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members

NPA NEWS

The magazine of the Northern Potters Association

January - February 2011

www.northern-potters.co.uk



In this issue:

NPA - What's it for?, Career Change, Honest Pots, Ferric Fuming

Editor's Comment

Here we are in a new potting year - let's hope the economy is improving, as well as the weather. I was expecting to have a problem filling this issue, but in fact it's been a challenge to fit everything in, so thank you to everyone who has contributed.

There have been few entries for the diary page - don't forget to send in details of events you're participating in, or those which you think may be of interest to members, and keep sending in new images for the members' gallery. You'll notice it's increased to 2 pages this time. As we're now printing in full colour, I'm not restricted in where I can put them, and there was such a good selection I decided to include something from everyone.

Membership numbers are looking very healthy, and are comfortably over 400 for the first time, so we must be doing something right! Nonetheless, it would be good to get more feedback on what members want from the organisation (Geoff Cox asks the same question on page 6), so if you have ideas or suggestions, please contact your regional coordinator or any committee member.

Lesley Nason is doing a great job in her new role as Exhibitions Officer, with an exciting exhibition opportunity at the New School House Gallery in York (provisionally titled 'North Stars'). There's a short timescale for getting your applications in, so be sure to read page 4 for more details.

As a founder member, it's good to welcome Alan Ball back to our ranks (see page 8), together with his daughter Laura Hancock, and he tells us a little about his career to date (I wonder if Laura has any pictures of those rabbits in clothes for the 'first or worst' feature?).

There's a thoughtful review of the Honest Pots exhibition at York Art Gallery from former member Ian Howie (page 12), which may encourage more of you to visit. It's on until October, so there's plenty of time for at least one trip to York. Jan Lewis-Eccleston's report on the first exhibition for the SW regional group is encouraging - they have established a resourceful team who seem able to tackle anything! I was delighted to be asked to assist them in setting up - it's my favourite bit of any exhibition.

John Cook's article on ferric fuming (page 18) leaves me still unsure whether to try it - I love the effects, but am not sure I could deal with the health & safety implications - and I only have one pair of jeans!

Cover :

Alan Birchall -
Tea bowl, pinched + carved,
willow ash glaze, propane
gas fired to 1300°C

Barbara Wood

Members' Gallery - has moved to page 14

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Welcome To New Members

Name	Location	
Moira Clinch-Ferguson	Matlock	Derbyshire
Kwong Kwo Lee	Bury	Lancashire
Chris Rumsey	Southwell	Nottinghamshire

A warm welcome is extended to our new members. We look forward to seeing you and your work at future events.

Deadline For Next Issue

All material for the **next issue** to be with Barbara Wood
by 21 February 2011

Text and images can be e-mailed to npanews@btinternet.com, sent on CD or in long hand with photographs to Old Mills, Seaton Ross, YORK, YO42 4NH. Images should be high resolution digital where possible - 180mm x 130mm at 300dpi preferred, and please send some good colour images of your work for the members' gallery. Articles should be no more than 1,000 words, and preferably have related images available (send as separate files, not embedded in the text).

Exhibitions & Events - Lesley Nason

The New School House Gallery, York

This will be the venue for the next NPA selected exhibition entitled "North Stars" running from 21st April to 4th June 2011. The New School House Gallery is a contemporary object and art gallery close to the centre of York, housed in a grade II listed former schoolhouse on Peasholme Green in landscaped gardens behind the Quilt Museum. Opened just over a year ago, this light and airy gallery shows the best in studio ceramics and decorative arts, and we are delighted to have secured this opportunity. Visit the website to find out more - schoolhousegallery.co.uk.

We are aiming to select between 20 and 30 makers for the exhibition on 15th February 2011.

Therefore the deadline for receiving your applications will be Monday 7th February 2011.

(unfortunately any applications received after this date cannot be included for selection)

**To apply, email for an application form – lesley.nason@btopenworld.com,
or phone 0115 9771390.**

The selection panel will be made up of a gallery director, a non NPA potter and a non committee NPA member.

Platform Gallery 2010 - Barbara Wood

Last year's exhibition at Platform Gallery was met with a rather mixed response. Visitor numbers were low, and only two of the exhibiting artists made it to the civic opening, which was a disappointment to the gallery staff.

Selection was rather unbalanced, with some members being asked for 10 items, and others only 1 or 2 (which could go some way to explaining why they didn't attend the opening). There seemed to be an attempt to include as many applicants as possible (although some excellent work was excluded!). The visual effect was somewhat 'bitty', with pieces of work sharing plinths with those of other makers, and sometimes looking as if they'd been put down and forgotten about, while other plinths looked bare. No re-stocking was requested by the gallery, so by the time of the AGM (just 2 weeks in) gaps were appearing, which did not get filled, and members may have felt they could have sold more if given an opportunity to supply more pieces.

Having said that, sales amounted to just over £4000, compared with almost £6000 in 2008. Although much lower, it does seem to indicate that there is still a market for good quality ceramics, and if stock levels had been maintained, perhaps the sales would have been higher.

Platform is a lovely gallery, with a good local audience, but I believe the space is going to be, or has been reduced to accommodate a tourist information office, so there may only be very limited opportunities for NPA to exhibit there in future. We constantly need to find new galleries which are suitable for our selected exhibitions (able to accommodate work from 20+ makers, with an established visitor base, and willing to share commission with NPA for us to cover our admin costs), so if you have any suggestions, please let Lesley know.

