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members

NPA NEWS

The magazine of the Northern Potters Association



July - August 2011

www.northern-potters.co.uk



In this issue:

Fired up,
Presenting to Potting,
Marriage, Clay, Life and
all that,
Urban Traces
'Transformations'

Editor's Comment

A very clever move from David Wright got him a place on the front cover this time - by sending in his Ikebana'd pot, I got a chance to pick the beautiful red in the calla lily as my 'theme' colour for the issue. It won't work every time, but it's worth a try.

David also provided an entertaining First and Worst article, so he's well represented. Please send in your own first and/or worst features - they're always interesting to read, and an excuse to stroll down memory lane, or own up to your most embarrassing ceramic secrets.

I found it fascinating to read Jenny Eaton's article about her long break from ceramics, followed by a return to clay but in a totally new direction. I'm looking forward to seeing Jenny's new work at Potfest in the Pens.

Another total change took Lizi Botham from Children's tv presenter to emerging potter. Her piece will encourage anyone thinking about applying for the Pens to make the decision to give it a go. It doesn't work for everyone, but it is a supportive environment for anyone taking a first step into such a public arena.

John Rivers' piece on the planned NPA-SE exhibition in Sheffield Cathedral whets the appetite. It's good to hear that John is so passionate about the venture, and I trust it will be a great success. For anyone not sure what can be achieved in such surroundings, I urge you to look at the pictures from the Cumbrian Potters' exhibition in Greystoke church (follow the link on page 18) - they're truly inspirational.

For a brand new member, Gerald Unwin probably has more ceramic experience than many of us will ever accumulate! He writes about how he is making the transition from teaching to doing.

Christie Brown will give the final NPA talk in a series organised by Liz Collinson, at Storey Gallery in Lancaster on October 14 - put it in your diary! Thanks to Liz for all the effort she's put in to persuading such high profile artists to visit the area. We'd love to do something similar in another area, so if anyone wants to volunteer to get involved (or can suggest a suitable venue?), please get in touch.

Please make sure you read the information about the new website on page 21 - if you haven't already sent your details in, please do so soon. As so much of the current website is out of date, we decided it would be better to collect in new data from everybody rather than trying to sift through what was there and correct it. This is a significant exercise to undertake, but we're sure it will be worthwhile. Sylvia Holmes has done a wonderful job on the design of the new site - keeping it clear and simple, while serving a useful purpose for members.

And finally... don't miss your chance to apply for our next selected exhibition at Gallery Oldham, from November to January - see page 4 for details.

Cover :

David Wright - **Square Bottle**, coiled, beaten, wood fired with wood ash glaze. This piece was chosen and used for the tea ceremony at Clay 2 day recently in Holland. Ikebana is by Iesaka Ruriko

Barbara Wood

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Next Issue

To contribute to the next issue of NPA News, send your articles, comments and / or images to
Barbara Wood
by 22 August 2011

You can write an article about a gallery / exhibition / place of interest you have visited, about your own ceramic work, or that of someone you admire. Technical articles are always popular with readers, as is the 'first or worst' feature. Don't be shy about promoting yourself!

Please send between 300 and 1000 words, and send them as an email attachment, or on a cd, or in longhand. Email attachments are easiest for me to include, but I will re-type if absolutely necessary! High resolution (big jpeg files) digital images are preferred, as these give the best quality for printing, but I can scan photos. Low resolution (small files) digital images are the worst - they may be fine for websites, but don't have enough detail for a printed magazine. Send your text as a .doc file (or equivalent) - if it's a jpeg, or a pdf, it's not easy for me to edit it as necessary.

Make sure you have permission to use any images you send. Some galleries / artists will allow you to take photographs of their work for your own reference, but not for publication. If you are asked to include a copyright statement please send it to me and I will use it (e.g. all images provided by York Museums Trust include something like 'courtesy of John Maltby / York Museums Trust').

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.

Exhibitions and Events - Lesley Nason



Northern Stars

New School House Gallery, York, 21st April to 4th June 2011

As Barbara Wood reported in the last newsletter, the preview evening on 21st April was very well attended with sales over that Easter weekend exceeding £2,500, a wonderful start for our exhibition. Lots of time, thought and effort was expended by the gallery owners Robert and Paula to ensure that interested visitors continued to flow through the gallery doors throughout the exhibition. Many of our members also worked hard to promote the exhibition to their contacts, thank you all. And everyone's efforts paid off, as sales at the end of the exhibition totalled £9,189.

