

NPA Magazine



Focus:
Supplier
discounts
for NPA
members



Inspiration:
Goddesses,
bathing beauties,
mother earth -
creating the
female form in
clay

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

Quarterly
August 2025

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Stay connected!



@northernpottersassociation



Northern Potters

Front Cover: Deborah Robinson

NEXT ISSUE

The copy date for the next issue of NPA News is **Monday 6 October 2025.**

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 magazine@northern-potters.co.uk
Please email if you have any queries or need help.

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ADVERTISING

Per issue prices

Small ads (30 words) Free to members
Boxed adverts
1/2 pp £50 1/4 pp £30 1/8 pp £20
size 182Wx115H 88Wx115H 88Wx58H (mm)

20% discount on 4 or more consecutive insertions

Further discounts for members - please enquire

From the Chair

npachair@northern-potters.co.uk

Welcome to the Summer edition of the NPA magazine.

And what a lovely summer we are having! My garden is in full swing, and I am busy freezing, pickling and fermenting the fruits and vegetables. School is also out and of course there is always the tidying and deep cleaning of the studio to be done.



Which brings me to the other work that is keeping me busy over the summer months, mixing more glaze. In my little ceramic school, I stock about 50 different brush-on glazes, of which half are mixed up by me. I have some recipes from books, some from fellow potters and some from the internet. Many from one base, and a few I mix completely anew. With so many glazes, there is always room for error and, as you can imagine, the kiln has exposed them ruthlessly. Back in February, I applied for a NPA bursary, something I would encourage all of you to do if you are interested in learning a new skill or deepening your knowledge (all information about it is on our website). Using the bursary money, I have undertaken an online course in "Mastering Glaze Consistency" and ever since, I am wondering if the more I learn about glazes, the more I know what I don't know. Hmmm.

Nevertheless, I will tell you what I learned in our new "Potters Circle" zoom meet up that we will start on 11th September. Many of you have already contacted me (Thank you!) and we have decided to run it once a month, alternating on a Wednesday or Thursday evening. Our Zoom licence allows 100 attendees and we will see how it goes, if more of you would like to join, we are happy to extend it. The link for booking will go out from LoveAdmin in August directly into your inbox, so please watch out for it. Also, if all attendees agree, we will record it. As a little summary, here are the topics we have lined up so far: we will start with "Consistency in glaze making and common glaze faults", followed by "Marketing and Social Media", "Kilns, firings and maintenance" and finish this year with a "Christmas get together". I hope many of you will be able to zoom in.

In addition, I would also like to invite you to our annual Potters Camp and AGM on 12th October at the North Light Gallery in Huddersfield. More information as usual on social media, the website and via email.

Happy potting, glaze-making or holidaying ...

Nadine

Your Committee

Chair	Nadine Blakemore npachair@northern-potters.co.uk Ilkley
Vice Chair	Graham Northing vice-chair@northern-potters.co.uk Sheffield
Membership	Wendy Wall membership@northern-potters.co.uk Sheffield
E-Newsletter	Tony Ovenell e-newsletter@northern-potters.co.uk Bradford
Bursary Coordinator	Bev Seth bursaries@northern-potters.co.uk Sheffield
Gerry Grant	York
Lyn Grant	York
Carol Newmarch	Middlesbrough
Kathryn Stevens	Barrow in Furness

Support Roles & Pending Election

Magazine Editor	Chrissie Hunter magazine@northern-potters.co.uk Ilkley
Secretary	VACANT secretary@northern-potters.co.uk
Treasurer	Beverley Fallowfield treasurer@northern-potters.co.uk Wath-Upon-Dearne
Social Media	Dawn Philips @northern-potters.co.uk
Website Content	Ian Turner-Smithson website@northern-potters.co.uk Harrogate
Potters Camp Lead	Tiffany Prescott potters-camp@northern-potters.co.uk
Liz Carlisle	Askrigg

Equality & Diversity

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.

Round-up

Faith, Hope & Peril - Everything is Connected

Following our item in the May issue, NPA member Mo Schofield has taken on the challenge of creating a work in response to a painting in the Everything is Connected exhibition which will feature original works from the Methodist Modern Art Collection across five venues in Bradford. The venues will be linked by an Art Trail as part of Bradford's City of Culture celebrations 2025.

methodist.org.uk/faith/the-methodist-modern-art-collection/the-collection-on-tour
bradfordcathedral.org.uk/whats-on/bradford-2025



Places to Go & People to Know...

A series of personal links and coincidences prompted Mo to create a sculpture in response to one of the works in the collection - Jyoti Sahi's Dalit Madonna which will itself be on show at Bradford Cathedral.

A maquette of Mo's work will be displayed in the Methodist Church in Ben Rhydding which will show alongside ten pieces from the MMAC collection

as well as further responses from several well-known local artists and other creations resulting from school and community workshops.

The Art Trail runs from 5 September -12 October after which Mo's main work will go on show in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit in Bradford Cathedral during their Global Connections Season 20 October - 28 November.

Founding NPA member Alan Ball is celebrating his 90th birthday with a showcase exhibition at the Biscuit Factory, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The exhibition will feature larger scale ceramics alongside memorabilia and archive pieces from his career of 60yrs.

Alan worked and taught as a full-time self-employed potter at Washington Art Centre for 20yrs. He now works from his home studio making one-off naked raku pots, he is still producing and selling pots through various galleries.

[instagram/allanballceramics](https://www.instagram.com/allanballceramics)
northern-potters.co.uk/artists/ball-alan

Alan Ball: Master Potter runs from 25 July-7 September.

Get more information and free tickets for
The Biscuit Factory Summer Social on 25 July

thebiscuitfactorynewcastle.eventcube.io/events/87170/the-summer-social/



Ceramics A Green Approach
by Kevin Millward, 224pp,
New Ceramics Series,
Herbert Press £25, isbn
9781789941944

Due for publication in
paperback on 21 August
we hope to review this in
the November issue.



Catch this if you can!

Artists are asked to donate their empty bowls by 15 August to be sold at Chapel Allerton Festival in aid of Leeds Rainbow Junktion Cafe, Community Centre and Food Bank.

More information:
[instagram/empty_bowls_uk](https://www.instagram.com/empty_bowls_uk)



New Members

Welcome to all our new members.

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

Rachael Baverstock	NW
Matthew Bowen	SW
Laura Brownsteele	NE
Jack Burnett	SE
Ruth Burnham	SW
Hilary Cartmel	SE
Robert Farley	NW
Suzanne Foster	SE
Eve Gnoyke	SE
Laura Goldsack	NE
Richard Graves	NW
Rob Hall	SE
Angie Heal	NE
Jan Howard	NW
Dawn Hulme	NW
Fran Kelsall-Jenkins	NE
Leon Maughan	SE
John Mcalary	E
Gail McCusker	E
Rachel Mullan-Feroze	SE
Kate Nussey	SE
Lucy Ormsby	SE
Katy Philpot	NW
Lou Pickford	SW
Corinne Price	NW
Lisa Pritchard	SW
Haley Ramsdale	NE
Wendy Reed	NE
Erica Renzi	NW
June Richardson	NW
Louise Riley	NE
Abby Roebuck	SE
Jason Smith	NE
Helen Taylor	NE
Alison Wallis	NE
Barbara Wooding	NE
Haruna Yanashima	SE

(List may include members who have re-joined following temporary lapse in membership)



Chris Cox



Steve Kitchman

Five members have added their own Artist's Page to the NPA website. As well as the three shown here, Amanda Packham and Deborah Robinson are represented in our Goddesses feature and on the cover.



Debbie Michaels

NPA Potters Camp 2025



Places to Go & People to Know...



Jonathon Vanderheyden, aka The Jolly Potter, discovered ceramics after a bike accident left him with a spinal injury which affected his hand mobility. He found pottery helped his rehabilitation and hasn't looked back since. Originally from Leeds he now lives and works in south-west Scotland (when not attending 2CV meetings around the globe). He reached the seventh round of Series 8 of The Great Pottery Throwdown.

Jonathon will present "Falling into Clay - a Story of Recovery and New Horizons".



Master hand-builder, Jim Robison is an enthusiast who makes and promotes ceramics. He is an elected Fellow of the British Craft Potters Association, former Chair of the Northern Potters Association and Master of Ceremonies at the Aberystwyth International Ceramics Festival where he recently received the ICF 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award. He has written for many Ceramics publications and is author of skills handbooks on large-scale ceramics and slab techniques. Commissions include public murals and sculptures.

