for printing, saved as .jpg files. 1MB is a suitable sized file.

Please send text and images as separate email attachments – do not embed images in documents.

Send them to npanews@northern-potters.co.uk
Email or phone the editor if you have any queries or need help.

From the Chair

It was unfortunate that the AGM at Potfest in the Pens had to be cancelled due to a number of the committee being placed in Tier 3.

Fortunately, we had a Zoom back up plan with my son as the host. So, on 15 November we had the AGM. It was very much one of procedure to satisfy the requirements of the Constitution. Hopefully the next one will be a face-to-face affair.



I have always found the virtual world of the internet a very strange and abstract place. I can understand someone losing substantial amounts on a gaming site as it doesn't feel as though you are using real money. When I found myself in isolation having travelled from Portugal in September, I found an online auction of Leonard and Alison Shurz' vast collection of studio pottery. Why not have some bids? I thought I had no chance of winning as the auction is world-wide. Having viewed the catalogue I made my pitch. The software is very reassuring: 'Yours is the best bid', 'You have been outbid have another', and so on. The day of the auction arrived and I found that I'd won two bids: a pot by Betsy Evans and one from H P Bloomer, both USA potters. So I had to pay up and collect.

It was a very pleasant surprise to study the pieces I bought, having only seen an auction house photograph. The quality is superb, and the detailing of the surfaces is something I could never achieve in two lifetimes.

I have mentioned Grayson Perry's Art Club before as a very successful interlude in the boring days of the first lock-down. A friend of mine submitted 'a view from my window' and had the painting accepted into the exhibition. The work has been collected and Grayson was to have held a preview in the Manchester Art Gallery in November of all the art created for the program. This was cancelled but I still hope to get to the new preview in December. A film is being made of the exhibition and will be broadcast on Channel 4. One worth looking out for, I think.

John Cook

Your Committee

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Lynn Grant	York
Carol Newmarch	Middlesborough
Michelle Park	Low Bentham
Kathryn Stevens	Barrow in Furness

Diary

In the current circumstances, you should check with the organisers before travelling to events. To add your events to the diary and website, email Dianne Cross publicity@northern-potters.co.uk

to 5 Dec	<i>Fired 2020</i> Newark Upon Trent NPA SE
to 24 Dec	<i>Northern Stars</i> Platform Gallery, Clitheroe Graham Hough
to 10 Jan	<i>The Winter Show</i> Studio Eleven Gallery, Kingston upon Hull Deiniol Williams
to 11 Jan	<i>Where it all began</i> Bassetlaw Museums, Retford, Notts Shaun Clark
Jan to Apr	<i>Affinity</i> Arteria Gallery, Lancaster NPA West
1 to 28 Feb	<i>Love Mud</i> Cornerstone Arts Centre, Darlington NPA NE
1 to 28 Mar	<i>Form and Function</i> Jarrow Hall, Jarrow NPA NE
11 Mar to 25 Apr	<i>Earthworks</i> Water Street Gallery, Todmorden NPA exhibition (see right for how to apply)
24 & 25 Apr	<i>Sheffield Ceramics Festival</i> Kelham Island Museum, Sheffield (see page 5)
12 Jul to 3 Sep	<i>Connecting Crafts</i> Platform Gallery, Clitheroe NPA exhibition (see right for how to apply)

Exhibition Opportunity

We are happy to remind all NPA members that there is an opportunity to show their work in the excellent Platform Gallery, Clitheroe in 2021.

The exhibition will be called 'CONNECTING CRAFTS' and will be a mixed display of NPA ceramics and 10Strong artists' prints.

The exhibition will run from 12 July to 3 September 2021.

All submissions will be reviewed by a selection panel.

No entry fee.

Application forms are available now from The Platform Gallery.

Andrea Westall & Jack Shackleton

e: platform.gallery@ribblevalley.gov.uk

t: 01200 425566

Exhibition Opportunity

The Northern Potters Association and Water Street Gallery in Todmorden are collaborating once again for an exhibition in early Spring 2021 – March 11 to April 25. We want to showcase the variety of work members make – sculptural, hand-built, wheel-thrown, figurative, abstract, wall pieces and so on.

Earth Works presents a good opportunity for members to sell work in a popular gallery in the well known creative Pennine town. The last joint show, HEAT, produced substantial sales for exhibitors.

Entry details available in early January on www.waterstreetgallery.co.uk with the submission deadline of February 18.

If you find the online application too complicated you can apply by email with images attached.

All work must be for sale and will also feature in the gallery's online shop.

Sheffield Ceramics Festival at Kelham Island Museum

Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th April 2021.

When Kaktus and I started the Sheffield Ceramics Festival seven years ago although we hoped that it would be successful we did not know how it would develop, but develop we hoped it would. This was greatly aided by Ken Taylor joining Kaktus and I making short work of organising the site and with Steve Booton later on traffic control.

Our first six festivals were held in the beautiful walled garden at Meersbrook and would not have been possible without the help of hard working volunteers. After the forced break this year, it became time to re-assess the situation. We did not want to cancel the last festival but wanted to offer an event when Covid permitted. We chose Spring as a good time but this did not fit with the walled garden's calendar, so we looked for another site.

Well we have been successful and have found an excellent site without some of the difficulties of Meersbrook. The walled garden was weather dependent, had logistic problems regarding set up, and had little space for expansion. Numbers were always going to be limited so we could not always meet the demand for stall space.

Kelham Island Museum is accessible and close to the city centre in the vibrant district of Kelham Island. It offers a large indoor space which would solve all the above problems, So no need for gazebos. There is a large service lift up to the first floor where the event hall is, and also a long ramp (not as steep as the hill up to the garden) up to this space. There is a bar and cafe/restaurant with reasonable prices and good coffee, several toilets on the site and we will have AMPLE PARKING.