Most of the 26 exhibitors sold work. A total of 124 pieces were sold, with 69 pieces below £50, 37 pieces between £51 and £100, 15 pieces between £101 and £300 and 3 pieces for over £301. The highest priced item sold for £1,250 and the lowest £10. I think it's wonderful that we can show quality work in a range of prices that will appeal to the discerning collector, whatever their budget.

As this has been my first exhibition for NPA I would like to thank all the members who have helped me bring it all together. What I have learnt from this exhibition I intend to use and improve on for the next one.

Photos: Garry Uttley

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Gallery Oldham, Oldham

www.galleryoldham.org.uk

This will be the venue for the next NPA selected exhibition, running from 12 Nov 2011 until 6 Jan 2012, a great time of year to take advantage of Christmas gift purchases; in addition the gallery would like to include a number of selected pieces in their gallery shop.

The gallery is also very keen on any talks or demonstrations that our members can offer. If you are interested in participating, please include details with your application.

Gallery Oldham is a bold, contemporary building situated in Oldham's Cultural Quarter. It was opened in February 2002 and has received an award from the Royal Institute of British Architects. It adjoins a library and learning centre which opened in 2006. Gallery Oldham brings together the once separate museum and gallery services and shows Oldham's extensive art, social and natural history collections alongside touring work, contemporary and international art, design and craft.

We are aiming to hold the selection for the exhibition in September 2011, therefore **the deadline for receiving your applications will be Monday 31st August 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 01283 736017.

Book Review - Roger Bell

WALL PIECES

Publ: A & C Black

Dominique Bivar Segurado

£15.99

A & C Black have yet again found a specific subject area in ceramics which can justify a separate Ceramic Handbook without significant overlap with other books in the series. The author though only making for 12 years has been making her mark, being selected by the Crafts Council to tour Japan in 2008.

The introduction does not convey any excitement or enthusiasm. Plodding perhaps best describes text such as 'Through ceramic wall pieces, three dimensional forms are entering the realm of the painting and hung canvas'. The first chapter, written by Anne Mercedes rather than the author, does no more to inspire. While discussing the history of wall pieces from 5000 years ago to the present, the oldest illustration is the Gamble Room at the V & A dating to 1865 – 1877. It does, however, introduce the useful breakdown into 4 (overlapping) categories: ceramic load-bearing walls, added decorative and protective skins, removable ceramic compositions hung on a wall and temporary ceramic installations.

After this disappointing start the quality and content of the succeeding chapters is vastly improved and the photographs and illustrations are well used to enhance the points being made. 'Designing and Planning' emphasizes how much more thought and effort needs to go in before making starts than for stand-alone ceramic pieces. The location must be the prime constraint for all but the smaller pieces. If the piece can, and therefore will, be touched then sharp edges and surfaces that can be marked, must be avoided. The type of wall material and its strength can be a major constraint on weight and hence size, while an exterior location affects both making methods and surface finish.

The third chapter on hanging and mounting goes into alternative methods of attaching the finished product directly to the wall or after fixing to wood, metal, perspex or whatever. This kind of information is not easily come across in a single publication. The author sensibly suggests specialist publications or, if necessary, use of a specialist company for larger and more complex pieces. Fourth and fifth chapters consider projects by UK, other European, US, Japanese and Brazilian makers. They repeat and emphasize the considerations of chapters two and three but also emphasize innovation and particularly sensitivity to both the specific physical site and the commissioner's brief.