Jim will reflect upon 50 years as a maker and demonstrate some of the slabware techniques he has developed over the years.



Venue

The North Light Gallery
Brooke's Mill
Armitage Bridge
Huddersfield
HD4 7NR

northlightgallery.org.uk/

This is a well-equipped, wheelchair accessible venue with good transport connections and plentiful parking.

Stay connected!

 @northernpottersassociation

 Northern Potters

More information on our events pages
northern-potters.co.uk/events/npa-potters-camp-agm/

Non-Members' tickets:
£40 available on Eventbrite in
due course

A taster of Events and Workshops at PC25

Nerikomi
workshop
with NPA
Chair
Nadine
Blakemore



*Your chance to
network, connect
with fellow
members and your
committee, make
your views known
and above all be
inspired!*

Joe Small shows
how to create
ceramic screw
threads



- **Keynote Speakers** - Jim Robison & Jonathon Vanderheyden
- **Workshops & Demos** - include Nerikomi, ceramic screw threads, wheel throwing, sprigging and brush making
- **Membership Matters Desk** - with Wendy Wall - get help with your JoinIn account and subscriptions/renewals
- **The Joan Hardie Award** - judged by one of our guest speakers (theme tba). Please bring your item on the day
- **Potters' Choice Award** - all attendees may vote for their favourite entry in the Joan Hardie Award
- **Mug Swap** - bring a mug and swap it for another potter's creation
- **Waste Not Want Not** - materials and equipment swap - bring any unwanted items on the day
- **AGM** - this will be scheduled to take place between formal sessions and workshops - members only

Light refreshments - tea, coffee and biscuits - will be available. Please bring your own mug to drink from.

Bring a packed lunch.

**There is a cafe on-site but it is advisable to book a table in advance.
Contact Luke: 01484 408599
sonsofthenorth.co.uk**

**Members' tickets: on sale now
£20 via the 'Book an NPA event'
link on the NPA website**



Sprigging workshop
with Gerry Grant



Diary

* Denotes NPA event

- 16-17 August **Art in the Pen**, Auction Mart, Skipton
- until 23 August **Unearth - Mary Sewell Solo Exhibition**, The Art House, Carver St., Sheffield
- 24 August **Ceramics in Southwell**, Market Square, Southwell, Notts.
- 30-31 August **Empty Bowls Leeds**, Chapel Allerton Arts Festival, Leeds
- 6-7 September ***Art in the Gardens 2025**, Botanical Gardens, Sheffield
- 5-7 September **Craft Festival Wales**, Cardigan Castle, Cardigan, Wales
- 6-7 September **Wardlow Mires Pottery & Food Festival**, The Three Stags Heads, Wardlow, Derbyshire
- 6 September - 19 October **British Ceramics Biennial, including FRESH**, Stoke on Trent
- 13-14 September **Ceramics in the City**, Museum of the Home, London
- 4-5 October **Only Clay**, Kelham Island Museum, Sheffield
- 12 October ***NPA Potters Camp & AGM**, North Light Gallery, Armitage Bridge, Huddersfield
- 17-18 October **Potfest in the Pens**, Skirsgill Auction Mart, Penrith, Cumbria
- 20-21 September ***Art at the House**, Cliffe House, Head Lane, Shepley, Huddersfield
- 26 October ***Cromford Ceramics Fair**, Cromford Mills, Derbyshire
- 6 November- 1 December **NPA Group Exhibition**, Sculpture Gallery, Corn Exchange, Leeds, Closing date for entries 30 September **contact Drew Caines**
- 7-9 November **Potfest in the Pens**, Melton Mowbray Market, Leicestershire
- 6 December **TOASTED**, Long Eaton Art Room, Nottingham



Now in our 10th year,
we invite you to join us at
Ceramics In Southwell 2025.
Come along, talk to the potters
and treat yourself to one or two
unique treasures.

Tony Laverick

Cabby Luxford



Guy Routledge

Vicky Yates

Michelle Freemantle

Find full details
about the event
on the website



www.ceramicsinsouthwell.org.uk

This event
coincides with
the Southwell
Music Festival



www.southwellmusicfestival.com



Ceramics in Southwell has become one of the foremost one day ceramic fairs in the country, attracting exhibitors and visitors from far and wide. The quality of the ceramics at this show has always been extremely high - the final 35 potters this year selected from over 80 applications.

Alongside more established names will be new, up-and-coming potters maintaining the freshness and vitality of the show, and all to the backdrop of live music provided by fringe artists from Southwell Music Festival.

From the Editor

Earlier in the year I was contacted by Liz Hewett who sent me her bursary article and asked whether she and some fellow members could do a "take-over" of an issue of the magazine on the topic of Goddesses (and maybe sculpting the female form in general).

Well I wasn't going to say no to some ready-made copy!

Liz and NPA Bursaries Coordinator Bev Seth posted a call-out in the May magazine and several members got in touch - their contributions are included in this issue.

Despite the enthusiastic submission of copy and images, or because of it, there was still much work to do as I suggested amendments and tweaked and squeezed everything into place. So I didn't get off that lightly. Still, the process was highly enjoyable and I am open to any future "take-over" suggestions.

Take a look at what's coming up in future issues on page 19. In February we will go back to basics and focus on "form" and functional ceramics and while I ponder on the idea of "Quirky Creatures" for another issue, I will wait to hear from you with other ideas!

Chrissie

On Goddesses: Drew Caines

Divine Beings

For thousands of years the archetype of the "Goddess" has fascinated people around the world. The earliest known ceramic object is the "Venus of Dolni Vestonice" which is approximately 30,000 years old. We don't know who made it, whether they were an adult or a child, a man or a woman, whether it's a doll or a sacred object **but** we do know it had some meaning and it carries an emotional charge that resonates to this day. The main theme in my art is the relationship between people, other animals and the planet we share. The association of the Goddess with the natural world, especially in her guise as the Earth Mother, Pacha Mama and Mother of Beasts (among many other incarnations) means she is an obvious and powerful archetype for me to draw on in my work but I leave the interpretation open to each individual viewer. Her exact meaning may be elusive and changeable but her emotional power always remains.

drewmonkey@btinternet.com

[instagram/DREWCAINESCERAMICS](https://www.instagram.com/DREWCAINESCERAMICS)

Goddesses!

magazine@northern-potters.co.uk

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Prehistory, Goddesses & a nice hairdo



Obviously there is a very close link between archaeology and pottery. Pieces of ceramic are probably the most common find on most excavations and the analysis of pottery is a major backbone of historical study, giving the basis of the chronology of the early part, at least, of our history.

But that's a lot of pots! Cauldrons, cooking pots, beakers, bowls, storage jars, wine vessels and all the other unspecific bits of rim, handle and base. What about if we looked at what else pottery from the past provides us with?

I studied prehistory (i.e. everything before written history) as a young student, and have come to pottery later in my very early twilight years, but both are equally interesting. Prehistory, in particular, is a study with no particular solutions. Without the necessary time machine no-one can say for sure what motivations or uses were. Stonehenge - what's all that about? Why paint your own hands on cave walls? Why build

temples in Orkney? Theories we have in plenty, but you can't very often put your finger on the truth. But we can speculate, fantasise and copy as much as we want.

So apart from these endless pots, bits of pots and more pots, we can get our dose of mystery from looking at prehistoric sculpture. This is a very fascinating field, but a very wide one which I have narrowed down to prehistoric clay figurines. There is certainly an awful lot of information on this subject. Some of it, I feel, a reflection of its own time. (Have a look at Maria Gimbutas' 'The Goddesses and Gods of old Europe', if you're interested).

What's a Goddess? Only last year I bumped into a Goddess Convention in Glastonbury (where else?). Many ladies beautifully decked in purple and black were attending workshops on yoga, inner calm, personal enlightenment etc. - with a bit of a disturbing bonfire planned for later.

Goddess is a very trendy term nowadays and has been in the historical study of figurines. Anything female-shaped is assumed to be of ritual significance or for religious purposes, but we have very little idea of whether this is at all true.

Funded by a NPA Bursary Liz Hewett attended a Figurine Workshop with Mary Sewell. She sent us this article and set in motion a discussion about ceramic female figurines that resulted in the content of this issue of NPA Magazine.