New Books - Roger Bell

Michael Casson	Cooper & Fielding	20.00 R
Ceramics Today	Jeffery Snyder Schiffer	
Copyright Law for Artists, Photographers & Designers	Gillian Davies	14.99 BI
English & Irish Delftware 1570 – 1840	Aileen Dawson	35.00 BM
Hazel Johnston – Porcelain	Ed S Johnston	35.00 LH
The Ceramic Art of Karen Karnes	Ed Mark Shapiro	35.95
Makers: a History of American Studio Craft	Koplos & Metcalf	
Mud Architect (DVD)	William Daley	\$20
Paperclay for Ceramic Sculptors	Rosette Gault	\$22
Slipware & St Ives: the Leach Pottery 1920 – 1937	John Edgeler	
The Lost City of Stoke-on-Trent	Matthew Rice	19.99 FL
Studio (exhibition catalogue – Ruthin)	Phil Sayer	12.00 Ruth
Ai Weiwei –So Sorry	AW 7 M Siemons	17.99 Pres

Book Reviews - Roger Bell

MASTERING RAKU

Publ: Lark

Steven Branfman

£19.99

Available from www.thegmcgroup.com or tel 01273 488005

There are many books available on Raku in print or available 2nd hand. Quality does vary substantially and this is one of the best, written by a specialist in the technique. It is his second on the subject.

The chapters follow the more or less standard sequence: What Is Raku; Health & Safety; Clays; Glazes, Slips, etc; Kilns; and The Firing Process. These are all clearly written and illustrated by excellent photos and drawings of finished pieces, making processes, kilns and equipment. The following chapters emphasise the value of experimenting throughout all stages. 'Advanced Firing Techniques' and 'Related Techniques for Raku' talk about such areas as copper matte, the halo technique of Paul Soldner, slip resist (naked raku) and many others.

There is a short chapter on teaching raku, a gallery of finished work showing the wide variety possible, and appendices including clay bodies, glazes, slips etc. These latter are largely US in origin but in most cases quote UK equivalent materials. For a hardback book in A4 format with 176 pages, this good value.

HAZEL JOHNSTON: PORCELAIN

Publ: Lund Humphries

Ed Simon Johnston

£35.00

At last monographs on potters are appearing more regularly. Hazel Johnston has been a member of the CPA since 1963 and a fellow since 1993. Her work shows a steady development from stoneware and earthenware domestic ware from 1951 when she was attending Manchester College of Arts, through slipware in the 1960's, then stoneware again before porcelain took a hold and has dominated till today.

The influence of Bernard Leach, Harry Davis and the like is obvious in the earlier work but Lucie Rie is the obvious influence in the porcelain vases and bowls. These works are a range of classic shapes and glazes. Sometimes subtle effects are sufficient, on others there is a bold use of turquoise, cobalt, gold lustre etc. Some of the most effective are vases and bottles thrown with coloured clay additions to produce spiral patterns. Hazel Johnston is an unostentatious potter whose work deserves wider recognition.

NPA - What's it for? - Geoff Cox

An association of potters in the North but for what purpose ? Why did *you* join ?

I was a full time potter when I joined many years ago and wanted to feel the support of a network of like minded souls. I rarely put work into NPA exhibitions partly because I already had my own marketing systems but also I found it impractical to take a day off production, make a roundtrip of up to 300 miles to deliver work and the same to pick up what hadn't sold or was unselected. I joined to share in the creative energy of my peers but as members were scattered over such a wide area [Edinburgh to Oxford at the time] there were few opportunities to connect so after a while I left. That was almost 20 years ago. Things may have changed over the years and regional groups have certainly made local connections easier but people still join for different reasons, some of which might not be being met. So why did *you* join ?.

Chris and I started Potfest for many reasons. Some we didn't realise at the time and only became apparent later on. Living in Cumbria and selling mostly in the Home Counties was quite isolating and to some extent Potfest in the Pens was intended to create a focus for ceramics in the North, where we live. As a market it would give potters an economic reason to take part but also it would be a place to network and share that enthusiasm we all have for playing in mud. We saw it as a sort of potters' rendezvous where everyone meets up once a year and enjoys each other's company. Over the years it has achieved both of these to some extent. By generating a large audience it allows any working potter to test their work and gain feedback from the public. Inevitably some work sells better than others but everyone has the same chance to gauge a response to what they make - from the public and fellow potters. But just as important is the social interaction between the exhibitors taking part. It can act as a support group for potters in all stages of their career and for those looking for new marketing initiatives it can offer national and international networking opportunities. But most of all with up to 150 potters taking part it has a creative energy that's infectious. We all spend so much time working in isolation that just to be in the presence of so many potters is a tonic for the creative spirit.

So the market element is in place. With exhibitors travelling hundreds of miles to take part networking opportunities are there for those who want them. What's missing at the moment is the chance to work together; to share skills, to interact on a more creative level. In the distant past NPA had very successful weekend camps - on a more intimate scale than Aberystwyth but a place where potters could spend a time together, see demonstrations and work alongside each other on specific projects.

Three years ago we tried to start something similar on a very small scale at the Pens. We asked members of the NPA to work together to build a castle in clay over the three days of the show. Chris Mortimer bravely stepped up to the plate to act as team leader and half a dozen members joined him. Everyone seemed to have a good time and the resulting structure was on the front page of the following NPA newsletter.

The following year the project was to build a bridge able to span a metre but this time only two took up the challenge. The same happened last year with the Noah's Ark project. What started out as an interactive event for NPA members was becoming a creche. Time for a rethink.

As the biggest association in the country, and based in the North I believe NPA should have a presence at the Pens, it being a major focus for ceramics in the region, but in what form? What can it contribute to the show and what can it gain from it? Many members already take part as exhibitors and many others come to see the work but is this all the membership want? Are they taking full advantage of the opportunities the Pens presents? There are over 400 members in the association many of whom will never meet. Could something happen over the weekend on a more formal or informal basis that could bring them all together as a group? Is an interactive social event with hands on elements something individual members would find of value? [This isn't a rhetorical question - a non-reply means " No ".]