New Books - Roger Bell

NEW BOOKS

10,000 Years of Pottery (Reissue)	Emmanuel Cooper	24.99
African Pottery Roulettes Past & Present	Haour etc	25.00
Ceramic Transfer Printing	Kevin Petrie	16.99
Chetham & Wooley Stonewares: 1793-1821	Colin Wyman	35.00
A Chosen Path: The Ceramic Art of Karen Karnes	Ed Mark Shapiro	\$40.00
The Complete Guide To Painting & Decorating Porcelain	P. Newell-Dunkley	24.99
Correspondence of Josiah Wedgwood	Ed K. Farrer	65.00
The Etchings of Bernard Leach	Simon Olding	15.00
Korean Buncheong Ceramics	Lee & Jeon	35.00
Out of Anarchy: The Work of Donald Locke		\$75.00
Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures & Monsoon Winds	Regina Krahl	\$65.00
Yoshitomo Nara – Ceramic Works		34.95

Fired up - Gerald Unwin



Less than a year ago, I finished working as a secondary school teacher and adult education lecturer, having been employed in South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire at a range of schools and colleges with various degrees of responsibility for three and a half decades. After doing a Fine Art degree at Leeds Poly (now Metropolitan) in the early '70's, I'd worked for Mick Shone (a tutor on the degree course there) at Wood Rhydding Pottery in Ilkley for a while, producing jardinières, and doing my own creative work on the side. Just after I finished my degree, Trevor Nicklin - a tutor at Chesterfield College of Art and Design - phoned and asked if I might help teach a pottery evening class during this time as well, which meant hitch-hiking down to Chesterfield every week and working Saturdays to make up for lost travel time. I guess those were the days.....

Having spent most of my time doing ceramics whilst on the Fine Art course, I had a joint exhibition of my sculptural pieces at Trevor Whetstone's 'Broadline' Gallery in Rodley and soon after went on to do a PGCE at Bretton College. I'd taught ceramics, art and technology in a majority of what are euphemistically referred to as 'challenging' schools, throwing up rewards and frustrations in pretty well equal measure. With a drop in the birthrate meaning falling secondary school rolls, after over thirty years in education, the opportunity to take early retirement (coupled with redundancy) arose. I'd loved teaching with its highlights being not only superb 'A' level art and GCSE ceramics exhibitions, but the numerous waifs and strays finding safe haven in my department - and making phenomenal progress in what they must have found to be a welcoming enclave.

Working on Further Education courses had proved extremely enjoyable. One student, who had joined the class just to 'get out of the house' had, after achieving the highest qualification she could with me, gone on to gain further credits guaranteeing a place on an art degree course - coming out with a 'First'. She now earns a living from her art. Another major plus was seeing the expressions on the faces of students when an exhibition of work by a group of mentally handicapped was being opened by the Lord Mayor.

Still being in contact with people now in their mid forties that I'd taught in the late 1970's had been as much of a delight as people still at college asking if they can come for a coffee with me, and youngsters still at school asking when I'd be coming back. But no. Despite the pension I'd paid into for over thirty years not being enough to cover basic living costs I thought 'Now's the time to make a move' and boy, with the issues facing the public sector, strikes, falling school rolls, low staff morale and a government cutting left, right and centre, am I glad I did!

I'd always made ceramics and done paintings throughout my career - displaying and selling them at 'open' art events and The Great Sheffield Art Show, but having much more time to think as well as express my ideas I got into making ceramic figures, taking photos, sketching, attending lectures and recitals, gardening, fly-fishing, and catching up not only with three decades of neglected DIY and house maintenance, but with myself as well. However, despite welcoming the more tranquil and un-rushed pace of life, I found I missed terribly both people and actually teaching.



In the first months of my new status - did I describe myself as 'a recently retired teacher and lecturer', a 'pensioner', 'unemployed' or an 'artist, ceramicist, sculptor and photographer' - not having wanted to commit myself to anything remotely regular after years of timetables, bells and deadlines, I found myself with nothing to replace the companionship and mutual support of colleagues evident in the school environment.



So, yearning for a bit of rapport, I continued to organise my 'Staff, Family and Friends' walks in the Peak District and took the plunge by joining a local evening pottery class. As a newcomer I was in the process of introducing myself - 'I'm Gerald..' when another class member piped up 'It's Gerald Unwin isn't it?' going on to add 'It was you who gave me a love of ceramics in those evening classes you used to run'. Well, I was both flabbergasted and amazed. Judith had joined a class I'd run off my own bat, along with her daughter who was in one of my school art classes, some twenty years previously. Small world. Weird thing was both she and her daughter had had a premonition that she might meet me! Scary, but then they said they were, er...'like that'. It was fantastic to know she still wanted to make things and had appreciated a bit of input to her creativity years earlier.