Most of the scholars were male, if that makes a difference, and I can't help thinking the Venus of Willendorf was sarcastically named by an aged gentleman who didn't at all appreciate her excellent hairdo. We won't call our figurines Goddesses unless we are looking at a named Greek statue.

My first practical clay-based encounter with the figurine was following the excellent pattern from Claycraft magazine which made a simple yet effective female figure out of paperclay. Sometime after this I encountered the work of John Maltby (who I am a big fan of) and his figures which have such a mixture of old and new and strange in them - have a look at his work. Wouldn't you love to know what he was thinking? And then I came across the work of Mary Sewell, a contemporary potter, who is the



Figurines in progress by Liz and her fellow workshop attendees

master of the prehistoric-style figurine. And look! Mary runs a Figurine Workshop. I have a bursary from the Northern Potters Association to attend, so I'm off.

Mary is based in Portland Works in Sheffield which is a lovely old industrial building from the outside, but her studio on the top floor is a bit like the finds room of an excavation, or the store from the back of a museum. She has the perfect prehistoric vibe. There are paintings and drawings, ladies with fat bottoms, scorpion legs, wee goats, large pots and everything in muted colours just fresh from an excavation as well as a huge amount of background material. Amazing.

The course was over two sessions and four of us were initiated into the sacred rite – or, you may say, taught to make a figurine. Two of our number were completely new to pottery and the rest more experienced, but it didn't matter either way. The tuition was gentle and inspiring. We slabbed and cylindered, coiled and smoothed and eventually all produced a very pleasing piece of work. The conversation ranged over some quite intimate anatomical descriptions and admiration of a nice roll of belly fat. Where else would you get that appreciation? Figures were finished with slip decoration and oxides over the beautiful white clay.

So my new figurine joins in on the shelf with the rest of my collection. And here it is below, left to right:

NPA Bursary Scheme

The NPA offers bursaries to members needing support to develop their work by attending courses, workshops or otherwise exploring new directions. The maximum award is £250.

For more information and to apply, go to the **bursaries page of the NPA website**. Fill in the form, 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. Applicants must have been NPA members for at least one year.

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

1 My own figurine

2 Mysterious lady by Geoff Cox. Not quite a comfortable figure because of the face mask which covers expressions and features and perhaps reminds us of a recent unpleasant time. I love the textures on her clothes and the unusual headwear. I believe she is the lucky survivor from a boxload of her sisters which was dropped by Geoff.

3 Cheerful lady by Hilary Marsh.

This figure is a very happy soul with a positive aura and makes me smile. I love the black and white decoration and her very perky crown.

4 Fierce spirit by Mary Sewell. This one looks like a fighter, poised for action with a load of spells and magic at her hypothetical fingertips. Not one to annoy with too much dusting.

5 Small winged figure by Fiona Newby.

There is a vast number of such figures throughout the western world and they are almost certainly of ritual or religious significance. There is some documentary evidence to support their identification. (It's an angel. Beautifully polished and tactile, like all of Fiona's creations).

6 Three sisters by me. This is a wonky and lumpy sculpture following the Claycraft pattern which represents my lovely aunt and her big sisters, which I made on the day that she died. I'm not claiming that my mum and aunts were Goddesses but this is certainly my most precious piece of ceramic work in all of our over-stuffed house. And maybe that's how it all began..

auntyloopy@talktalk.net



On Goddesses: Mary Sewell



Making a living as a creative person is no easy task; As a woman perhaps it is a little harder, although I wouldn't like to assume a position for whatever gender you identify with, so this is from a personal perspective, as someone who identifies as a woman, I am a she/her. As an artist I have had to move about and allow myself to be a bit of a shape shifter - finding with each change of shape I have brought something from my last incarnation; physical, spiritual and existential, into my new form, bringing me a little closer to the genuine place I would like to inhabit and call home; My mantra is 'Just do it, trust whatever it is and keep going. Take up some space and let yourself be'.

It hasn't always been like this but for over 30 years I have been interested in making art, sometimes not knowing why or what it is I'm trying to achieve but knowing that I have a need to create. Over this time my practice has shifted and moved using different mediums from drawing to photography, performance and installation. Maybe my final shift is from painting to ceramics.

My mother made large red earthenware pots. They were big and round and sometimes I coiled small pots with her, watched her cutting out stencils and painting oxides onto smooth burnished surfaces. It was many moons later when I started making things using clay that I found in my allotment; hanging teardrop shapes made from wattle and daub and cloth soaked

in liquid clay sculpted into abstract shapes that lead me to find my own love of clay.

Earth Mother

I wanted to look at what the first hand built ceramics looked like. So I went right back to the beginning to see what people were doing in prehistoric times. I looked at neolithic ceramics to see if they may uncover anything about how people, then, may have thought or felt. It was at a time when the earth and agriculture took over from the hunter/gatherer and women became symbols of the earth. Many of the ceramics found during this period were small female figurines and Venus figures and they came from everywhere, all around the world. I find the uniqueness of these figures an inspiring source of creativity which continue to provide interest, passion and learning within my practice. I love that idea that



I use the same material people have been using for thousands of years sharing that same connection to the earth.

So I started making figurines of female figures, using forms and attributes from different cultures, fusing them together to find my own way. I've been particularly inspired by the postures of Jomon figures in Japan and the tattooed figures from Cucuteni culture in Eastern Europe, but there are many more to explore. During the process of making, my mantra comes into play which I find useful to remember at different stages - especially when the structure is in place and the figure is finding its sense of self. I want my figures to have their own power which I tend to find if they are well grounded and can stand up for themselves. This often comes from their large feet, strong posture and a face which has to communicate their spirit.

Mary runs hand-building workshops for small groups, combining slab-building with coiling and pinching to create neolithic inspired figures and pots inspired by the people of the past, or you can visit her open studio 11-4pm on the last Sunday of each month - contact her ahead to check.

Her solo exhibition, UnEarth, runs until 23rd August at The Art House, 45 Carver St, Sheffield, S1 4HJ.

me@marysewell.co.uk

marysewell.co.uk

[instagram/marysewell](https://www.instagram.com/marysewell)

Why Sculpt Goddesses?

To answer this question I wanted to know why we would even need Goddesses. After a little research I concluded that in the ancient world the role of Goddesses seemed to be mainly representational of birth, death and rebirth.

For me the sculpting of Goddesses is all about story and the power it has to represent difficult topics such as the ancient legend of the Irish Morrigan which deals with the sorrow and defeat that lead to regaining powerfulness.

The unforgiving crow. Why? Because for every wrong ever done, she sought retribution and revenge to make things just through her shapeshifting more famously into a crow.

From the less distant past I chose Frida Kahlo as a Goddess. Why? Because in the face of adversity she sought the power of art and creativity. A place where she could live out her reality and to show a different more feminised view of pain and passion as a way to rebirth.

Lastly, I nominate Greta Thunberg as

On Goddesses: Mo Schofield

a modern living Goddess of our time. Why? Because through her neurodiversity she saw the truth. A child's view is simple when it comes to wrongs. Greta has the ability to cut through the nonsense of the money making energy narratives and the vision to see a new world reality.

When it comes to the making of my figurines in clay it is extremely challenging to try and get a real likeness of someone who has lived. Creativity is more compromised and the challenge becomes hugely observational and meticulous. Hours of hard work and photo comparisons with an awareness of negative space, angles and distance. I think of it as a training exercise in body structure and facial characteristics. I often work with a solid form of the head - working from top down. Sometimes using armature but hollowing out once I've got the features feeling firm at greenware stage.

For the Morrigan Goddess I worked in small overlapping slabs working from the bottom up. I often surprise myself at similarities between facial features. Maybe I'm always giving my characters similar noses. I love the freedom of choice and creative energy it gives.



Creating a Goddess like the Morrigan is exciting in that you never know who you are going to get - I get to know her through my hands, whereas the likes of Frida and Greta I know with my own eyes.

mo.schofield2@yahoo.com

[facebook/Inner Mo Ceramics](https://www.facebook.com/InnerMoCeramics)

[instagram/inner_mo_ceramics](https://www.instagram.com/inner_mo_ceramics)





The Goddess in Every Woman

I first really looked at the female form whilst studying for my Foundation course at Huddersfield, then latterly my degree at Bretton Hall (now the Yorkshire Sculpture Park) repeatedly drawing a life model who was pregnant, I drew her flat tummy to fabulous, full belly, watching her back change to support the stresses and strains of the new life growing.