The museum itself is a gem of an industrial museum with working engines and a powerful rolling mill which is demonstrated at hourly intervals and is a must-see spectacle.

We have been offered the site on a recurring annual basis. Our first event will be a replacement for the cancelled September show so those accepted for that show do not need to re-apply for this one. In future years we will welcome new applicants as there is space to expand and increase exhibitor numbers, as well as a large room for demonstrations.



This time, due to Covid restrictions, exhibitors will be well spaced limiting exhibitor numbers to 40 but in future when these restrictions are lifted, we will be able to host many more potters.

This development is really exciting and with all the facilities on site a promising future for us.

Brian Holland, Ken Taylor, Michelle Holland

Throwing hollow forms demonstrated by Sue Clark

Last year I decided to see what would happen if I threw a closed form within a closed form (aka hollow pot). My first two attempts failed, but I was able to alter the forms created decorative pots with the centre section opened out and the outer part bowl-shaped.

Finally I threw my first hollow form and decided it would have to be turned as thrown, with the top as the base. When I turned it over I had to cut through the "top" to reveal the bowl of the inner form.

The next time I threw one I went down to the wheel head on the inner form so that I wouldn't have to cut through the clay when turning. About a week later the NPA magazine arrived and I was astounded that a Danish potter was making huge pots using this technique!

I'm not sure where this is going for me as I'm still playing with the technique, but I do like pushing boundaries as far as I can when throwing, so there's a lot to try yet. I'm now turning rings on the tops of the pots to give them some decoration. I find that decorating these pots with coloured slips or painted-on earthenware glazes works very well to get good clean lines around the top of the bowl.

I've really enjoyed the NW NPA Zoom sessions, both watching and taking part. It was a lot easier than I would have imagined and I hope other potters will volunteer to take part and show their skills to the pottery community in these very strange times. It'll be wonderful to see what people are working on.

Editor's notes:

This is the second Zoom demonstration organised by Kathryn Stevens in NW region. Jack Hardie recorded it and an edited version was posted on the NPA Facebook page on 18 October 2020. It lasts about 15 minutes and is well worth a look.

The Danish potter who Sue refers to is Thomas Bohle. The article she refers to was included in the October/November 2019 NPA News which is in the archive section of northern-potters.co.uk

There is also a book available on Bohle's work published by Arnoldsche at £45.50.



"My first ever attempt. The middle section is too big so there was insufficient clay in the outer section to close it up. I soon learnt to get where I wanted to go."



During the demo, Sue threw the pot on the right and turned the one on the left, adding two holes for the trapped air to escape. The finished tea light holders are 9cm and 7cm tall.

Advanced glazes here we come! Diane Nicholson

Earlier this month I applied for an NPA bursary.

I've just completed an online glaze course from Ceramic Materials Workshop and found it really interesting and useful. The advanced course is starting soon and I was struggling to figure out if I could afford another \$500 to continue my studies.



Then I remembered the bursary is there to help people advance their knowledge in situations similar to mine so I thought why not apply? I thought about how I could repay the favour if I was awarded the bursary and decided to run a reduced price basic glaze making class for cone 6 temperatures for NPA members when the advanced course finishes early next year.

I emailed treasurer@northern-potters.co.uk and Emmeline emailed me the form which I filled in and returned. It was a super easy process and I heard back in a couple of weeks with the decision.

Being successful, the money is paid straight into your bank account which was really handy as I needed to get signed up as soon as possible.



The Bursary Scheme has been developed to support members to develop aspects of their ceramic work, and the funds can be used for items such as training courses, workshops, networking or otherwise exploring new directions.

If this applies to you I'd highly recommend applying. You need to be able to provide an article about your experience for the magazine and I'm even considering writing one for a national clay magazine which has previously printed articles of mine. This will help promote the course, the NPA and Muddy Fingers Pottery.

Thanks NPA, I'm looking forward to sharing my experience with you all!



Re-making the Prunay Vase – Christina Unwin

Christina Unwin is a graphic and exhibition designer and illustrator based in County Durham, and is currently working on a post graduate degree. Having originally graduated in archaeology, she is writing her Research MA thesis on a design approach for the archaeological study of made things. This includes how material objects are thought of, planned, made and used and how the creative practitioners worked through the design process.

How Iron Age people would have planned and made their designs according to what was required by their communities is a central theme to this research. An important part of Christina's research is conversations with contemporary designers and makers working in the same media as those in which her case study artefacts were made. One of these is a painted ceramic vessel from France, known as the 'Prunay Vase'.

Gerry Grant from Fangfoss Pottery in York undertook the task of remaking the pot so that Christina could explore how it was formed, painted and fired. This revealed an alternative suggestion to the published conclusions.

The Prunay Vase, a pedestal pot, is on permanent display in the British Museum. It was made on the wheel by a potter living in the Iron Age in northeast France around 400 BC and was recovered during an excavation in the late nineteenth century. There is a degree of pattern and wear on the original pot especially around the rim and the column of the pedestal. It has been suggested that these are the parts of the pot that would have been worn away with use, perhaps as a vessel used in ceremonial feasting, as part of a funeral rite and then eventually placed in a grave with the deceased. This was a common practice in Iron Age burials.

It was cleaned and restored in 1980 which presented the opportunity for detailed visual and computational analysis of its fabric and construction. The published analysis suggested that the red and black spiral decoration had been achieved by a two-stage firing in oxidising conditions, but Gerry's remaking has suggested otherwise.