Since joining the class I've taken delivery of a smallish kiln and hope to get the things that have been lying around for months finally fired. I've also met a couple of NPA members who, when I toured their open studios last month, suggested I join the association - quoting the 5% & 10% discount some suppliers offer as reason enough itself. Having been a bit of a loner in the artistic realm - teaching really can take it out of you - I hope to meet other members at events and shows before too long.



As for influences I think my sense of humour is a constant though I thoroughly appreciate the work of Geoff Fuller and a year or two ago had Paul Young run a workshop at the school where I taught (and which he had previously attended). I relish the treat of seeing the astonishing quality and variety of styles, methods and content found in the 'Earth & Fire' show at Rufford every year.



Always having enjoyed up-dating the artistic genre - previously having tackled still life, the madonna and child in my paintings and the cow creamer and the Toby jug, besides doing my domestic ware, torsos, commemorative slipware and figurative sculptures with regard to my ceramics, I'm developing a series of ideas related to the genre of Staffordshire flat-back ware.

In the long - or short - run - I'm hoping 'you **can** teach a new member old tricks....'

Welcome To New Members

Olinda Everett	Ashover, Chesterfield	S. Yorkshire
Yvonne Heath	Onneley, Crewe	Cheshire
Tess Spencer	Eshwinning	Durham
Ken Taylor	Bentley, Doncaster	S. Yorkshire
Gerald Unwin	Sheffield	S. Yorkshire
Deborah Wright	Fleetwood	Lancs

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

Out of the Earth II - Shirley Hetherington

Now that all the excitement of The Chelsea Flower Show has died down, we can return to the reality of our own gardens.

NE-NPA's second exhibition at Crook Hall, Durham, took place in four acres of garden. We set up at Easter, and, by the middle of May, some of the plants had overtaken the pots! This time there was more beauty and colour, as the show took place some weeks later than last year. Our work was enhanced by burgeoning foliage and visitors commented on the enjoyment of discovering ceramics amongst the vegetation. They came across Victoria Leek's white paper clay birds in flight and gathered on wires, Sara-Jane Palmer's colourful Picasso-like head of a woman near the pond, and Geoff Proudlock's quiet, thrown pots next to his wife June's hand built vessels, in perfect harmony.



Victoria Leeks - Birds in Flight

There were several Green Men to protect the garden, springs of porcelain ferns, and smoky blue pagodas in the orchard. In the trees, the surprise of dryads and goddesses, while Kris Lambert's gorgeous large red bowl lit up the woodland and Carol Metcalfe's plates were set off by the grey stone walls.

This was a very successful exhibition, more so than last year, even with fewer participants and, as we have been invited to put on a show for 2012, I would urge more members to exhibit in this spectacular and safe environment. All types of ceramics work well here, not just the sculptural pieces.

Thanks again to our hosts Maggie and Keith, and to the NE-NPA committee for all their hard work in the organisation. Who knows, perhaps Chelsea designers may even take out lead and create a ceramic garden next time, rather than plasticine!