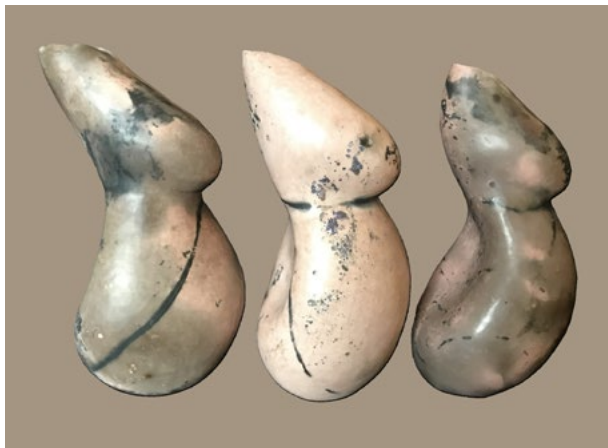
At the start of my final year at Bretton I was pregnant, but sadly I miscarried, this sent my world into turmoil. Already a mum to a four-year-old, I knew the potential transformation on my life was huge, but then nothing.....just emptiness. What I didn't expect was the total sense of loss, the shock, the loneliness of grief. My womb wasn't supporting the longed-for life; it was raw after the removal surgery.

My work in the final year, culminating in my degree show, was my very personal journey of motherhood, my expectation, elation, grief and the cycle of new life or not. I explored all my emotions during my short pregnancy. Sequencing the events in clay.

I graduated pregnant with my second son, no one knew at this time, I finally told them when I was 18 weeks pregnant. The female body is amazing, how it knows one pregnancy is viable and one simply is not.

My forms evolved into belly pots, I used a white clay for purity and my own glaze which I sprayed to maintain a

perfect surface and an even coating of glaze, I was searching for perfection. At this point I discovered you could buy ready made glazes, after spending hours, days, weeks developing my own glazes, logging them, photographing



the results, I felt robbed. Robbed of my time. I think this was when I started to look at other ways to create hues of colour. I no longer use any glazes, I do however make my own Terra Sigillata slips.

My practice evolved and I eventually came back to making belly pots, Mother Earths I now call them. They have been on a long journey, I used to add positive quotes; was this to aid my positivity? Looking back maybe. Then after watching The Great Pottery Throw Down and the amazing Christine's biography piece about her breast cancer journey, I decided to add the boobs or breasts - whatever you call them - to my pots. This has transformed my ladies. When I'm making, I now think about size and whether they balance the whole form.

As we grow and progress through life, we generate marks and scars which we have no control over. I use foil saggars to protect my ladies from the harsh smoke in the oil drum wood firing, allowing only the combustibles to burn and smoulder, marking the clay's surface. This alchemy of the fire and the marks they leave are akin to our marks and scars.

After attending last year's South-East NPA raku day, my love for raku is reignited. In November, with the help of my hubby, we built a raku kiln using an oil drum. It works brilliantly and I am hooked. Naked raku works for me, printing with combustibles on to the clay surface. With temperature changes in the raku firing I can now relate to the age of flushes.

We are all different and every Mother Earth I make is unique, a Goddess, as is every woman.

fiona@fionanewbyartist.com
fionanewbyartist.com
facebook/newbyfi
instagram/fionanewbyartist

Watch as Fiona demonstrates her raku firing process in this Meet the Maker video on YouTube

youtube.com@Xen_videos





On Goddesses: Deborah Robinson

I endeavour to convey the powerful emotions that swimming in cold water can produce, both euphoria and mindful calm, something that is particularly important to me in this time of negativity and chaos.

Bathing Belles

this also gives structural integrity to the torso. I can then push out the form from the inside and add clay as I am working.

I create the arms and legs by rolling a dowel inside a sausage of clay, leaving them hollow. Sticks can be handy for ensuring the limbs are straight.

The head is created as a thumb pot, and clay is added accordingly.

A mirror is one tool I find I use constantly as I work to check balance and perspective.

I recently signed up for a five-week, online figurative workshop with Sharon Griffin. This has been incredibly inspiring. Part of the course focused on different aspects of the face. Each week we would try to quickly produce several mouths, ears, eyes etc to get movement in our work, a great exercise!

Finally, I finish using oxides and under-glazes. I like to experiment with textures and to pick out detail, run cobalt and iron oxides into the marks.

tarnsideceramics@gmail.com

[instagram/tarnside_ceramics](https://www.instagram.com/tarnside_ceramics)

I create many forms both human and animal but am particularly drawn to swimmers.

I have been working on my body of female swimmers for several years but recently I have been inspired by a little known event called the Morecambe Bay Cross-bay Challenge. Although started in 1907, the ladies event ran from 1912 until 1991 when it was deemed too unsafe to continue.

With the help of small boats they raced from Grange-over-Sands to Morecambe, battling the tides, eddies and shifting sands of the estuary.

Method:

Ideas are gathered from old news reels and photographs.

I particularly love the costumes, head gear and goggles, so some have a vintage look while others are more contemporary.

I will draw them in various positions until I am happy with the pose and the emotion I am trying to convey.

I'm not a fan of hollowing out, so I begin larger figures on the wheel by throwing a cylinder for the body. I find

On Goddesses: Ruth Burnham

Trees of Life

In my studies for my MA in Ceramics at UCLAN, I have been creating work which is inspired by the curves of women's bodies, but I am not creating women as such. I do my research at life drawing sessions, where I draw with coloured pastels and also do quick sketches with clay. I take these images and use them as a resource when I work in clay. I use coiling, working up from two overlapping circular shapes. I had originally started out drawing trees and then noticed the resemblance in some of the trunks to elements of women's bodies, so, I use bark as inspiration for the surface texture of my pieces.

ruthburnham@posteo.uk

[instagram/ruthburnhamceramics](https://www.instagram.com/ruthburnhamceramics)



A Journey with Ceramic Goddesses

First inspirations

I find that the female Goddess form has appeared in my ceramics interpreted in different ways over the years - starting with a gymnastic form made experimentally from a single block of stoneware clay to, many years later, seaside bathing beauties in flowery bathing hats made using cardboard and plastic formers. The figures that inspired me, but interpreted in my own more organic, figurative way were some elegant Cycladic figures I saw in an Athens museum.

Making faces and using formers: Faces

I have always hand-built in the same way by creating a number of ceramic forms which I then add together to create the final work. The images show the progression I make to create the face.



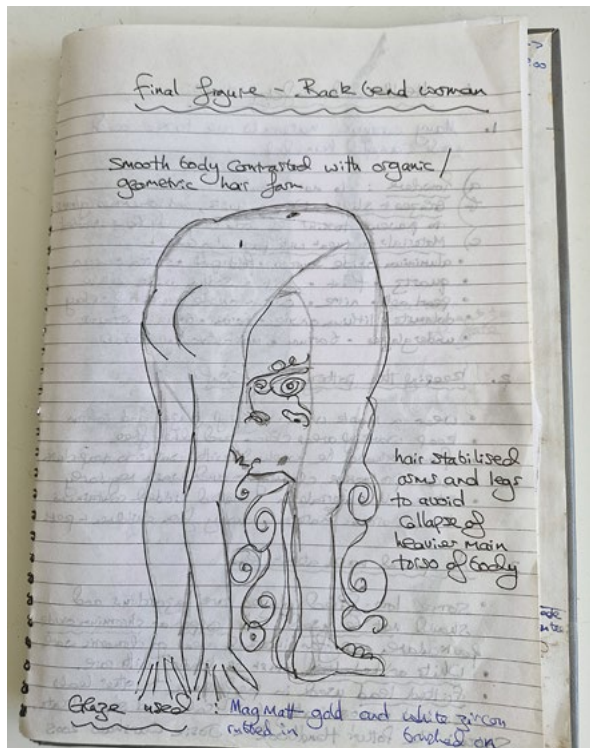
First, I impress clay into the egg-shaped plastic moulds, which have cling film pushed into them first to stop the clay adhering to the sides. Then, once the egg shape is leather-hard I start to make the features. I make an impression for the eyes and continue this line on either side of the head – try this, it really does



make the face look more realistic. I make a small egg shape of clay and halve it to make the two eyes. The eye lids can be made by either putting tiny pieces of clay over the eyes or by cutting into the eye shape already in place in the eye sockets. I then add a long triangle of clay to make the nose and another triangle to make the mouth and start to model these features.