The clay used would have been alluvial clay, with small stones and plant fragments being removed first and then allowing it to settle, in much the same way as it is prepared today. Section analysis has shown that the potter prepared the clay for the Prunay vase by adding a temper of 30% quartz sand to 70% of the red-brown clay.

Gerry suggested that the Prunay vase was thrown in two stages – the main body and the hollow pedestal base, conjoined and allowed to dry a little. When remaking the pot, Gerry found the most challenging part was planning how the curving pattern was applied over the convex body surface. The Iron Age potter would have had a clear mental image of this complex surface design combined with long-practiced expertise to paint it around the curving surface of the pot.

The surface of the Prunay pot was applied with a sequence of layering techniques. A thick red slip of red haematite ore was applied with a brush to the lip, neck and body of the pot. The surface was burnished (polished) to a smooth and even surface – giving it a gloss. The Prunay pot had three



Making the body of the pot



Putting on the base



Painting on the slip



Working out a design



Final painting



The finished piece

other areas of black pattern integrated into its design – a Greek type ‘key pattern’ around the rim, the curvilinear pattern around the middle, and an undulating line above the pedestal. The painter of the original pot probably marked out, perhaps with charcoal, the salient points of the pattern before outlining the shapes to achieve a continuous pattern around the surface of the pot.

It has previously been suggested that the two-colour design could have been achieved by a two-stage firing process using an application of wax resist. After the initial firing of the red slip, it has been thought that a wax resist was applied to the parts intended to stay red, and a dark mixture of powdered carbonized organic material applied around the pot from the neck to the foot. A second firing would have melted the wax, removing the dark areas from the red slip – leaving the others as black. On making the replica pot, Gerry commented that preserving the red parts of the pattern with a wax resist would not have resulted in the sharply defined black shapes of the pattern of the Prunay Pot, as the wax would have melted at too low a temperature to have an effect. He also pointed out that a narrow unpainted band around the lower body, revealing the fabric of the pot, has remained unchanged in colour, confirming that the pot was fired in oxidising conditions.

Gerry painted the red slip onto the pot, fired it, and then painted the black patterns on using a mixture of iron oxide and manganese. He then fired it again to 1100°C, which fixed the oxides onto the pot.

It has also been suggested that the Prunay pot was fired in a clamp kiln – a shallow pit that was covered with combustible material – at around 800°C. Gerry commented that these firing conditions would have produced a lot of smoke which would have blackened the surface, whereas the fabric of the pot has remained buff coloured.

The Prunay Pot was probably fired in a kiln built with a circular ground-plan, with a stoke-hole, a grate supported in a central firing chamber, and a door for loading and unloading the pots. The superstructure of the kiln was constructed with clay bricks corbelled into a dome.

In the field of Iron Age design, creative practitioners provided their clients with the means that would enable them to express new social connections through such occasions as funerary feasts. The conspicuous consumption on display at these assemblies, furnished by coloured and patterned ceramics, reinforced the social bonds between the living community and the deceased, before the body was removed from their company and placed underground.

Gerry’s remaking of the pot buried at Prunay in the Iron Age was more than an experimental reconstruction of how it was made. This process has connected the potter who was commissioned to design and make this pot in the continuing story of its design.

Abridged from research in progress for Durham University MA thesis ‘Aspects of design in Iron Age and early Roman Europe’ by Christina Unwin BA, PGDipDMT, FSA’.

Setting up a home studio – Joan Hardie

After a request for advice on setting up a home studio and knowing how much we like to see each other's studios, here is a quick tour of ours.

First, the advice. See what space is available, inside and outside. Think through your making process and the space and facilities each step needs. Consult other household members. Agree how to match all these up. The Hardie household has some advantages as Jack and I work together to make pots, are both tidy people and are not excessively house-proud.

We don't have the space to build an outside studio. We thought about making the garage into a pottery but it is dark, cold, damp, draughty and houses bikes and gardening stuff we've nowhere else for. So our pottery activity has ended up distributed around the garage, small lean-to and the house.

We make our work using a home-made 3D clay printer. This is relatively clean in operation except for preparing the clay which is very messy indeed.

Raw clay and buckets of prepared clay are stored in the garage (1). At the back of the garage there is a dry section, which houses a pugmill that we use to wet down our clay to the consistency we need (2).

For the really messy stuff, we fitted out a 5ft by 6ft lean-to shed as a tiny pottery, with a water supply, sink, clay trap, cupboards for stains and glazes and working surfaces. Here we mix body stains into the wet clay, knead it by hand on a wet plaster batt and then force it into plastic tubes for the clay extruder. Any glazing is also done here (3).

Pots are made in the house. Our original 3D printer is in Jack's workshop (4), together with our damp cupboard made from a cheap plastic box standing on its end. (5). Pots dry on the windowsill.

The second, larger printer lives in the dining room (6)! This is not ideal, but guests don't seem to mind and we usually eat in the kitchen.

Our two propane gas kilns are in the back of the garage with the pugmill (7). One is a front loader for pots up to 30cm high, and the second a top loader for anything taller. Finished work is stored in plastic boxes on shelves in the garage (8).

We take photographs of all our work and found a good spot for this on the windowsill of the guest bedroom where the natural light is just right. We place the pots on a board and suspend A1-sized card as background (9 & 10).

Finally we sell most of our work at shows, so we store our stand and display materials in the loft. Perhaps it's a studio home.



Sea Urchin Lamps – Anna Brown



Porcelain forms with holes for light give a warm, attractive, and enchanting effect.

I made a 3-part Plaster of Paris mould using a real, dried, empty sea urchin, then made a hole in the top to pour liquid porcelain in. The slip was poured out after 10 minutes. I used a sharp needle tool to make holes along the line where the prickle scars are.