Shirley Hetherington - Poppy Heads



Geoff Proudlock - Thrown Pots



Carolyn Corfield - Goddess

Diary

- 3 - 9 July **Holmfirth artWEEK**, Holmfirth Civiv Hall, HD9 3AS, holmfirthartweek.org.uk
- until 10 July **Clay Matters**, NPA-W exhibition at Lytham Heritage Centre
- 8 - 10 July **Kilns, Clay, Fire & Fun**, Orkneys 2nd Annual Potters' Camp - davidholmes-ceramics.com
- 8 - 29 July 'Fired Up' exhibition by Harrogate College students and tutors at The Old Court-house, Thirsk. open daily 10am - 4.30pm
- 11 - 15 July **5 day throwing course with John Stroomer**, Solway Ceramics Centre - solwayceramicscentre.org.uk
- 16 July - 6 November **Urban Traces: Ceramics and the City**, Gallery Oldham - galleryoldham.org.uk
- 21 - 24 July **Art in Action**, Waterperry Gardens - artinaction.org.uk
- 23 July **Deadline for sending details for the NPA Website** - to npawebsite@btinternet.com
- 29 - 31 July **Potfest in the Park**, Hutton-on-the-Forest, nr Penrith - potfest.co.uk
- 2 - 4 August **Raku glazing & firing course with John Scott**, Solway Ceramics Centre - solwayceramicscentre.org.uk
- 5 - 7 August **Potfest in the Pens**, Penrith - potfest.co.uk
- 9 August - 4 September **NPA-SW exhibition**, Knutsford Heritage Centre - knutsfordheritage.co.uk
- 15 - 19 August **Altering and decorating thrown forms** - 5 day course with John Calver, Solway Ceramics Centre - solwayceramicscentre.org.uk
- until 21 August **Ten Years On** - NPA member Shirley Sheppard exhibits with Janine Baldwin and Sharon Winter at Blandscliff Gallery, Scarborough
- 22 August **Deadline for next issue of NPA News** - npanews@btinternet.com
- 22 - 26 August **Decorative Earthenware** - 5 day course with Paul Young, Solway Ceramics Centre - solwayceramicscentre.org.uk
- until 27 August **Mixed exhibition** including ceramics by Sylvia Holmes and Roger Bell, Maiden Bridge Arts Centre, Tatham, Lancs. - maidenbridge.co.uk
- 31 August **Deadline for completed applications for NPA exhibition at Gallery Oldham** - lesley.nason@btopenworld.com
- until 30 September **From the Earth** - sculptures in wood by Gordon Baddeley, and clay by Roger Bell, Café in the Forest, Grizedale, Hawkshead, Cumbria
- 14 October **Christie Brown gives NPA Talk** - Storey Gallery, Lancaster - npatalk@live.co.uk

Please send me details of events you think members would like to hear about - Ed

Presenting to Potting - Lizi Botham



Lizi with witches

As a children's television presenter living in London in 1998, I never dreamt that I would be preparing for my second appearance at 'Potfest in the Pens' in 2011. Pottery was always my passion but never developed into anything more than a hobby until I left the BBC in 2006. I left London to move home to Lancashire and set up my own pottery studio for me to continue my hobby, while I pursued a career running my own children's arts and craft business. Although successful, the pottery obsession was always there and slowly took over until last year where I found myself running adult pottery classes while making and exhibiting my own work!

Last year was my first experience of exhibiting my work to the 'ceramics industry' at 'Potfest in the Pens'. I had chatted to fellow exhibitors online, all of whom were very helpful and supportive to a nervous, apprehensive newbie. I was still about to go into the unknown and I was afraid!

I arrived at Penrith and began to set up the best I could, watching carefully how the other exhibitors were working to make their stands look amazing. I looked at my attempt and wanted to go home! I felt completely out my depth and that I really shouldn't be there... I only stayed thanks to the supportive comments from the Potfest 'veterans' in the pens around me.

The next day, when the first visitors/customers arrived I was feeling nervous and, to be honest a little embarrassed about my work. They looked at my work and moved on. I was just about to despair when a gentleman approached my stall. He had seen my competition piece in the main hall (an option at Potfest to make a one off piece to enter into the competition). This piece was totally different from anything I had made before, and I had flippantly put a price on it, fully expecting to take it home at the end of the weekend. Anyway, this gentleman loved it and wanted to buy it. Well, externally I was cool, calm and collected, politely said 'Of course' and promptly completed the transaction. Internally I was jumping up and down like a crazy person screaming 'Woohoo!'.

To add to this success, the gentleman who now owned my piece, asked me to make six for an exhibition he was having at his gallery near Lancaster. Little did I know this one off piece was going to change the way I work and the pottery I produce. My six pieces are currently on show at the Maiden Bridge Arts Centre, Tatham, Lancaster.

Since this massive boost of confidence, and challenge of making the six pieces, I have been making less of the pottery I thought I wanted to make, and have now developed into sculpture, abstract and figurative pieces. I am working on quite a large scale, using my initial influences from Paganism and Pendle Witch history to make symbolic, hand built ceramics.