Bodies

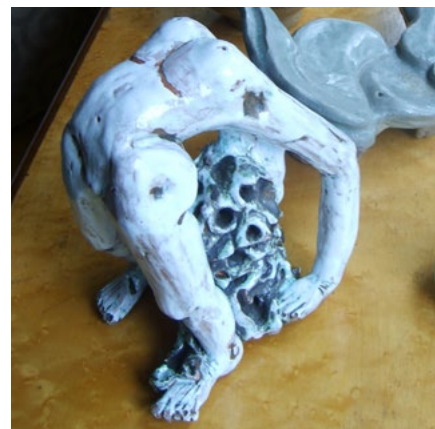
I make bodies by first wrapping newspaper around cardboard tubes – anything from kitchen rolls, toilet rolls or larger fabric rolls. This is to stop the clay sticking to the rolls and enables the tube to be slipped off easily prior to modelling. Once the clay is leather-hard I slip it off, joining the tops and bottoms of the clay tube together and then creating the body. I add shoulder blades, a belly, hips and chest. Unless I am making a very large piece that necessitates using large roll formers, I will make the arms and legs entirely by hand from one piece of clay. I make the feet and hands individually too and add them to the limbs once leather hard.



Gymnastic Goddesses, 2002

Inspired by some wonderfully vivid Matisse sketches I first sketched my own version which is mindful of how clay behaves.

I made the hair long and organic to support the figure during the making and firing process. In the foreground is my first sculpture made from a single cube of stoneware clay. To make a figure from a block of clay first you must draw the image of the figure from all angles on all sides



of the block and carve back from there. It is a very reductive process and takes a lot of concentration because you are not feeling the shape as you imagine it in your head or as you know your body to be. The luxurious long hair is a key point of balance and holds up the slender arms and legs. The organic hair also contrasts with the smooth white body. The work was glazed in Magnesium Matt Gold and brushed with Zircon White (stockists unknown).

An Oscar for Botanists, 2008

For my BTEC in Ceramic Art & Design we were given the project of creating an Award for a fictional Botanist in Kew Gardens. I chose the Oscar as my inspiration but made my own version of it – my own Oscar for Botanists. The work was hand built from one single piece of Terracotta clay to resemble an exotic plant. The slender African



woman wears an elegant dress and her beautiful face shines through the foliage. I originally tried to make the foliage in clay but the slender pieces kept breaking off so in the end made the delicate tendrils in

gold electric wire. The limbs and face were under-glazed in Manganese Dioxide and the dress was glazed in Zircon white (stockists unknown).

1950's Bathing Beauties, 2024

Inspired by old pictures from the 1950's I made these two beauties.

Their bodies were made by winding clay around toilet rolls as formers, but the elongated legs, arms and heads were hand-built. I have been making figures with exaggerated feet for a while - in part to stabilise standing figures but also as a stylistic expression. The faces were made by impressing clay into egg moulds (readily available from craft shops) and the features were added once the clay was leather hard. The flowers on their bathing hats were cut out with a clay stamp and carefully added on to the heads with clay slip. These details are important to the overall success of these pieces.

The Bathing Beauties were made in Special White stoneware clay (Potclays), under-glazed in cobalt blue stain, particularly over the eyes, ears and mouth to accentuate

these features, then overglazed with Neon Orange and Primrose Yellow glazes (Potclays) for the bathing costumes and a clear glaze for their bodies.

More recently I have found myself coming back to Goddesses (and gods) in a series of work called Archetypes where I am creating figures such as the Small Screen Goddess, Warrior and Harlequin. I find that I am attracted to these figures because of their power to represent different aspects of modern life including our obsession with small screens, fear about war, and our emotions. Goddess sculptures have been used through history to reflect the beliefs and values of the society they emerge from, but I think they represent my own personal values and are a way of communicating my ideas to a wider audience.

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Goddesses! *Editor's Post Script*

I'd like to thank everyone on the Goddesses team who contributed by instigating, sculpting, authoring, photographing, and proof-reading. They were: Drew Caines, Helen Birnbaum, Ruth Burnham, Liz Hewett, Fiona Newby, Deborah Robinson, Mo Schofield, Bev Seth and Mary Sewell.

I took the opportunity to browse the Artists' Pages on the NPA website and was struck by the image of Kate Stride's work below, which I think makes a suitable addition, and a fine conclusion to our Goddesses feature.

Chrissie



Members' Notification

Unfortunately it has not been possible to publish the audited 2024-25 NPA accounts in this issue of the magazine.

The Accounts along with the Agenda for the AGM which will take place at the NPA Potters Camp on 12 October, will be emailed to you in advance of the meeting.

If you do not receive these documents prior to this date please contact the Membership Secretary, Wendy Wall:

membership@northern-potters.co.uk

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Coming up in the next issue:

magazine@northern-potters.co.uk

The theme for the November issue is *Ceramics Outdoors*

We have several articles lined up but there's still time to share your experience of working outdoors, making for the outdoors or creating ceramics influenced by the landscape (whether aesthetically or by using materials gathered in the wild). Send in your images along with a brief outline.

There will be a round-up in words and pictures of this year's crop of outdoor ceramics events - so whether it be pit-firings, selling fairs or community clay-days and whether rain, hail, snow or blow, send in your high quality images along with 20-50 words of explanation.



Draft contributions for the November issue should be with the Editor by the end of August and final versions and **high quality* images** by the end of September. Small ads and short reports may be sent up until 6 Oct. (15 Oct for Potters Camp reports)

Please send high quality* images as separate attachments to an email. Please do not embed images in the body of your message or in a Word document or PDF.

***High quality** images should be **at least** 2400 pixels wide x 3000 pixels high. More than this for full page/cover images please. Anything smaller than this will be printed proportionally smaller.

Organising NPA events step-by-step

NPA Vice-Chair Graham "Nog" Northing will take you through everything you need to know from booking a venue and carrying out risk assessments to tapping in to the NPA insurance cover and selling tickets.

If you have ever organised an event we'd like to know about your experience along with your hints and tips for avoiding pitfalls and for making your event successful. Please send your comments and queries to the Editor.

Articles to look forward to in November:

Trevor Pollard on pit firing in Senegal.

Richard Graves on making with minimal tools and equipment at Wildwood Forest School.

NPA Potters Camp report. A round up of the day's events - **You have until 15 Oct** to contact the Editor with your feedback from the day along with images you wish to share.

February

The February issue will embrace the themes of repetition, precision and consistency through the dual prisms of Form and Function.

Form - will feature ceramics which have a graphic, geometric or engineered quality where decoration may be secondary and/or dictated by the shape of the vessel.

Function - If you make teapots, mugs, casserole dishes or other functional pottery which require consistent size, shape or finish get in touch and explain your methods for consistency in making, glazing, firing etc.

Please contact the editor with your draft proposals as soon as possible and **final** versions of all articles and images submitted by mid-December.



Community: Peter Hawes, Maggie Davis and Ollie Hawes - Kirton Pottery Past, Present and Future

This is the story of three communities of potters in the UK and Botswana, and one couple's passion for pottery, community and education. It summarises a 55 year journey from teaching local people in Botswana to a pottery studio workshop in North Lincolnshire and the plans they have to preserve their legacy.

Kirton Pottery was established in 1975 by Peter and Christine Hawes. Christine studied ceramics as part of her fine art course at Sheffield Art College from 1962 to 1965, where the couple met. Peter's first introduction to pottery was in Botswana where they moved in 1969 with their two young boys Oliver (3) and William (2), and were employed at Swaneng Hill School, Serowe. Peter taught history, geography, and development studies, while Christine taught art.

The school was unusual in that, alongside academic subjects, it also offered training in agriculture, motor repair, building, tanning, and electrical work. A separate adult education section, Boiteko, included gardening, weaving, cloth printing, and a small tannery. Boiteko - meaning "helping one another" was designed to provide local adults, many of whom were poor and had little or no formal currency, with useful craft skills. A bartering system, using a token currency, was developed and a shop was built to facilitate trade.

Initially, pottery was the one craft not represented but Christine was asked to start a pottery workshop. Peter was enthusiastic and encouraged her to agree, on the condition that they could do it together.