After biscuit firing, I applied oxides and a clear transparent glaze. The lamp was finished with an inexpensive LED candle in the bottom.

The three cabbage leaf soap bowls were made with a similar plaster of Paris type mould, using a fresh cabbage leaf. I put a glass marble in the bottom of one bowl, along with a translucent glaze.

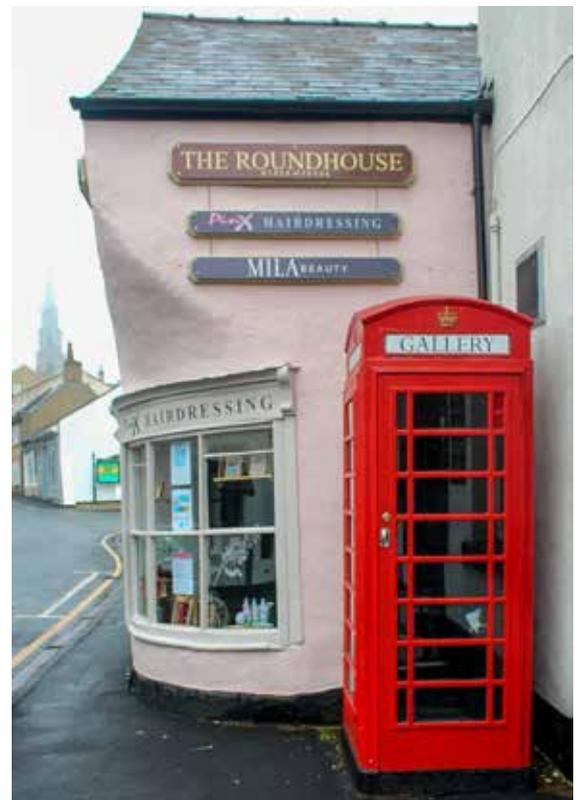
Mother of Hope – Drew Caines

I recently completed a small public art commission called 'The Mother of Hope' (see p 15) for the RedBox Gallery in Horbury, near Wakefield. The RedBox Gallery is an old red BT telephone box that has been converted into a mini-gallery with a rolling program of exhibitions.

'The Mother of Hope' is a gentle response to the current Covid catastrophe. Life is hard for everyone at the moment and we have all endured desperate times. So when the opportunity to make a commission for the RedBox Gallery came up, rather than reflecting on these dark days, I wanted to make something positive which might lift spirits. So was born "The Mother of Hope".

Her body is made up of words made from old letterpress type pressed into sheets of clay. At her base are words like separation, grief and isolation and as you move up they become more positive until the word 'hope' predominates. She is moving forward and from her body are bursting forth new shoots and leaves symbolic of change and the promise of better days ahead. On her breast is a butterfly, another symbol of change and rebirth. No matter how bad things are there is always hope for a better future.

It is somehow fitting that she took up residence, locked down in the RedBox Gallery, just as we ourselves entered a new national lock-down.



The Great Pottery Lockdown – Shaun Clark

Does anyone else suffer from last minute essay syndrome? It's where you know you should be doing one job but defer it to another. Whilst I was at University studying ceramics many years ago we would have to submit a thesis once a term.

Art versus craft, Japanese ceramics, tri-axial glaze tests (yawn), it could be anything as long as it was relevant to the subject we chose to both love and hopefully practise. On the evening of the deadline me and my flat mates would suddenly decide the house needed a good clean, or we fancied bowling and going to the George for a quick bevvie.

I feel like I have been like this in lock-down. I should have done so much work but the garden beckoned, as did the nearby woods with my son and our bikes.

Last year I turned a 12 foot open gap at the back of my workshop into a little clay store with a perspex roof and put my kick wheel in it. My son calls it "the thrown room"! It keeps a lot of the general mud and dust away from the kiln in the workshop and is perfect for storing clay, buckets and my bike.

As most of my work is slip cast or slab formed, I decided I would push my throwing technique during the time at home in my little den, but oh dear, essay syndrome kicked back in and a little, but not a lot, of throwing was achieved.

I trained as an industrial potter working with plaster. I can sledge you any shape, a bowl or a mug, in plaster of Paris, then block and case it. But I couldn't realistically throw it.

Now the prospect of second lock-down has made me re-assess my time. You need to be very disciplined to make pottery when you want to live off the proceeds but without compromising creativity. So I'm still slip casting but I have the luxury of keeping the mess out of the workshop and, in the thrown room, sharing the space with half a ton of clay, dirty buckets, all my packaging, onions, some home brew and my bike. But I'm not going to stress about throwing.

Don't get feeling too guilty for inactivity, sometimes we all need it.

www.whiskerhillspottery.co.uk



Shaun Clark, Big Blue Octopus, terracotta earthenware with blue slip and black oxide decoration fired to 1100°C.

Covid 19 and Potfest in the Pens – Graham Hough

Well despite the designation of most of the North West as Tier 3, the imminent national lock-down, the awful weather and discovering at the last moment that part of the Auction Market was still operating, Potfest in the Pens happened and was a great success.

I do not know how Matt Cox and his team survived the trauma but they designed a show that was safe to visit and sell work, and there was food!

I have to admit that whilst setting up our stall during a rainstorm on Thursday night I was not optimistic about the success of the show, with the new layout significantly reducing the numbers of stalls and their separation from each other. But as the livestock market was still operating we were all moved up into the newer, brighter end of the market, albeit on a slope. Pat and I were happy to be in the new section but we did notice that those who had stalls in the lower areas were mostly in the dark and damp.