What a difference a year makes! This year's Potfest stand will be un-



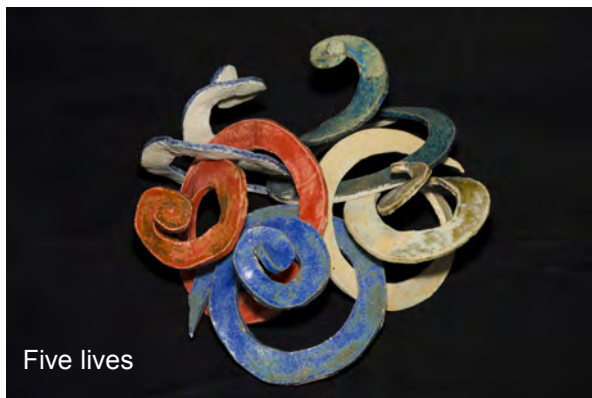
Earth,
wind, fire
and water

recognisable from last year's, as will be my attitude to the event as a whole. I now have more confidence in my own work. I know it is unusual and not everyone's cup of tea, but I am finding the processes I now go through to produce my pieces exciting and challenging.

Hopefully this will come across on my stand this year. I would love fellow Northern Potters to come and say hello and let me know what they think who knows how my work will change in the following twelve months!



Zodiac puzzle



Five lives



Ruby

Christie Brown Talk
 on October 14th

STOREY GALLERY

Storey Gallery is funded by Arts Council England, Lancaster City Council, Lancashire County Council.

All Welcome in the Lecture Theatre at 7:30pm

Lecture Theatre, Storey Gallery, Lancaster.
 Meeting House Lane, LA1 1TH

Admission :- pay at the door, £4 for public, free to NPA members. Reserve a seat by emailing NPAtalk@live.co.uk

Marriage, Clay, Life and all that - Jenny Eaton

I first got the pottery bug twenty five years ago. My beginnings were humble - an adult education class but with a very good, old school, inspirational teacher who encouraged me to buy a kiln and aspire to make beautiful pots. Fired with passionate enthusiasm, I eventually built up a reasonable trade through gallery sales, exhibitions and ceramic shows, making raku and smoke fired vessels. Five years ago I dropped out of that world, almost completely for two very important reasons.

It became clear I no longer had the same empathy with or passion for the vessels I made. The blue, Raku fired, pot bellied bottles and tall flat smoke fired vessels no longer meant anything to me. I had lost my direction and become disillusioned. I realized I was making work with a purely commercial outcome in mind.



Raku vessels - 2002

The second reason was that my husband, who had just taken early retirement, was peeved at the competition for my company against that of my time spent with clay. As we all know it is a very time consuming business making and selling pots. This marriage of the three of us was not his idea of a much anticipated retirement or mine.

After a major rethink on both our parts we decided the time had come for a change in lifestyle and direction. You'll be happy to know not divorce but for me to down tools and for us to buy... a camper van! Five years later our semi nomadic life has taken us and our dog on numerous adventures across Europe. We have

spent so much more time together, giving us time for reflection and in spite of the day to day close proximity we are still talking to each other!

For myself, one of the extra benefits was that once away, I had a chance to look at the wider art and craft world in a more relaxed fashion. To look at nature and alternative, cultural artwork, not just ceramics, to have time to observe, photograph and to draw. How lucky am I.

Last year, on return from one of our trips I re-joined NPA, and fired with new found enthusiasm, I ventured into the black hole which my workshop had become, tidied it up, shooed out the mice and started making and having fun with clay again. At first my fingers wouldn't work. The new style of handling clay: handbuilding, patching, slabbing and pinching didn't produce what I had in my head.

Finally, after much experimentation, armies of figures assembled, hollow, fat, tall, solid and skinny, fragmented pieces. I was amazed at the forms being assembled in front of my eyes. From what depths of my imagination had these people emerged? At last I think I 'found my form.'

The semi androgynous figures are usually composed in pairs, mounted on a wooden plinth, inclined to one another as in life. My work is now all about body language, nuance and ageing, a direct but unconscious parallel to my life. The clay I use is Earthstone E20, E40 or crank and finished with heavy coats of oxides and fired to 1200 degrees c. The figures are slowly built up with clay from ground level on metal posts pushed into thick blocks of insulation board. My inspiration is derived from several artists: Giacometti, Stephen de Staebler, Claire Curneen, Mo Jupp and Sally McDonnell amongst others. I also attended several sculptural courses, which were of immense help, taught by very talented ceramic artists: David Cook, Brendan Hesmondalgh and Annie Peaker - a great big thank you to all of them.