Funding from Norway allowed for a beautiful stone and thatched pottery building, constructed by the building trainees. Peter ordered Bernard Leach's "A Potter's Book" and Michael Cardew's "Pioneer Pottery", and set about build-

ing a large wood-fired kiln, finding local clay, and learning to throw on one of two kick wheels.

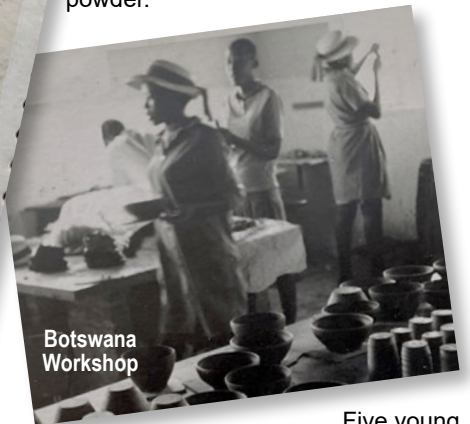
Only a few older women still made traditional pots, which they burnished and decorated. These women generously shared their knowledge, including clay sources and coiling and



pit-firing techniques using dry cow dung and wood. Their pots were beautiful, but the proximity to South Africa meant machine-made metal and plastic goods had become more popular. Young Botswana were more drawn to pottery wheel work than traditional methods.

The clay as it was dug had much sand and some gravel within it and, when only slightly refined, could be used for hand building, but for throwing a lot of wet sieving and drying in brick built drying terraces, as described by Cardew, was necessary. However, by itself once refined for throwing the clay cracked easily in the firing. Later, the Botswana Geological Survey confirmed it contained a large proportion of montmorillonite, which caused the cracking. To improve its performance, it was mixed with powdered clay from South Africa or fireclay from a local coal mine.

The kiln was built with two chambers - one for glazing using special curved firebricks from South Africa, and a second for bisque firing, built with ordinary bricks and a tall chimney. Built directly onto a sandstone outcrop, the kiln used a two-stage wood-firing process. Peter and Christine crafted hollow tapering bricks for the domed roof, insulating with wood ash. Unfortunately, they didn't use Cardew's more efficient firebox design, so they never reached true stoneware temperatures and had to use frits in their glazes. Luckily, the sand and gravel sieved from the clay provided silica and feldspar. The engineering teacher, Kib, built a ball mill from a thick-walled iron tub about a foot in diameter. When filled with rocks this trundled around for an hour or two grinding the sandy gravel into suitable glaze powder.



Five young women joined as enthusiastic trainees, and Peter and Christine worked hard to stay ahead in teaching the required skills.

The family returned to England in 1974, planning to start their own pottery. By chance, they discovered two dilapidated buildings on Kirton High Street purchased for £1,600, exactly the amount they had. Peter taught for a year at the local secondary school, and Christine worked at a play school. They refurbished the cottages creating a flat above and a workshop below, making their first pot in autumn 1975.

They sold pots from Kirton and had a retail space at Jews House on Steep Hill in Lincoln. Most weekends were

spent working in a wooden shed at Elsham Hall, where they also sold to visitors.

They started with slip-decorated earthenware. Christine became skilled in trailed decoration with lettering for items such as name-mugs, wedding and birthday plates, inspired by the book "Mary Wondrausch on Slipware". The work of Peter and Jill Dick at Coxwold Pottery also influenced them.

In 1976, Peter salvaged firebricks from old furnaces left over from the transition from coal gas to natural gas and began building the gas-fired kiln still in use today.

A road-cycle accident in 1980 left Christine with life-changing injuries which was devastating both personally and for the pottery, as she had been the main decorator. Over time, she adapted remarkably well, working with her one (fortunately dominant) good hand.

In 2002, an advert in Ceramic Review for a pottery teaching position at a Camphill Community in Otse, saw the couple return to Botswana.

Camphill, present in several countries, provides work and social life for people with disabilities. As before, the aim was that income from the work done should pay for the training as far as possible.

There was a school for disabled children and a section for older teenagers. Peter and Christine's section was for adults with disabilities and their helpers. It included a well-established furniture workshop, a plant nursery, café, and a hearing aid assembly group.

Pottery began in an old chicken shed, with just two students - David, in a wheelchair, and his helper, Joel. With donated funds, they made Botswana-themed coloured slipware. A shopping mall in Gaborone offered a stall, which had limited success. There was a decent electric kiln and a wheel, and eventually, a new pottery building was constructed.

They experimented with clay sources such as riverbeds and termite mounds, again needing to supplement with powdered clay from South Africa. They made pots, animals, and beads. One disabled student showed exceptional sculptural talent and was selected to train with North Korean artists making statues of Botswana's renowned chiefs.

Sales were always a challenge,

though Camphill's furniture shop in Gaborone provided an outlet. The electric kiln consumed too much power, so Peter built a catenary arch kiln fuelled by waste oil, using Indian burners and blowers.

From the time Peter and Christine returned from Botswana for the second time, in 2005, the pottery produced a variety of work and completed many commissions. There were plaques for both Caistor's Britain in Bloom and Kirton in Bloom every year as well as commemorative plates and domestic ware. Peter won the Best Jug Prize at the Alford Ceramic Fair in 2021. There were selling outings at the Rope-walk in Barton on Humber, Alford Craft Market, and various shops in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire and regular classes.

The Pottery has a loyal customer base and has pupils who have been attending classes since the 1980's! We are always struck by the number of customers who tell us that they have pots from the late 70's and 80's and can't believe that Peter and Christine, and the Pottery here in Kirton Lindsey, is "still going"!

Over the years we have seen potters who have attended classes here go on to be potters with studios of their own.

To ensure that the legacy of Kirton Pottery we have set up Kirton Pottery Community based on Peter and Christine's philosophy of helping one another, community, education, and generosity. KPC has around a dozen members who are current students, some of whom have been coming to classes for decades. The more experienced of them selling their work in the pottery and at shows, and teaching classes in the pottery. The members all have different skills to share including selling, teaching, social media, health and safety, and building maintenance, as well as their own artistic skills.

As well as the making skills that Peter and Christine have always taught, Peter has begun to pass on some of the more technical and mundane tasks. These include glaze, pigment and clay preparation and kiln firing, ensuring these skills are not lost and at the same time lightening Peter's load.

We also hope to have the pottery open more often by offering studio time and selling space to members in exchange

for manning the shop on a rota basis. Part of the shop will be available to our aspiring potters and artists, and some younger and more technically minded are helping with publicity and, in particular, social media!

Kirton Pottery will be 50 years old in October this year and we are hoping that it will go on encouraging artists for many years to come!

You can read a longer version of this history of Kirton Pottery on the Kirton facebook page

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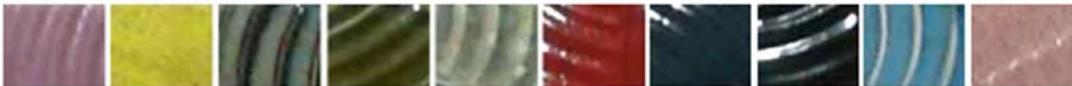
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PotteryCrafts offer NPA members 10% discount on their orders across all of their products from kilns and wheels to materials, tools and equipment, but the discount may not be used in conjunction with any other discounts or offers.

- Discount code issued in January changes on an annual basis and is printed on their adverts (see below).
- The discount code for 2025 is PC-NP. PotteryCrafts do not require you to send your proof of membership email. Use the discount code online or when making a phone order.
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- Send CTM your "Proof of Membership" email as they make a note of this on their address list. However you are advised to remind them each time you order.
- You can email a list and they will send back a quote and bank details to pay by bank transfer or you can ring with your order and pay by credit/debit card over the phone.
- There is no online ordering.
- They aim to despatch within 2 days.

CTM are offering a Discount Voucher worth £100 (incl VAT) to spend on other items when ordering a kiln up until 30 September.

When ordering just tell the sales team you are an NPA member and wish to claim your voucher.

De-mystifying Supplier

NPA no longer issues membership cards or membership numbers. You will automatically receive a "Proof of Membership" email via LoveAdmin at the beginning of each year your membership is in force.