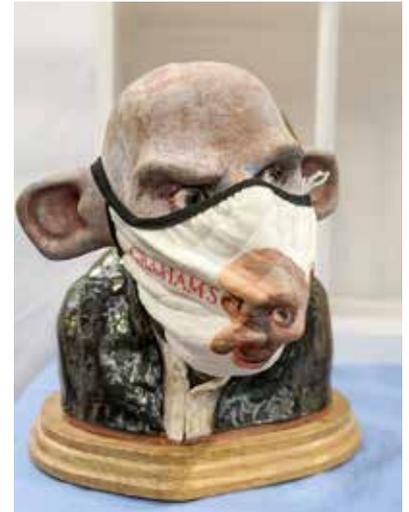
The show opened on Friday and after a slow start the public poured in and fears of a poor show evaporated. Despite the absence of the band, Potfest was its usual bright, vibrant self, full of happy pottery lovers joyfully indulging in our obsession for clay. As at Potfest in the Park earlier in the year, it was noticeable that many of us were starved of such shows and overjoyed to be able to talk about pots. Saturday was a lot busier and Sunday had fewer visitors but was still an interesting day.

This year Pat and I made a feature of our 'Bargain Box'. In previous years we had seen the British obsession for bargains. Work that had been on our stall last year and we were tired of, sold out of the bargain box. We did consider making our whole stall bargains only but perhaps that is going too far.

Sadly our 'Confessional Chair' could not be accommodated but otherwise we returned home, through another wild night, tired but happy.

The COVID layout gave visitors more space to circulate around the show and I understand that this has stimulated Matt and his team to consider new ideas for future shows. So although we are still going through this terrible pandemic, the future holds some exciting prospects. Lets run into our sheds, kitchens or workshops and get making for the next Potfest.

Keep safe and keep potting.



Members' Gallery

All NPA members are invited to send images of their work to the editor for inclusion in the gallery.



Jane Timshle, 'Myself', white and black stoneware sculpting clay fired 1260°C, glazes vellum and Lava. Base 54 x 35cm, height 173cm



Lesley Nason, 12cm, slab built porcelain vase with hand inscribed detail, finished with oxide and crackle glaze, fired in electric kiln to 1240°C



Terry Nason, thrown stoneware with layered glazes, electric fired



Ruth Charlton, 'Is it safe to come out yet?', porcelain with oxides and underglaze colours, 10 cm high



Stuart Broadhurst



Shirley Hetherington



Drew Caines, 'The Mother of Hope', black stoneware clay washed with cobalt oxide and fired to 1160°C. (see article p11)

When sending images for the Gallery, please provide a print quality jpg file of about 1MB or more, sent as an email attachment.

It is helpful to readers if you give short details about the piece including its title, size, material and key firing information. Email to npanews@northern-potters.co.uk

Profile – Kathryn Stevens

Hello all. My name is Kathryn Stevens and I'm the Regional Coordinator for the North West and recently a new NPA Committee Member. Like many, I first started playing with clay at an evening class, back in the late 80s early 90s, I just couldn't wait for Tuesdays to come round each week so that I could jump onto the wheel and get caked up in mud. Mandy our tutor had the patience of a saint and I learnt a great deal from her. She taught me how to slip cast, hand-build and different exciting decorating techniques but I was happiest when it was my turn to go on the wheel. I think at one point we only had one or two throwing wheels to share amongst all the students so the time was short but precious. At that time I preferred the wheel as there were only so many cabbage leaf bowls one could make before it got embarrassing.

As well as using commercial earthenware clay, over a couple of weeks each year Mandy would bring into class some 'Askam Grogg' from the local brickworks. In its raw state it is black, very rough and coarse but once fired turns into a pale terracotta shade. We used it to make solid outdoor sculptures but it would take months before they got fired as you didn't hollow them out –one of many unusual qualities of this particular material. I spent at least 15 years going to Mandy's evening class until one day the class got cancelled and never resumed. If I remember rightly, it was a small matter of a faulty temperature gauge on the kiln which initially started the fire in the recently opened college building into which we had transferred a few years earlier. Not sure what temperature was finally reached but part of the metal kiln had melted and had to be opened up using a saw and crowbar so I guess it got quite toasty! Luckily it happen at a weekend when nobody was in the building and to this day, ceramics is no longer undertaken on the premises.

After about 10 years on the wheel I got bored and disillusioned so moved to hand-building instead. I also became interested in stoneware clay because I felt it gave a nicer finish and the glazes used were more earthy, subdued and unusual. When my local evening class stopped I travelled to Kendal to do classes at the Brewery Arts Centre, which I have been attending until recently under the tutelage of Chris Barnes, a fellow NPA member.



After working in the NHS for 30 years, a couple of years ago I decided to leave so that I could project manage the renovation of my new home and set myself up as a self-employed artist. I foolishly also decided to start studying for my MA Ceramics degree at UCLAN in Preston, hoping that the renovations would be completed before I began my studies. One year into my studies I still haven't moved in, but there is light at the end of the tunnel, fingers and toes crossed. The stress of doing these two big projects at the same time has been a challenge and many tears have been shed, but I have to say my previous career has helped prepare me for it. Although I had worked in public services since leaving college, leaving was the best decision I have made as it has opened up a lot of exciting opportunities.

It has allowed me to set up my own business, spend two years renovating a house, join a number of local art committees, become a NPA member and given me time to explore my creative practice. My MA studies are taking my ceramic journey into new directions, into the field of public art and large outdoor sculpture. Because the concept of my work is informed by sense of place I am using locally sourced raw materials to form and glaze my work, including researching the properties of Askam Grogg, so in some ways I feel I've come full circle. This autumn I will be entering another path along my journey, one which I am particularly passionate about and that is inspiring our future generation. I have been approached to teach ceramics to foundation degree art students which I am very excited about but also terrified. I don't think that they nor I know what we have let ourselves in for!