It's been a long journey but finally the three of us, me, my husband and the clay are all the happier for it. So much so, that this year I have booked Poffest in the Pens again. I'm really looking forward to it, seeing old friends and hopefully making new ones. Our accommodation will be in the camper van, my three days in the Lakes spent in a cattle auction and his walking the

falls with the dog. I'm not sure the general public will share my enthusiasm for my tall thin pot bellied, skinny bottomed figures but at last I'm making something I love, without pressure.

A perfect solution don't you think?

New work - 2011



New work - 2011



Art in Action 21 - 24 July 2011

Waterperry Gardens, Oxfordshire
Two tickets for £20

Buy two standard adult entry tickets online and save £10.
Tickets can be used on any day.

Go to www.artinaction.org.uk, and use the unique promotional code **NORPOT** (terms and conditions apply)

NPA members Gwen Bainbridge and Penny Withers will be participating, among many others



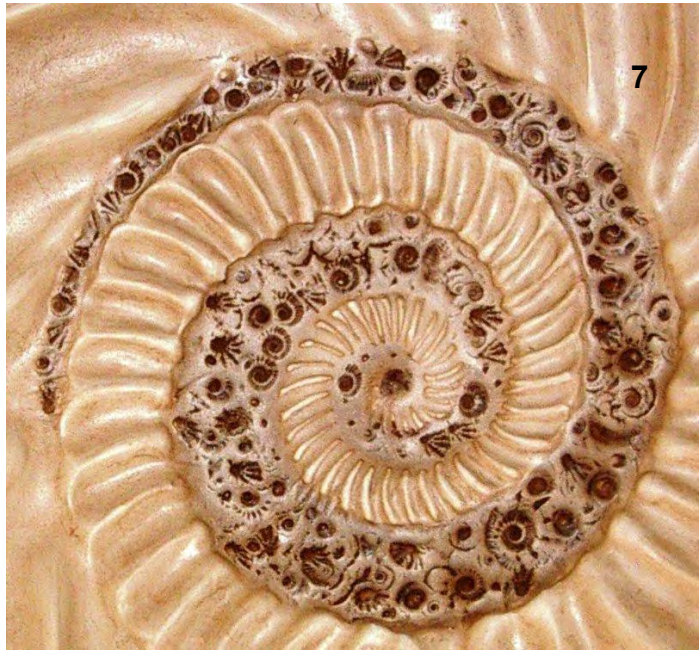
Members' Gallery

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





1. Kirsti Buhler Fattorini
2. Steve Booton
3. Laura Hancock - **Wall hanging**
4. Steve Booton - **Woodfire glazing**
5. David Wright - **Crater Bowls** (with Ikebana)
6. Lorraine Clay
7. Penny De Corte - **Fossil Spiral** (detail) hand built, burnished
8. Gerry Grant - **Horned Vessel**, thrown stoneware, with additions



Urban Traces: Ceramics and the City - Brigitte Soltau

An exciting new exhibition at Gallery Oldham explores the significance of the city in studio ceramics. In contrast to the view that ceramics is essentially a rural craft, *Urban Traces – Ceramics and the City* aims to show that the urban experience is powerfully present in the work of established and emerging ceramic artists.



Brigitte Soltau

My involvement as co-curator for this exhibition came from my interest in representations of and responses to the city. My own ceramic work explores the connection between memory and materiality, using my experience of living through the redevelopment of a Manchester estate. As this work has developed, I have seen connections with other ceramic artists whose work spoke of the city, of memories and traces, and felt there was value in bringing such work together in one exhibition.

I have always loved visits to Gallery Oldham, and in recent years have been impressed by the gallery's commitment to ceramics. They have embarked on a five-year programme of engagement, including exhibitions, talks, handling sessions and workshops exploring the diversity of ceramics practice. This has been alongside developing their studio ceramics collection,

through the Heritage Lottery Fund *Collecting Cultures* scheme. Last autumn the idea for the show was enthusiastically received by senior curator Dinah Winch, and through regular meetings it began to take shape.