Potfest in the Pens takes place over the first weekend in August. Plans for the following year start in September. The show is often fully booked by Christmas and promotion starts in January. It's not too late to formulate a plan for NPA to be part of the Pens 2011 but it's getting there. Some think apathy is endemic in the association. I don't

think this is necessarily true. I believe everyone joins with good intentions but for different reasons, then become frustrated when their expectations aren't met. But this is often because they don't articulate their reasons for joining.

So back to Potfest in the Pens, the northern ceramics festival. If you're an exhibitor and would be willing to spend an hour over the three days working with others or if you're visiting and would like to teach or take part in a short project on the day then let us know but do it now. The next step could be to form a small working party of interested potters to put together a project or series of small projects they would like to be involved in at the Pens.

I originally joined NPA because I wanted to be part of a pro-active group of creative people. I understand that not everyone joins for the same reason but if you did too here's a chance to show it and get pro-active.

To be involved in NPA activities at Potfest in the Pens 2011, contact Geoff - potfest@uwclub.net

Go on - APPLY for that exhibition - Lesley Nason

It can be quite daunting looking at that exhibition application form and thinking "should I – shouldn't I?" particularly if it's the first selected exhibition you have considered applying for. I remember the feeling all too well, because up until just over a year ago I too hadn't plucked up the courage to apply for a selected exhibition. But as the old adage says "nothing ventured, nothing gained".

I wasn't successful with my first application and didn't get selected! I have to admit I was feeling a little down, but I only allowed myself a 10 minute "pity party", then dusted myself off, asked for feed back (to help me improve my application in the future) and thought "NEXT". And I was selected for the next exhibition I applied for, so I replaced the "pity party" with a 10 minute celebratory dance (luckily only the cat was around to witness the spectacle!)

I will continue to apply for as many exhibitions and events as possible from now on, and I know that some I will be selected for and many more I won't, that's just the way it is and we just have to accept this.

So in my opinion, what is the secret to a good application?

- Does your work have a strong & confident individual style, which is innovative or particularly well crafted?
- Make sure you have strong, clear images of your work. Ideally professionally taken, if this isn't possible the best digital images you can take, without props or patterned backgrounds which may distract from your work. Make sure the images you put forward show a maximum of two style ranges of your work – don't be tempted to show a bit of every type of work you produce. Work can be shown individually or in groups and it's often good to include one or two detail close ups.
- Your artist statement or anything you write about yourself or work should be concise and to the point, because there isn't a lot of time for the selectors to read the applications. Why do you create your work? What does it mean to you and what are your inspirations? And maybe a little about your techniques.
- Make sure your application follows the guidelines requested, is neat and tidy and arrives on time.

And remember there are only so many applications that can be selected for each exhibition, so if you don't get in this time, brush off your disappointment, ask for some feed back and apply for the next event, refreshing your images and text and go for it again.

And remember **"Fortune favours the brave"**.

Career Change - Alan Ball

In 1967 I built my first electric kiln. At that time, I was employed as a design draughtsman in the packaging industry but had taken up pottery and painting as a hobby. I attended an extra mural course at the Industrial Art & Design College in Newcastle onTyne under the Head of Ceramics, Mike White.

After a few terms at the college I thoroughly got the pottery bug, and I didn't know it then, but it was to change my whole way of life. By 1970 I had my own fully equipped workshop at home and was making and selling pots at various craft markets.



When I was 38yrs old I made a big decision and resigned from my job as senior designer at the Timex Corporation to become a student at Neville's Cross, Durham, taking a three year teacher training course to be an Art Teacher.

I had taught pottery and painting at a comprehensive school for only a year when, in 1975, I got the opportunity to go self employed as a potter with the offer of a studio workshop in the newly built Washington Art Centre. The Art Centre was situated in a converted farm by the planners of Washington New Town, and had 6 craft workshops, an art gallery, theatre, bars etc. It also had community workshops where I taught pottery evening classes and weekend courses. The teaching helped to supplement my income.

I had been working at the Art Centre for a couple of years when the Northern Potters Association was formed in 1977 and I was one of the founder members. I remember David and Jane Greaves from Cleveland College of Art at the first potters camp at Peter Dick's place in Coxwold. The next camp was at Piece Hall, Halifax and saw Dave Roberts demonstrating his early Raku firing techniques. It was all very exciting.

My wife Ann and I have three daughters. The youngest one is Laura, and from an early age she was interested in making pots. When Laura was only nine years old she would accompany me on a pottery stall at a weekly Sunday art and craft fair on Jesmond Dene Bridge in Newcastle. I sold domestic ware and she would sell her little pottery animals, rabbits with clothes on sitting on chairs and baby rabbits in cots. Invariably she sold all her stock! It wasn't till the 1980s that Laura came to work fulltime in my Art Centre workshop where we made a range of domestic ware for the wholesale market.

Laura now has her own studio at her home in Westerton, near Bishop Auckland.



Laura in her workshop



Ceramic fruit and dish - Laura Hancock



Dish - Alan Ball

I left the Art Centre in 1995 after 20 years, and built my own workshop at my home. I sort of retired from making domestic pots and spent a lot of time abroad. As I couldn't take my pottery making equipment with me I started painting again. When I come home I cannot wait to get into the pottery again - the call to the clay is still very strong.

I now only make one off pots and spend much more time and consideration on each one. My making techniques are more environmentally friendly than they used to be; I biscuit fire everything to 1,000 degrees Centigrade, and smoke fire the biscuit ware in a controlled bonfire using newspapers.

Laura and I have had separate stands at the last two Potfest in the Pens and enjoy it very much. I feel it a privilege to be able to spend my time being involved in the age old craft of ceramics.



Flat Pot - Alan Ball

To this day I am very happy I changed my career when I was 38 years old.