By Christmas this year I hope to have moved into my new home and when I do I'll be able to admire with pride the 300 ceramic tiles I made for my kitchen, use my octopus (yes I did just say octopus) bathroom sink that I was petrified to put in the kiln in case it cracked, and eat from my handmade rustic dinner service (there is a reason why I'm not a functional potter!). And that's why I love clay, it's such a versatile material, often doesn't behave as we expect and no matter how long we have been playing with clay there is always something new to learn, either from the clay itself or from a fellow potter.



Books – Roger Bell

Review

Salt Glazing, Phil Rogers



Published by Bloomsbury at £30.00

Practical books on Salt (and Soda) Glazing are few and far between. As far as I am aware there have been just 5 in the last 50 years – Gail Nichols (2006), Rosemary Cochrane (2002), Ruthanne Tudball (1995), Jack Troy (1977) and Phil Rogers. This is a reprinting of Phil's book first published in 2002 under the A & C Black imprint, and still up to date. All the others are out of print.

The chapter titles tell you what you need to consider when salt glazing, including items which are less important or almost irrelevant with some other firing methods. As Rogers says in the introduction "There are few rules, only one or two fundamental principles. Extract what you want from the information contained in these pages and use it to make your own way."

The 'Introduction' gives an account of the history of the use of salt glazing worldwide. 'Clay Bodies' then gets down to some fundamentals such as the need for a body that will go to a sufficient temperature for the salt to melt, and the balance between silica and alumina to achieve the surface required (orange peel, bright shiny or even matt with little glaze formed).

New Books

Ceramics of Iran	Oliver Watson	£50.00
Hand Building	Thomas Arroyo	£15.51
Practical Pottery	Jon Short	£23.95
Salt Glazing	Phil Rogers	£30.00
Special Effect Glazes	Linda Bloomfield	£20.00

Subsequent chapters cover Slips & Glazes, Decoration, Salt Kilns, Stacking Kilns & Firing and follow the same format of explaining the fundamentals with specific relevancies to salt glazing pointed out. The scientific and technical basis is always clearly explained.

The chapter on 'Environmental Concerns' is interesting and some may find contentious. The overall effect from individual potters is trivial compared to the major salt glazing plants in the past. Rogers argues that the change from salt to soda which many thought less damaging is probably incorrect. Perhaps of more interest is the fact that they give alternative finishes. I am sure more up to date scientific information is now available.

There follow 25 profiles of salt and soda glaze potters including Hamlyn, Keeler and Tudball from the UK, the Borjesons from Denmark, Mansfield from Australia, Oestreich from USA etc. Each has background information and relevant details of clays used, kiln design, firing schedules and the like. They give specific 'faces' to the facts given in previous chapters.

The whole book is copiously illustrated with excellent photos of kilns and work. Appendices include firing logs, recipes, materials analyses, suppliers etc. It should have all you need to get making and firing.

I would recommend keeping booksellers going by visiting your nearest when you can and viewing it, but you can also get 'Salt Glazing' by visiting the Bloomsbury website. I have just discovered that downloads are now available for many books including this.

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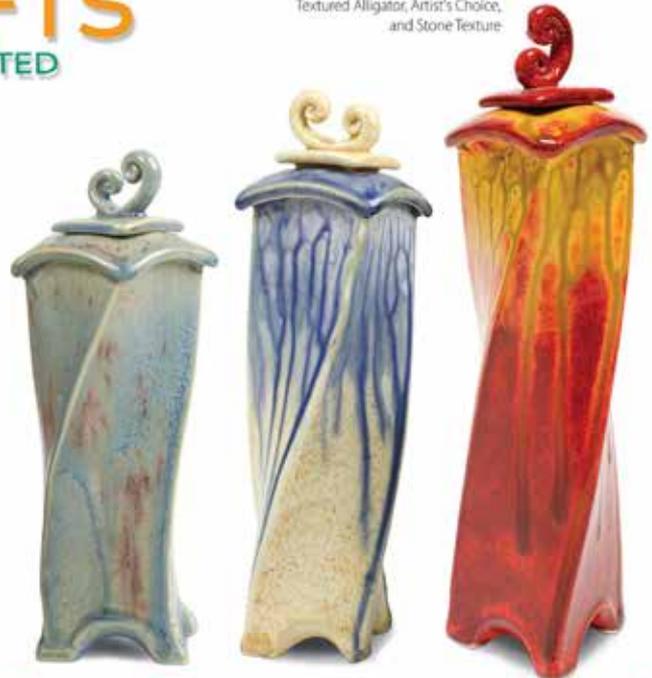
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Welcome to new members

A warm welcome is extended to all our new members.

We look forward to seeing you at events and images of your work in our gallery.

Sarah Cassels	Sheffield
Helen Fleming	Middleton, Manchester
Kate Akkrill	York
Stella Boothman	Nelson, Lancashire
Elizabeth Barton	Bridlington, East Yorks
Heather Niven	Malton, North Yorks
Jeni Jacques-Williams	Warrington, Cheshire
Jennifer Bulman	Carlisle, Cumbria



Ann Davis
Membership Secretary

Visit northern-potters.co.uk
for membership forms
and subscription rates.

Small ads

Wanted – Lotus wheel-head

Has anyone a Lotus wheel-head for sale with a 3/4 inch B.S.W. thread (with sound thread) for a 1969 Shelton wheel.