Shipping charges are a mixture of weight and number of boxes /pallets. For full 25kg boxes the second box plus are discounted by £2 + VAT a box.

ctmpotterssupplies.co.uk
doncaster@ctmpotterssupplies.co.uk
[facebook/CTM Potters Supplies](https://www.facebook.com/CTMPottersSupplies)
[instagram/CTM Potters Supplies](https://www.instagram.com/CTMPottersSupplies)

CTM Potters Supplies – maker of CONTEM glazes

Mail Order and Collection of a wide range of tools, materials, equipment, clays and glazes etc etc
5% Potters Association Discount on all items, excluding Wheels, Kilns, Machinery and Direct Delivered Clay
which we already discount down to what we think is usually the best UK price



ROHDE, KILNCARE and NABERTHERM Kilns

We aim to provide the most cost-effective ranges of clay, tools, glazes, materials and equipment for potters in the UK. You can visit us, see test tiles and browse, or order over the phone or email – please see www.ctmpotterssupplies.co.uk

We Often Have 20+ Rohde Kilns In Stock In The UK

Unit 7/8, Broomhouse Lane Ind Estate, Doncaster, DN12 1EQ 01709 770801
Unit 19, Hogsbrook Units, Greendale East Ind Estate, Exeter, EX5 1PY 01395 233077



Discounts

Ensure you save it somewhere handy - pin it to the top of your email inbox, put it in a separate folder in your inbox or screenshot it and save it somewhere safe so you always have it to hand when you need it.

Sedgefield Pottery Supplies

The best price for kilns, wheels and equipment will be offered on enquiry.

10% discount is offered for clay collected from the shop

5% discount offered on all other items

- Do not currently offer online ordering
- Email your requirements for a quote or order directly over the phone
- Shipping calculated at time of ordering
- Payment may be made by BACS or over the phone by credit or debit card

sedgefieldpottery.co.uk
info@sedgefieldpottery.co.uk
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A leading supplier of ceramic materials and equipment based in the North East of England. We stock the largest range of products from the best selling brands.

Your trusted source for pottery supplies.

Hot Offer!

Get £100 (incl. VAT) voucher to spend with Sedgefield or free carriage to any mainland address when you purchase a kiln during September

Scarva Pottery Supplies

Offer 10% discount excluding orders on kilns, wheels, equipment and gift vouchers.

- Online ordering only.
- Create an account or checkout as a guest.
- Discount code advised by NPA each January. Code for 2025 is NORPA2025. Enter it each time you check out.
- Royal Mail or Parcelforce tracked shipping calculated by weight.
- Members can email sales@scarva.com if they have queries/issues with ordering or orders once received.
- Sign up to their mailing list and follow on socials:

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[instagram/scarvapottersupplies](https://instagram.com/scarvapottersupplies)

scarva
POTTERY SUPPLIES LTD

- Suppliers generously offer discounts to NPA members in goodwill and at their discretion. In order for the NPA to maintain good relationships with suppliers please remember, when placing your order, to ask politely that a discount or voucher be applied.
- Shop around and ensure you are happy with your overall price before you confirm your order.

Hot Tips for the best deals

At the time of going to press we have been unable to establish definite information regarding **Clayman Supplies**.

Please see their website for further information
claymansupplies.co.uk

Around the Regions

Held in The Coach House Gallery, Astley Hall, Chorley, Lancashire, our fourth exhibition in this excellent venue was another success with almost 600 visitors and nearly £1600 sales. A popular feature is the 'working table' where visitors can make their own works with clay, tools and advice freely available. Twenty-five potters showed their varied works. Visitors commented on the huge variety and quality of exciting items that can be made from mud.

This year's theme was 'Pauline in the Yellow Dress' by Sir James Gunn or 'Yellow'.

'Visitor's Favourite Potter' competition was won by Laura McNicholas.

The 'Visitor's Favourite Yellow Work' competition was won by Pat Hough.

Prizes were donated by Northern Kilns and Potclays.

The Exhibition was sponsored by Create Bolton, Northern Kilns, Potclays and the Northern Potters Association.

Graham Hough

Organiser **GLORIOUS CLAY CHORLEY**
11-29 June 2025

**NORTHERN POTTERS
ASSOCIATION OPEN EXHIBITION**



Image: Mo Schofield

Thoresby Hall in Newark was home to over 40 potters to celebrate all things clay in its first ever Ceramics Fair.

A collection of coloured Gazebos outside housed a vast array of styles and genres all created from clay, whilst inside the indoor Riding Hall had been transformed from the previous week's prom into a collection of stalls under a ceiling of sparkling fairy lights.

Visitors were treated to an eclectic selection from Cabby Ludford's alternative fired horse sculptures to contemporary designs by Emma Westmacott. Demonstrations throughout

the day included Mo Schofield explaining her hand building methods for sculpted pieces as well as wheel throwing demos by the Potting Shed which drew the crowds.

The annual dog show running alongside in the grounds ensured a good flow of visitors throughout the day despite the rain!

Key organiser Tracy Bramley is keen to deliver an annual Thoresby Ceramics Fair and hopes to be offered a weekend fair for 2026.

Laura Lee
**THORESBY PARK
CERAMICS FAIR**
20 July 2025

Friday evening: the gazebos are up, the stalls in place. A colourful array of pots, vessels and ceramic sculptures fill the garden, lawns and farmyard at the Dovecot Gallery.

Saturday morning: volunteers have transformed the wagon shed into a tea-room and on the stroke of ten the first visitors arrive. By eleven it is heaving. We've done it! Our 3rd year and again, blessed with mid-summer sun, it's going to be good.

Visitors love the ambiance of the place: Hilary's garden, a jungle of colour, plants too many to name, interspersed with fruit bushes, the old farm buildings and Mike and Hilary's sculptures dotted about the place. A perfect

place for a ceramics festival.

Saturday evening: The public disappear. The potters sit down to a magnificent paella, cooked in a huge pan over an open fire by our resident chef (thank you Anne).

Sunday: Another great day despite the rain which started just as we began to pack up resulting in a soggy drive home.

What a fabulous weekend!

Ken Taylor


DOVECOT CERAMICS FAIR
21-22 June 2025




Your Regional Contacts

VACANT

northernpottersnw@gmail.com

 NPAnorthwest

 @northernpottersassociationNW





NW

NE

Carol Newmarch, Helen Pickard,
Michelle Webb, Christine Walker,
Claude Frere-Smith

north-east@northern-potters.co.uk

 NorthernPottersAssociationNorthEast

 @northernpottersassociationNE

VACANT

west@northern-potters.co.uk

 NPAwest

 @northernpottersassociationWest




W

E


Sylvia Schroer


east@northern-potters.co.uk

 NPAEast

 @northernpottersassociationEast

Lisa Pritchard, Liz Anspoks
south-west@northern-potters.co.uk

 NPAsouthwest

 @northernpottersassociationSW




SW

SE

Kate Stride, Mo Schofield

senpacoordinator@outlook.com

 NPAsoutheast

 @northernpottersassociationSE



Sunday 27 July saw the first NPA outing at the **Aldborough and Boroughbridge Agricultural Show**, at Newby Hall, North Yorks. 30 NPA potters assembled in a marquee to show their work. As a first-time visitor to that show I was amazed at how big and busy it was and a fair number of people were curious enough to enter the NPA tent. Several made enquiries about membership and some had come specially to the show to see the ceramics. The red-topped gazebo outside the main NPA tent was a popular stop-off point for visitors as they watched Gerry Grant's teapot from-start-to-finish demos. The event took place as the magazine goes to print so we look forward to a fuller report in the November issue.

Chrissie Hunter

NPA SW Coordinator Lisa Pritchard runs the Cheshire Clay Studios along with fellow SW Coordinator Liz Anspoks. The Studio has a busy schedule of popular events open to both NPA members and non-members which, in the last few weeks, has included:

- Saturday 14th May - Elaine Watson (Creative Director of Waterstones) delivered a fabulous mini-workshop helping 15 attendees to use some excellent creative techniques for inspiring unique ceramics
- Friday 6th June - Amelia Bedson ran a Kinsugi ceramics workshop. 16 attendees brought their own pieces to repair using semi-traditional Kinsugi techniques.
- Sunday June 8th - Julia Elliot (Agamacreative) delivered a busy raku

workshop to a full house of 12 participants.

- Sunday June 29th - Simon Shaw delivered a 'Throwing Big' workshop - again fully booked.