Alan in his home workshop, 2010

Christmas Ceramics at the Hive - Jan Lewis-Eccleston

THE HIVE, MANCHESTER
27th Nov - 12th Dec 2010
Inaugural exhibition of NPA-SW

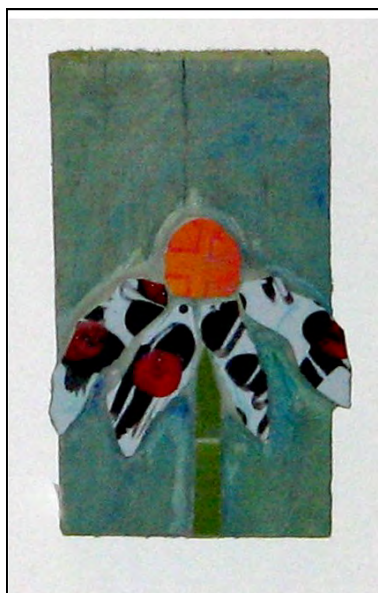
When we met in August to discuss future plans, all agreed that we should aim for a Christmas exhibition - but where? Finding affordable accommodation that is also near an audience is always a challenge - but there are places out there, as we were assured by one of our members, Clive Weake: he had recently seen a student exhibition in a disused office block, and undertook to make enquiries - and soon reported back that the space was ours for the asking, at no charge, and located in the centre of Manchester - and we could have it at a time to coincide with the annual Christmas Markets.

Feeling that all our boxes had been ticked, we went along to view our temporary residence - which was when the cold feet began to set in. (These were later to become a rather more literal feature). The space was *huge*. Being the ground floor of an incomplete office block, it boasted concrete floors, glass walls to three sides, concrete pillars, and the sad remains of the students' exhibition that had vacated it. What it didn't boast was lighting and heating - but there was a board of electrical sockets precariously perched in one corner. (And we were not being charged for electricity....)

Potters are nothing if not resourceful. With a bit of manoeuvring, and a lot of emulsion paint, the students' abandoned MDF constructions became walls and screens, and we reduced the space to a manageable size and shape. We all then raided our homes for electrical heaters and lights, as well as extension cables: the real inspiration was the purchase from ebay of a huge length of rope lights, which were festooned around the three glass walls, giving a very welcoming atmosphere, as well as announcing our presence to the passing public. Added to by the obligatory Christmas tree (which did double duty as a display area for all our porcelain tree decorations) it lent just the right seasonal ambience.

Stands for the work were the next problem: again, Clive's resourcefulness came to the rescue. Using chipboard and halving joints, he constructed a stand for each of the 14 exhibitors, and we met one cold day in November to paint them all with emulsion and to set up the overall layout of the room. As we were 14 very different potters, with limited experience of setting up an exhibition, we asked Barbara Wood if she could spare a day of her valuable time to set it all out to its best advantage - which she duly did, and that really was when the transformation from stark glass and concrete to elegant exhibition took place.

One of clay's main attractions for me is its sheer versatility, and this was amply demonstrated by the variety and range of work that was on display at the Hive: from Su Hudson's reptiles, so realistic we were all expecting them to move, to Sylvia Glover's richly glazed elegant pots, to Janice Thorn's intricate mosaics, nearly all aspects of the craft were on display here. Ruth Enstone and Sandra Martin both make planters, but their approaches couldn't be more different, Ruth's echoing the earthy tones of the garden, while Sandra's bright glazes echo those of a riotous herbaceous border.



Janice Thorn

Michael Wild and Barbara Chadwick both make birds ~ but again, how different is their approach: Michael's have real chicken bones for their legs and nose cones made from drinks cans strapped to their faces, while depositing golden poo on the cornice-shaped stand. Barbara's, meanwhile, have subtle smoke- and raku-fired surfaces, and sit on lovely pieces of driftwood.



Hazel Higham

Clive is inspired by the countryside around him and draws aspects of it through slip onto large platters: Hazel Higham also uses slip decoration, but in bold colours and chintz-like motifs, making functional domestic ware that would brighten any kitchen. Rebecca May again uses slip, but trails it in subtle sinuous patterns around fissures in the surface through which other fissures and patterns can be seen on the layers below, creating miniature geological strata, and containing them to create elegant wall panels.

Like Sylvia, Katrina Nowotynski uses a rich glaze and elegance of form, while Gill McMillan enjoys the subtlety of delicate lustres on porcelain, using it to create a range of decorative vessels, as well as some original and attractive jewellery. She also uses the quality of undecorated stoneware to create sculptural vessels, highlighting their edges with a narrow band of colour. Jill Hamson also enjoys the rough textures of stoneware, contrasting it in her tall sculptural pots with broken slip surfaces that resemble tree bark.

My own work concentrates on content, finding the technique appropriate to the task as necessary: hence, I too scratch through slip when I want to create a graphic area, as in the stand for *lesser cod*, and I also use the unadorned texture of the clay to make boats that contrast with smooth delicacy of porcelain for the figures they convey. I use glazed areas to contrast against those decorated only with oxides or slip; like a magpie, I am always looking for new effects and techniques that can enrich my work.

Clay is such a rich and versatile material, which is what keeps us all obsessed! And which is also what made this exhibition the exciting event it turned out to be.



Jan Lewis-Eccleston

Our thanks go to Barbara Wood for her professional input, Clive Weake for his indomitable resourcefulness, Barbara Chadwick for the most amazing canapés on our opening night, Gill McMillan for organising the rest of the refreshments, Sylvia Glover for her unerring support, and everyone else for bringing together a wonderful collection of work and for making this happen!



Sylvia Glover

Honest Pots - Ian Howie

York Art Gallery
Until 9 October 2011

This is not a show of worthy but dull brown wares, as the title may suggest. It is a wonderful selection of gems of country earthenware, from the medieval period onwards, shown beside some of the best of the craft and studio pottery that it has inspired over the last 100 years. The spacious and well-lit display in York Art Gallery's recently refurbished ceramics gallery suggestively combines ancient and modern pots, side by side. This allows the visitor to make valuable connections and comparisons across periods, and offers many different narratives to be picked up.