Please contact John Hudson tel 01924492507 or potandclay@btinternet.com

'Paperclay' by Sanger & Silva

I have 20 or so new English copies of 'Paperclay – The perfect union' by Sanger & Sliva for sale at £5 each, incl. p&p. Any profits will be donated to Clay College Stoke.

Please contact Roger Bell on 015394 32730 or bell.roger@btinternet.com

Advertising in NPA News

Per issue prices

Small ads (30 words) Free to members

Boxed adverts

colour	1/2 pp £30	1/4 pp £18	1/8 pp £10
B&W	1/2 pp £20	1/4 pp £15	1/8 pp £8
Size	176Wx106H	86Wx106H	86Wx53H

NPA Bursary Scheme

The NPA is now offering up to four bursaries of £250 to any member who would like to develop their work by attending courses, workshops or otherwise exploring new directions.

All you need to do is get an application form from treasurer@northern-potters.co.uk and complete it, outlining how and when the money will be used to benefit your practice. The committee will consider your application and let you know if you have been successful.

The final step is to write a short illustrated article about your experience for NPA News.

Equality & Diversity Statement

The NPA is an inclusive, not-for-profit organisation run by volunteers which welcomes and values diversity (of age, ethnicity, race, religion, disability, belief or non-belief, sex or sexual orientation) within its membership. Our aim is to ensure that all our members are treated with dignity and respect.

Highlights of the 2020 AGM

The AGM was held on Zoom on Sunday, 15th November, attended by many committee members and regional reps, totalling 16 participants.

John Cooke, as Chair, reported as follows:

Thanks to Ken Taylor and Sue Kaskiewicz, for their time on the committee, and to Emmeline Butler who is stepping down as treasurer. New members have been recruited and elected as follows: Pamela Thorby (as vicechair), Gerry Grant, Lyn Grant, Kathryn Stevens, Carol Newmarch, and Michelle Park (as treasurer designate). The appointment of Steve Wood as the NPA Auditor was approved.

The planned NPA exhibitions and promotional stands at Earth and Fire and Potfest in the Pens were cancelled. We hope all will return next year.

John's report reminded members that the committee has acted on the following:

- A cost effective Public Liability/Professional Indemnity Insurance Policy covering members undertaking official NPA business. Members representing the NPA must check before assuming they have insurance cover.
- Software to manage and cloud-store the membership details.
- 12 NPA banners, 2 for each region, to be used at exhibitions and events to promote the NPA.
- The Equality Statement in NPA News was approved for inclusion in the constitution.
- Payment for annual subscriptions is by standing order only, the constitution has been amended to reflect this.
- The future investigation of an Online Membership Application Form.
- The expansion of the NPA social media presence, both within and across the regions.
- The ongoing encouragement members to volunteer at committee or regional level. The need to find a volunteer to help or take over the production of the newsletter is of particular importance.

In the Regions:

- Additional volunteers are helping organise the NE and a small working group in Lincolnshire will allow members of the SE group to feel more involved.
- All regions were encouraged to use the £200 Regional Grant in 2021.
- Geoff Wilcock was thanked for his many years of service to the West group.

The Website:

- The relaunched WordPress site gives greater security and allows us to edit the content. The conversion exceeded the planned costs by £540.
- Jack Hardie generously volunteered to be the Administrator for the website.
- Only 25% of members have a page in the Artists Gallery. John encouraged all members to promote their work on the site.

The Bursary Scheme:

So far there have been four applications, which were all approved. The scheme was formally adopted and will run from one AGM to the next. It was agreed to increase individual bursaries to £250 and allow four annually.

At last year's AGM it was proposed that the NPA undertake a survey of members. The subsequent questionnaire achieved a response from 60% of the membership and included much useful information. Action has already been taken from the results and more will follow next year.

The NPA maintains a £10,000 minimum balance in the bank. The reasoning for this amount was queried and it was agreed that this would be reviewed by the Committee.

Next year's AGM will be held at Potfest in the Pens. This will continue on a biennial basis, with other locations being sought for the intervening years.

Sally Streuli, Committee Secretary



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Regional News

Regional groups were set up to help members communicate with others locally and to arrange events in their area.

It's coming up to the end of my first year as regional coordinator and I am enjoying the role greatly. It has been made easier with the help of members volunteering to help put bids together, writing articles for the newsletter, sharing their skills in demos, suggesting exhibition venues, taking part in zoom meetings, and sharing their knowledge and experiences for the benefit of others.

Our Instagram page is busy and is attracting new followers each week. This has only been possible with your input of content – don't forget to include #npanw in your posts. This year many exhibitions and selling events have been cancelled, so I'm hoping things will improve in 2021.

In late November we hosted the #7DayPotteryChallenge on Instagram and invited all NPA regions to take part to showcase members' work in the run up to Christmas. Thanks to everyone who took up the challenge. In December our Zoom meeting will be a fun activity which, as I write, members are still voting for on Facebook!! Zoom meetings will continue into next year so keep a lookout for email and Facebook notifications. Sue Clark gave a superb demonstration in October. In January she will be showing us some "advanced closed-form techniques" allowing time for you to practice the skills she showed us earlier! We are trying to schedule a few more demos for next year. If you have any suggestions for future meetings just let me know. I'd like to wish everyone a lovely Christmas and a happy New Year but most of all hope everyone stays safe and well. Roll on 2021!