Upcoming Events

- Sunday 24 August 10am-12 noon - Raku Experience
- Saturday 13th September 2pm-4pm - Sharon Lea Lecture demonstration - Throwing with Porcelain
- For more information on upcoming events and to book tickets visit

cheshireclay.com

Lisa and Liz are also running workshops as part of the Goosfest Arts & Crafts Weekend coming up in September - there are still a couple of places left. Book and find more events at:
goosfest.com/arts-crafts-weekend/

The Founder-Organiser

MUDFest is a buzzing, independent ceramics festival, proudly run by volunteers and set in the stunning, award-winning grounds of Ford Park in Ulverston, Cumbria. Held annually in mid-May, this not-for-profit event is driven by a mission to make ceramics accessible to everyone, fostering creativity and community by putting clay into the hands of others. With no entry fee and a host of free, interactive activities, it's a celebration of all things clay.

Our 2025 festival marked an exciting second year, building significantly on the success of our inaugural event in 2024. With glorious sunshine beaming down, enthusiastic crowds flocked to our weekend of clay-filled fun and artistic inspiration.

We were thrilled to showcase 35 incredible ceramic artists and potters,

handpicked to highlight the quality and diversity of this amazing craft. These talented creators travelled from all corners of the UK, including Helen, a NPA member who braved the Irish Sea by boat from the Isle of Man to join us!

Inclusivity was at the heart of MUDFest and we proudly celebrated small, trailblazing businesses like Small Ceramics from London and Movers & Shapers Pottery Tools. These innovators are using their engineering skills to make ceramics more accessible and eco-friendly, proving that creativity and sustainability go hand in hand.

One of the stand-out features for me was the infectious energy brought by the children from the Chorley Inspire Youth Zone.



Two Views of the recent MUDFest ceramics festival at Ford Park in Ulverston, Cumbria

The Visitor

As someone relatively new to pottery and with so much to learn, I appreciate any opportunity to learn from the skills and experience of others. With this in mind, I headed to MUDFest ceramics festival at Ulverston on 17 May and it certainly did not disappoint.

In the marquee was a balanced and selected range of exhibitors (some local and others from afar) who represented a range of clays, styles and techniques and provided something for all tastes. Exhibitors commented that they appreciated the fact the in that setting, their work felt unique and therefore they did not feel in competition with each other.

As well as the exhibitors there were hands-on workshops and demonstrations throughout the day including hand-building pinch pots, mini throwing wheels, paint a duck, smoke fired pots and demonstrations in surface design.

For me, the highlight was the chance to have so many wonderful conversations with people who share a com-

mon love of clay but also celebrate their different creative interpretations of the medium. I was impressed by the generous spirit of potters who discussed with me about their techniques and methods. As well as sharing their successes, they also explained how they overcome challenges and deal with the frustrations when things don't go according to plan. That ability to look for positives and embrace the "happy accidents" which can lead to new discoveries. It was the individual stories behind their pieces that made their work so special.

All this was happening in the beautiful surroundings of Ford Park. One thing organisers cannot arrange is the weather but they were blessed with the most glorious May weekend which just added the final flourish to an already successful event.

MUDFest provided an opportunity to appreciate the work of talented ceramicists, and I now feel inspired to get home and practice my own skills at working with mud."

Helen Ogden

They ran our handbuilding tables with such enthusiasm, sharing their skills with visitors of all ages. Their Clay Club, launched just a year ago with support from Kate Malone's charity Fired Up 4, was a huge hit and they're already counting down the days until next year!

Of course, no festival is complete without a little drama! During our smoke firing workshop, a towering plume of smoke caught the attention of the Cumbria Fire Brigade, who arrived on-site just 15 minutes later. Thankfully, it wasn't an emergency - they were simply curious about our event. To everyone's delight, especially the kids from the Chorley Clay Club, the firefighters even let them hop aboard their shiny red fire engine, adding an unforgettable twist to an already amazing weekend!

MUDFest 2025 was a whirlwind of creativity, community, and unforgettable moments, and we can't wait to do it all again next year! For more details or if you are interested in taking part next year, visit our website:

mud-fest.co.uk

Kath Stevens

Organised MUDFest
Cumbria
17-18 May 2025





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Stay up to date

Keep your contact details up to date:

membership@northern-potters.co.uk

Ensure that the images and statement on your Artist's Page on the NPA website reflect your current work:

website@northern-potters.co.uk

Send small ads and notices for the e-newsletter to:

e-newsletter@northern-potters.co.uk

next copy date: Saturday 20 September

Draft articles and images to be considered for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Editor as soon as possible and several weeks in advance of the final copy date please:

magazine@northern-potters.co.uk

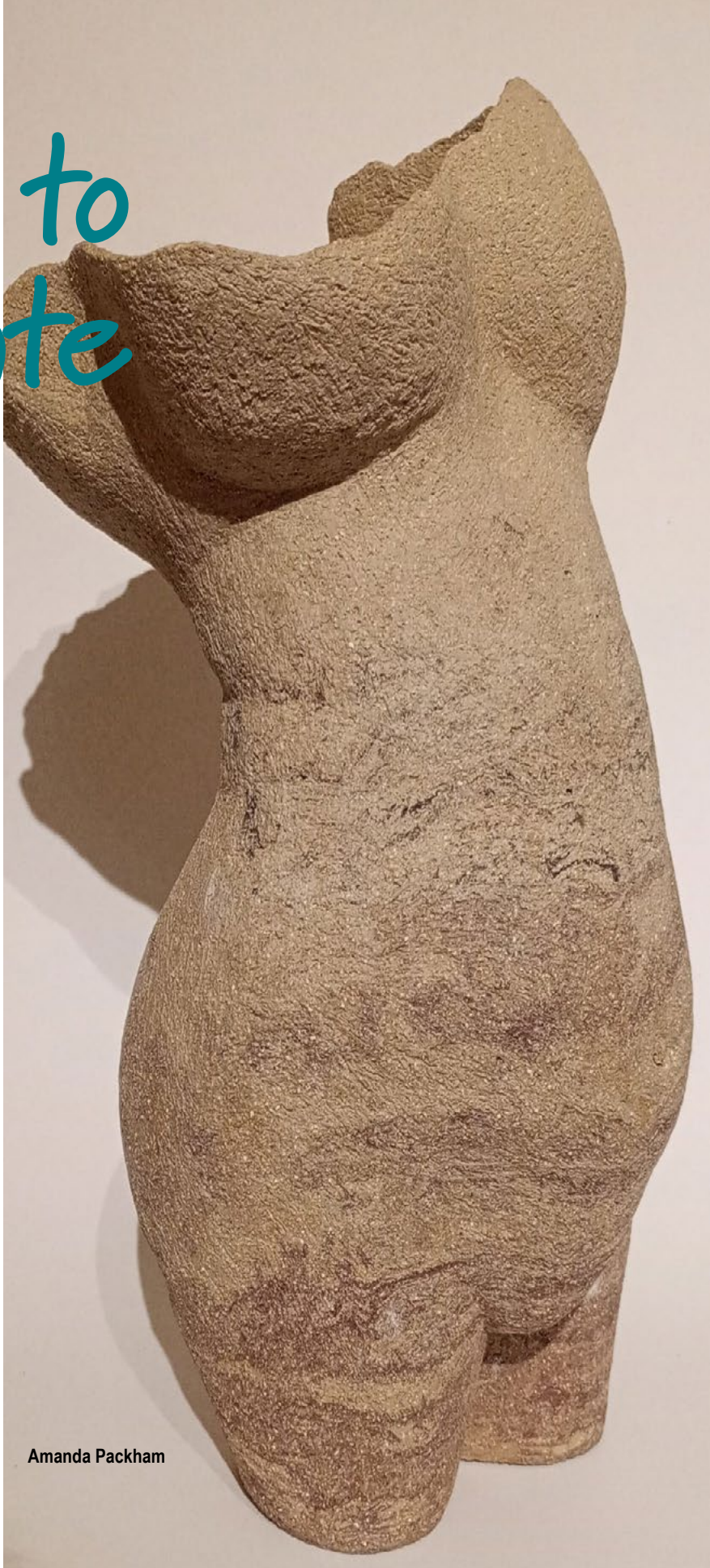
**Latest date for amendments and small ads for the November issue:
Monday 6 October.**

Proposed themes for upcoming issues:

Ceramics Outdoors - November

Form & Function - February '26

We look forward to receiving your contributions!



Amanda Packham