One of the first pots to catch the eye is a really large seventeenth century bung-hole pot by the York Wedgwoods, the magnificently pulled handles showing a lovely folded-over detail. A stack of pancheons, that multifunctional cross between a bowl and a bucket, demonstrates efficient kiln packing. Other obsolete forms on show here include the Dutch oven – a half-pot with an internal shelf for meat roasting in front of the fire - and the ham pan.



Strength of form is exemplified in a good pitcher or jug, requiring control and fluency for the thrown swelling and constriction, creation of the lip and pulling of the handle. Jim Malone described such medieval handles as having the energy of a striking snake, and we get to



see one of his jugs beside a range of small and large medieval predecessors. Phillip Eglin, best known for his large figures, is represented by Six Jugs, each made from plastic-bottle or tin-can clay impressions, manipulated into dumpy but elegant reworkings of the form. His glazes are the same colour families as the source pots, but don't have the lush richness of medieval lead. That works well, because nothing else about the pots is exactly medieval either. Malone and Eglin offer contrasting routes for a maker to respond to pots of the past. Like Malone, you can strive to relive and make them afresh, or like Eglin, keep a bit more distance to digest and reconfigure them. Simon Carroll has taken the second route, as he gives us mashed-up Toft-trailing juxtaposed with an anagama aesthetic of bare, disrupted clay. Ugly? Beautiful? Certainly fascinating.

Varieties of pattern are explored in depth elsewhere, as we see the evolution of a meander pattern at Winchcombe Pottery. A joint Elijah Comfort and Sid Tustin piece is redone by Michael Cardew and then by Ray Finch, in rich stoneware on a larger scale. Then we have Welsh feathering from the eighteenth century on a shallow platter. Neat and dotty trailing is present on a delicate tyg by Thomas Toft from the 1600s.

The fast and loose side of slip trailing is also exuberantly represented by some 1700s Derbyshire ware, the slip line poured wet on wet with crazy wiggles.

The same supreme level of technique which produced that decoration is shown in a crisp print of the early

1960s film of Isaac Button at Soil Hill Pottery, one of the last functioning country potteries. It's worth the trip to York just to see him raw glaze a large bread crock with a single pint of liquid, casually run round inside the rim then swirled out. The easy removal from the wheel of a just-thrown cider jar – lifted straight off with a dod of clay in the mouth to retain the air and the shape – is another moment for the potting Oscars. The Soil Hill pots on show are themselves professionally uniform, eschewing all throwing marks and firing variations, which reminds us that the purpose of the hand-made changes over time and for different markets.

The debt of Cardew and Leach to the professional country potters is shown in photographs around the wall. There's one of the Winchcombe team in the 20s or 30s which includes Elijah Comfort, born in 1863. Another shows Leach and Hamada watching a handle-pulling demonstration by Mr Pascoe of Lake's Cornish pottery. Much of the twentieth century craft pottery here was made for special or everyday domestic use, and there are lovely pots by David Lloyd Jones, John Leach, Jane Hamlyn, Geoffrey Whiting and Ray Finch. Pots for display or commemoration include Clive Bowen's magnificent satiny green jar and Geoff Fuller's bench figures beneath Halley's Comet in 1986.



c: Clive Bowen + York Museums Trust

The modern focal point of the exhibition is the Devon slipware potter Doug Fitch. He has a group of large bottles and jugs, confidently thrown with glowing lead glazes. The lips and handles could be made with greater finesse and confidence, but as a whole his pots sit very well with the old ones in the room. A film shows Fitch making, wood firing, digging clay (surely not his normal practice!), playing in his band and giving a special jug to the flower ladies in his local church. The film is interesting and well made, and it's good for the non-potting public to see a living breathing potter. The choice of Fitch as the exhibition's modern focus does rather strengthen the idea that potters inhabit the rural idyll and I'd like to see another

film of, say, Eglin in his Staffordshire studio. Nevertheless, this is a great exhibition. In curatorial collaboration with Manchester Metropolitan University, York has harnessed its historic and modern collections to great effect.

Honest Pots is a rich, stimulating show of outstanding pottery that deserves repeated visits.



c: York Museums Trust

Members' Gallery

Let me have images of your latest work for inclusion in the members' gallery - Ed





6

- 1: Ruth Charlton - **Ethel**
- 2: Sylvia Glover - **Slender Vases**, dry blue glaze,
- 3: Steve Booton - **Bowl**, pierced, tenmoku glaze, bamboo - 30cm dia
- 4: Lesley Nason - **Three Trees** - porcelain wall piece
- 5: Rebecca May
- 6: Catherine Boyne Whitelegg - **Raku Lamb**
- 7: Bethan Jones - **Green Platter + Cup**
- 8: Ian Baldwinson - **Vase** - St Thomas + grog, stoneware fired, mosaic inlaid with found ceramic pieces
- 9: Janice Thorn
- 10: Vivien Richmond



7



9



8



10

Curator's Corner - Helen Walsh

From the WA Ismay archives...

Members may know that as well as giving York his enormous collection of post-war British studio pottery, WA Ismay (1910-2001) also left us his archive. This is a rich resource full of information in the form of letters, photographs, books, journals and much more, over 10,000 items in all. Recent exploration amongst the archive has revealed information about Barbara Cass (1921-1992), the first potter whose work WA Ismay collected and a sadly neglected figure in British studio pottery.



Exhibitions of her work in Wakefield brought her to the attention of WA Ismay, who, after visiting her studio in York, set off on his odyssey of collecting. We are fortunate to have a



set of photographic negatives in the archive

which were taken by Ismay during one of his visits between 1955-1961. These give us a fascinating glimpse into the working life of one of York's studio potters.