[Kathryn Stevens](#) northernpottersnw@gmail.com  [Northern Potters Association North West](#)



NW

We had a useful and fun regional coordinators zoom meeting a few weeks ago. It was great to meet everyone and reassuring that we're all in similar situations. Thankfully there are still plenty of inspiring online exhibitions and live streams of making and kiln openings to keep our spirits up. Potfest In The Pens just squeezed in with many members exhibiting or visiting. Hopefully 2021 will see our exhibitions at the Arteria Gallery, Garstang Art Centre and The Heritage Centre at Lytham.



W

Artists Union England launched 'The Good Practice Charter for Artists' which may be helpful especially regarding commissions and participatory work. www.artistsunionengland.org.uk

Ceramic ArtLab at UCLan is still closed but a few of us were able to collect fired work. We're hopeful that we'll be back in the studio early next year. Our WhatsApp group keeps us motivated as well as being a very useful way of keeping up to date, sharing images and information.

If anyone is interested in a zoom meeting or setting up a NPAwest Instagram page, please get in touch and I'll do my best to arrange it. Finally, don't forget our Facebook group. Happy making!

[Kim Graham](#) west@northern-potters.co.uk  [Northern Potters Association West](#)

It was great to see so many of you join our first SW Zoom meeting last month. It really was a joyous, jovial couple of hours. Due to its success we are now planning another one for Saturday 5 December at 2pm. For those who can join us I will send out a link for the meeting and a second link to Sue Clark's recent video 'Hollow Forms' which she did for the NW NPA. Sue will be joining us for the Zoom and is happy to answer any questions about her method of throwing hollow forms.



SW

It's great to see how our members are adapting to the Covid restrictions and regulations. Matt Cox and his team did an amazing job ensuring that Potfest in the Pens was Covid compliant and went ahead. Similarly it is great to see SW NPA members popping up online in various galleries and exhibitions. A number of members have also opened their own online shops.

Don't forget that a great way for your work to be seen is through the Artists' Gallery on the NPA website. You can find details on how to do this on p 26. Wishing you all the best.

[Juliet Myers](#) email@sw-npa.co.uk  [Northern Potters Association South West](#)

Any member can ask to be included in any regional mailing list.
You must have given your consent to receive NPA emails.

Regional News

The NE committee have met in person and virtually, and held an online meeting to discuss developments with the whole region on 14 November. Thanks to those who attended. If anybody would like a copy of the video of the meeting please email for the link.



NE

We are making good progress with our plans for participatory events in both ends of our patch. We have already had more than twenty submissions for the 'Love Mud' exhibition in Darlington, in February (hence the love link). We are following this with an exhibition 'Form and Function', in March at Jarrow Hall. Applications will be opened for that in the next few weeks. Both exhibitions are open to all NPA members. Please contact me if you want to apply but have been unable to.

We have plans for handling sessions at various collections in the region, but these are on hold at the moment due to Covid. We hope to be able to put these on as soon as restrictions are lifted.

Diane from Muddy Fingers is making good use of the NPA bursary and is halfway through the advanced glazes course with @ceramicmaterialsworkshop She will run an online basic glaze workshop early next year, with a NPA member discount, to learn simple line blending and glaze testing techniques. Follow @muddyfingerspot on instagram to keep up with her progress.

Robert Campbell, Carol Newmarch, Diane Nicholson, Helen Pickard, Wendy Turner & Jaime Westwood
north-east@northern-potters.co.uk  Northern Potters Association North East



E

Although it has been a quiet few months, things have been happening. A number of people went to Potfest in the Pens and some of us joined our first Zoom AGM. Ali Bradley has been very inventive finding other outlets as shops that sell her work had to close. Drew Caines is in a Covid-themed exhibition in the Red Box Gallery in Horbury. Lots to talk about when we can meet up again.

A big thankyou to Kathryn Stephens in the NW who arranged to get all the regional coordinators together via Zoom and WhatsApp. This led to some NPA East members joining exhibitions in Darlington and the 7-day Pottery Challenge in the NW. Hopefully we will be able to offer reciprocal opportunities in the new year. Discussions have started on a NPA gallery exhibition on the East Coast in 2021 and gallery visits. Social events will be reorganised when restrictions are lifted.

Some emails are being bounced back so if you do not hear from us and have requested emails please check your spam folders or get in touch. Notifications for events tend to go out by email and do not always make the newsletter in time. We have a lot to catch up on in 2021 and look forward to meeting face to face again. Wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and great New Year.

Lyn Clarke & Kay Butterworth enpa.coordinator@gmail.com  Northern Potters Association East



SE

Even though we've had to cancel events and talks and haven't been able to meet face to face it's been quite a busy time in the South East. The Gallery6 exhibition opened on 3 November but unfortunately had to go online after just a few days. Melanie kindly offered to extend it until 5 December, so all being well it will be open for a few days after the current lock-down finishes.

We had high hopes for our pop-up Christmas shop in the Millenium Gardens but lock-down got us again and we had to cancel. We are confident that we will be able to hold the event next year.

It was lovely to meet with the other regional coordinators on Zoom thanks to Kathryn Stevens in the NW. We are busy planning two events. One will be a series of photography workshops with photographer Ian Daisley to take place over several days in the new year. The other is dependent on social gathering rules, but we are hoping to be able to meet outside in the weeks leading up to Christmas for our regular Christmas social. Details will follow.

Graham Northing & Wendy Wall senpacoordinator@outlook.com  Northern Potters Association South East

New entries in our Artists' Gallery



Martine Becquet



Anne James



Philip Magson



Wendy Turner



www.northern-potters.co.uk



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NPA Artists' Gallery

All NPA members can have a page on the NPA website to display and promote your work.

You will need to provide up to four photos of your work, an artist's statement of about 100 words, email address, phone number, plus any website, Facebook and Instagram links.

Contact John Cook with the details and any updates website@northern-potters.co.uk



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