Images show her throwing, decorating and glazing in her studio which was situated at number 10, opposite the shrine to Saint Margaret Clitheroe. The Shambles was originally home to 25 butchers' shops and in some views of the exterior of the studio, we can see Barbara making use of the meat-hooks above the window by having a line of jugs hanging from them.

Barbara Cass was born in Rosdock, Germany and after leaving school in 1940, she studied sculpture in Berlin. After the war she learnt wood and stone carving at the Forces Study Centre in Lubeck, became interested in pottery and practiced throwing in her spare time.

She moved to the UK in 1950, settling in Leeds and starting up her pottery on a site which had an old bottle neck, muffle kiln, which had been unfired for more than 20 years. Unfortunately the site was cleared and the kiln knocked down to allow for road-widening in 1952, so Cass moved on and set up a new pottery in the heart of historic York, on The Shambles. She remained there until 1961, when she moved to Warwickshire.



Other news from York Art Gallery

One other thing to look out for is the re-opening of the Burton Gallery on the first floor of York Art Gallery, at the end of January. Since our *Gallery of Pots* opened in September 2009, the Burton Gallery has looked decidedly shabby in comparison. Despite its glass ceiling, visitors constantly complain of poor lighting and the bright red, green and blue painted walls get mixed reviews. During the second half of 2010 we were finally able to give it a much deserved facelift—cleaning the glass ceiling, new lighting, re-clad walls and refinished floor.

The gallery has been re-hung with many of our most

popular paintings and a few that have not been seen for a while. Like in other spaces in York Art Gallery, items from different collections are displayed together, so as well as paintings, expect to see sculpture, costume, stained glass, photography and of course ceramics. Loans from contemporary artists include a series of plates produced by Steve Dixon in response to a painting by Peter Lely.

Helen is Assistant Curator of Decorative Art, York Museums Trust.

All photos courtesy of York Museums Trust



Kilns Clay Fire and Fun

July 8th 9th 10th 2011

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dpots1@yahoo.ca

Ferric Fuming - John Cook

Ferric Fuming is one of the many methods used to decorate and fire ceramic materials. It forms part of a group of techniques that are described in the textbooks as Naked Clay, clay fired without a glaze. Clay decorated and fired with the application of chemical materials that do not form a glass, but fuse with the body of the pot when fired, liberating colour.

This article covers my own experiences of firing ferric chloride (ferric fuming), sugars and salt, steel wool, and copper wire, in a foil sagger in a gas raku kiln.



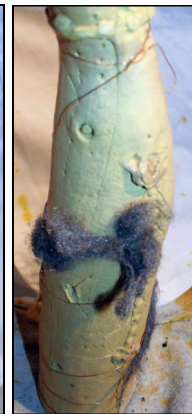
The equipment



Ferric chloride applied in a plastic bucket



Sugar applied as a concentrate



Wrapped with copper wire & steel wool

Ferric chloride is not a specific ceramic material, so it has to be purchased through an electronic components supplier, such as Maplin or Rapid Electronics, on the high street or the net; it is used in the etching of copper circuit boards not ceramics. The best source is in a granular form not a liquid. Small quantities can be relatively expensive. I use double the recommended manufacturers strength on my pots, and store the mix in a glass jar, use rubber gloves, a mask and goggles when applying the mix. **Ferric chloride is caustic and toxic, so beware;** it also stains my best jeans, rots the metals on brushes, and gives off toxic gasses when fired. When wrapped and fired in kitchen foil, ordinary supermarket stuff, reds, oranges and yellows can be liberated on the ceramic surface, sometimes in the most spectacular patterns when combined with other materials.



Wrapped in foil

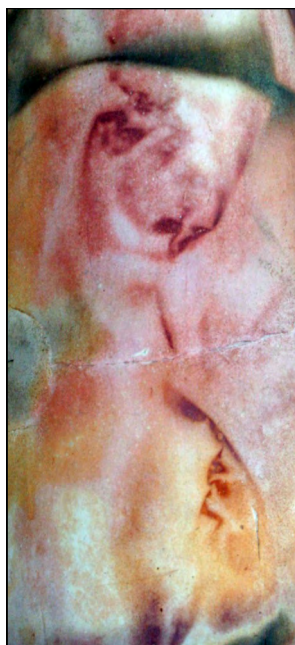
With the ferric chloride I use sugar and salt, which produces tones of greys to black, steel wool which produces soft browns, copper wire which produces black patterning and sometimes a green. All are fired quickly to 800°C in my gas raku kiln. Starting with a very hot kiln, the whole process takes less than 20 minutes. I use smooth raku clay, which I make into paper clay. I use two coats of ferric chloride onto a biscuit body, apply sugar and salt in a concentrated syrup mix, and fix steel wool and copper wire with masking tape or simply drape or wrap round the pot. The decorated pot is then covered with a foil sagger loosely wrapped. The pockets formed by the foil give the surface of the pot space to develop colour in a complex way.

A second foil is wrapped over the first. This second wrap protects the first from the heat and protects the chemical reactions. When this foil surface begins to disintegrate, it does not set on fire; the pot is removed, stripped of foil, and sprayed with water to develop the colour. I remove the pots with my tongs and welding gloves. Finished pots can be re-fired over and over again if the first firing is unsatisfactory, or darker tones are required.

The materials that I use are only part of the story, experiment and try seaweed or banana

skin, and do some student stuff and research current best practice. Some potters mix their own surface chemicals to their own very complex and disgusting volatile recipes.

The whole process is fairly idiot proof, but beware of undercooking the pot and always start with a very hot kiln, and the maxim should be less is best, do not over apply other materials, the main effect should be from the ferric chloride. You can finish the pot with a good quality wax, and buff to a shine. Oh, and by the way, make sure the neighbours are out, the cat is in the fridge, the windows are boarded up, the insurances are up to date, and the washing is in when you fire up the kiln. Keep breathing to a minimum and have a shower when you are done. Enjoy.



Surface detail of ferric fumed pot



Finished pots

NPA Membership

Subscription Rates:

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£22 (if paid by standing order)
 £25 (if paid by cheque or Postal Order)
 £30 (for overseas members)

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(2 members at one address) £34 (has to be paid by standing order)

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(please send evidence of eligibility e.g. photocopy of SU card, UB40 etc.) Contact the membership secretary:



Margaret Lawrenson
 'Seven Firs', Kemp Rd,
 Swanland,
 E.Yorks
 HU14 3LZ
 Tel: 01482 634784
 E-mail: margaret@sevenfirs.karoo.co.uk

You can download a copy of the membership form from our website - northern-potters.co.uk.

If any of your contact details change, remember to let us know

MAAC - Forthcoming Events

The Ashmolean Transformed

Monday 31st January 2.00 – 4.00 pm

A unique chance to visit the recently redesigned Ashmolean Museum. Dr Clare Pollard, Curator of Japanese Art will give us a guided tour and talk on some of the Museum's world class ceramics treasures. There will also be a pot handling session with a look at some of the contemporary tea wares including a new tea bowl by Koie Ryoji. This will be a very special visit (outside the museum's normal opening hours) and will be restricted to just 15 people. An early response will be necessary to avoid disappointment.

Details and booking form available from **Harriet Coleridge**: harrietcoleridge@aol.com

Studio Visit - Ruthanne Tudball

5th March 2011

Come and see Ruthanne Tudball at work in her studio: creating her unique functional soda vapour-glazed stoneware and porcelain pieces in her inimitable style. Ruthanne will be throwing, assembling and talking about the firing process at Temple Barn Pottery, Solomon's Temple, Welbourne, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 3LD. The visit will be from 11am to 4pm with a break for lunch from 12.30 to 1.30.

There may also be time for you to include a visit to the Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts at the University of East Anglia, Norwich. Full details from **Joy Bosworth**: info@joybosworthceramics.com

"Gallery Owners"

21st May 2011

A presentation by leading gallery owners, followed by a discussion. Full programme, venue and other details will be available soon from either: **Fay de Winter**: faydewinter@hotmail.com (for LP members) or **Richard Ballantyne** : rairballantyne@aol.com (for CPA members and non members)

We still have vacancies on the Committee: we need one more CPA member and a Student member (for one year only). So if you would like to help us organise events for you – the members, or if you know of a ceramics student, please contact Michael Jones or John Masterton, or any of the other Committee members for more information. Members are elected for three years and the Committee meets four times a year in London on a Saturday afternoon. Meetings will be held in the new CPA Ceramics centre opposite the British Museum, so you will have a chance to see the latest CPA exhibitions before or after the meeting, as well as meeting other potters from around the country.

MAAC Committee Members for 2011

Michael Jones – Chairman

mike_a_jonze@yahoo.co.uk tel: 01384 255 867

John Masterton – Secretary

john@jmasterton.freeseve.co.uk tel: 01279 723 229

Veronica Newman - Publicity Coordinator veronica@veronicanewman.co.uk tel: 0033 562 07 87 20

Joy Bosworth

Richard Ballantyne

Harriet Coleridge

Ian Marsh

David Wright

Future Events/Activities

We now have the opportunity to hold meetings and workshops in the new CPA Ceramics centre. If you have any ideas for a talk, slideshow, demonstration, or workshop or any other events related to ceramics, that you think would be of interest, please let us know. If you have any suggestions please e-mail or ring up any member of the committee as listed above, Or, if you prefer, you can send your suggestions/ comments etc by Post to :-

The MAAC Committee
c/o Craft Potters Association,
63 Great Russell Street,
London WC1B 3BF
Tel 020 3137 0750

MAAC is the Members and Associates Council (of the Craft Potters Association)

Claude Frere-Smith ceramics classes

Nature's World, Middlesbrough, TS5 7YN
Wed , Thurs or Fri classes, January - April
All abilities welcome - £130 full term, £65 half term
claudEFRERE@yahoo.co.uk, or 01287 204051

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or email willardwhitelegg@aol.com

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Contact Jim or Liz at:

Booth House Gallery and Pottery

3 Booth House Lane, Holmfirth, Huddersfield HD9 2QT

Telephone 01484 685270

Diary

- 20 January **Closing date for applications - Out of the Earth II - NENPA exhibition, Crook Hall - contact kris@krislambert.net**
- 22 January - 5 March LACi (Lancashire Art & Craft initiative) exhibition, Platform Gallery, Clitheroe ribblevalley.gov.uk/info/200270
- 7 February **Closing date for applications - NPA selected exhibition at New School House Gallery, York - lesley.nason@btopenworld.com**
- 19 March - 7 May LACi exhibition, Towneley Hall Museum & Art Gallery, Rawtenstall burnley.gov.uk/towneleyinfo/17/towneley_hall

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Cost of advert for one issue:

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Regional News

Please contact your regional coordinator with suggestions for events, or if. You can get information on activities in any region by contacting the appropriate co-ordinator.

North East

Co-ordinator: Geoff Proudlock, 46 Cleveland Terrace, Darlington, DL3 7HA
Tel: 01325 353445
Email: geoff@gproudlock.plus.com



"OUT OF THE EARTH II" - exhibition in Durham City 22nd April to 22nd May 2011.

This is a reminder that you still have time to participate in this exhibition, which is open to all members of NPA.

Although it is an outdoor exhibition in Crook Hall gardens, your pieces do not have to be garden-specific or garden sculpture.

A large variety of work can be displayed - on walls, in trees, in flower beds and grass areas, around the pond or in the courtyard area by the house. As long as you are happy for your work to be displayed outside you can submit large or small pieces.

You will need to email Kris Lambert at kris@krislambert.net for application forms and further information. Applications need to be in by 20th January 2011 so send for your forms as soon as possible.

Best wishes for Christmas and New Year,
Geoff Proudlock

East

Co-ordinator: Ann Decker
Email: ann.decker1@btinternet.com
Tel: 01904 788156



It was wonderful to see such a wide selection of ceramics on sale at the Tithe Barn in Poppleton on 20 & 21 November. It was a pleasure for me to meet other NPA-East members and talk about their work. Throughout November and December, various members held Open Houses, Viewings and Exhibitions despite the wintery weather.

National Ceramics Week is the first week in May 2011 and several members have already listed their Open Studios on the Craft and Design web site. If you are planning an event for that week you can go to www.craftanddesign.net to find out how to list your details.

If any member would like to host an event in the new year, please contact me either to send out a notice to the region or to discuss details. I hope 2011 is a fantastic year for everyone.

South East

Co-ordinator: Brian Holland
Email: brian.holland100@virgin.net
Tel: 01909 724781



Happy new year from and to the SE Group, we are planning several exhibitions and activities for the forthcoming year, and I will be in touch when dates and venues are confirmed.

South West

Co-ordinator: Jan Lewis-Eccleston
Email: jle.ceramics@yahoo.co.uk
Tel: 01625 263974



The South West Region is recovering from its inaugural exhibition, and basking in its success, and will be meeting later in January to discuss this and future plans for the region, amongst which is a proposed exhibition at Knutsford sometime in August - Watch this space!

West

Co-ordinator: Dave Harper / Geoff Wilcock
E-mail: dpharper@uclan.ac.uk / ghwilcock@uclan.ac.uk
Tel: 01782 617801 or Tel: 01204 674901



Members met for a Christmas meal in Preston City centre prior to the branch meeting at the 'Bitter Suite' pub in Preston Tuesday 15th December.

The main topic of debate was the forthcoming exhibitions that have been organized.

Arteria Gallery. Lancaster. 15th January – 26th March. 'TeaParty'

PR1 Gallery. Preston. (date to be confirmed last 2 weeks March) Please apply to Geoff Wilcock email ghwilcock@uclan.ac.uk or b-art-on@talktalk.net all members welcome. Details to follow

Lytham Heritage Centre. Lytham. 21st June – 10th July 'Clay Matters' Please apply to Geoff Wilcock as above all members welcome. Details to follow.

The meeting closed with the customary showing of our themed vessels which was of course 'Christmas'

To all members of N.P.A. Happy New Year.

North West

Co-ordinator: Roger Bell, Gale Mount, 11 High Gale, Ambleside, Cumbria, LA22 0BG
Tel: 015394 32730 E-mail: bell.roger@btinternet.com



The snowy weekend of 4th & 5th of December saw Sue Bartholomew, Roger Bell, Maggie Berkowitz, Rebecca Callis, John Kershaw, Angie Mitchell, Bob Park & Jane Smith take part in Bay Potters Plus at the Heron Corn Mill in Beetham. The ice forced us to cancel the Friday evening PV. On the Saturday a large crowd assembled to hear Mike Eden explain his current work using computer aided design and machine tools to produce complex pieces that could not be hand made. The complexity and expense leaves throwers and hand-builders some before we need to retrain!

For 2011 Mary Chapplehow is hoping to arrange the regular show at Keswick Museum which could not take place in 2010 because of refurbishment. Work is ongoing for the ceramics week in May coordinated by Craft & Design magazine. Open studios planned can be seen on the Potfest website for all the country and discussions can be followed on LINKEDIN for what else can be done.

As always I would like input from NW members as to what they would like organised and what they could help organise.

First or Worst - Liz Robison

People sometimes say to me, 'Don't you do any potting yourself?' To which I feel like replying that this is not a question that you would ask a brain surgeon's wife. Recently while sorting through historic albums and scrap-books as part of Jim's 70+ at Seventy effort, I came across forgotten photos which show that once I did indeed do some potting.

I met Jim when I was an exchange teacher in Michigan and I had to come back to the UK at the end of the year and it was another year before he could join me. I thought it would be a good idea to go off to night school and do a pottery class, (to impress him, if I'm honest.) I also knitted him an Aran sweater that winter.

Accompanied by my friend, Zoe, I enrolled in a class held in some old Victorian school buildings in Leeds. Great fun. In the first lesson we made pinch pots and on the way to the second lesson, I said to Zoe, 'I wonder how my Grecian urn looks this week?' The teacher had all the pots out when we arrived and he critiqued them one by one. He picked up mine and asked, 'Whose is the gnome's cap?'

Anyway, we did make progress, as the photo shows. I made an impressive-sized coiled pot with two necks – (why two?) Even though it was pretty hideous I felt quite a sense of achievement. When the teacher joined us later in the coffee break he said, 'I think your pot has just died.' But I was able to retrieve it to have it biscuit fired and glazed with the ubiquitous night-school sludge-coloured glaze, and it did service for several years, probably as a doorstop.



The classroom was equipped with one wheel which meant everyone got one go a term on it. When it was my turn it must have been near Bonfire night and some kid threw a banger through an open window. Of course, we all shrieked and jumped and when I looked, the pot I was attempting to throw had disappeared to be found leaning drunkenly on a shelf in the nearby damp cupboard at the end of the evening.

Zoe's big pot was so heavy it took two of us to carry it to the car – when I reminded her of this lately she said it probably had to be done under the cover of darkness too!

The next year we did jewellery.

Please send in your own 'first or worst' memories - Ed



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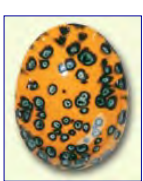
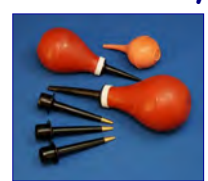
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Jan Lewis-Eccleston : Jonah
Winner of the craft&design
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2010