We decided to structure the exhibition around key themes that would allow us to present the interests and inspirations of the makers. It explores architecture and urban fabric, urban decay and industrial archaeology, maps and texts, individual and communal histories and the meaning of home. There is work by major contemporary artists, including David Binns, Neil Brownsword, Halima Cassell and John Higgins alongside earlier works from Gallery Oldham's collection by, amongst others, Gordon Baldwin and, from other collections, by Martin Smith and Bryan Newman. In addition to the work of established figures there is work from new makers and recent graduates from around the country, showing that the experiences and concerns of urban life are evident in the work of emerging ceramic artists.

There is an ambitious breadth of style and intention. The mimetic qualities of clay are demonstrated, referencing many urban materials, and in some cases including the materials themselves. Diverse responses to architecture are presented; bricks become a canvas for interpreting urban housing and elsewhere vessels carry drawn and printed urban scenes, commenting on



John Higgins

attitudes and perceptions of contemporary urban life. A large wall hanging brings the textures of city streets directly into the gallery, commenting on the tension between nature and the man-made. Surface treatments echo aspects of the contemporary urban landscape: rigid structural lines and blocks of colour, the patinas of rusting metal and discarded machinery. The debris of urban destruction becomes material for commenting on the disappearance of urban landscapes, the loss of livelihood and place.

Through the work of eighteen artists, *Urban Traces* celebrates the rich seam of inspiration within our urban lives, and shows that ceramics can illuminate and transform our understanding of the city.

The exhibition runs from Saturday 16th July to Sunday 6th November. On 16th July there is an opening event with artists' talks at 1.15pm and 3pm, including Halima Cassell and Neil Brownsword.



David Binns



Halima Cassell

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National Ceramics Week - Reviews



Museum Gardens - and yes, the sky really was that blue!

Many members took part in events organised for National Ceramics Week (first week in May), and from feedback so far, it seems to have been well received throughout - so much so that some of us are already planning next year's events.

The framework provided by Craft & Design magazine made the whole thing possible, and simple - we could all add our events to the calendar on their website, download the logos and sample press release, and so benefit from being part of the larger, nationally branded occasion. Afterwards, the blog had reports from various events, which were posted throughout the month - you can still read it on www.craftanddesignmonth.net. Paul and Angie Boyer (of Craft & Design magazine) were very supportive, visiting many of the events themselves, and deserve to be thanked whenever you see them for making it happen (we only needed a little push).

To celebrate National Ceramics Week, the Cumbrian Potters' Association [CPA for short] had an empty bowls project on the preview night of our ceramics exhibition and potters' market at Greystoke church near Penrith. The potters taking part, between them donated over 200 bowls, the ladies of the village made soup, people bought a bowl of soup and kept the bowl. As a result we raised over £1400 on the night for a third world hunger charity. If

you just happen to be in the area over the weekend do call in and say hello. Remember to get loads of pictures of your event and we'll make a special archive of everything at the Pens.
(Chris Cox)

If you haven't already, make sure you look at the images on the link below - the work exhibited looks absolutely stunning, so appropriate to the surroundings, and yet enhanced by them.
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/potfest/sets/72157626641728512/show/>

We had an enjoyable Open Studio week with plenty of people popping in to see the work on show and usually going away with something. The ceramics and cards on show were by NPA members Eryl Fryer, Dave Harper, Geoff Wilcock and myself, with textile work by Shelley Rhodes, fine art by Gilbert Davies, print by Rosie Collinson and glass by Janice Sinclair. We sold over 70 items which brought in just under £ 500.

Our customers were mostly cyclists and walkers who just happened to be passing and disappointingly we only got a few Northern Potter members who were doing the Studio trail. The general public seemed pleasantly surprised with the work on show and enquired as to whether we would be open again in the future.

A big thank you to all the members who did the trail - it was especially good to see you. We would also like to give a special thanks to Julie Miles from the NPA -W group for organising the Open Studios in our region.
(Liz Collinson)



NPA - E potters launched National Ceramics week by throwing a Royal Wedding Breakfast in Museum Gardens in York. It was a raw clay installation - Gerry Grant, Julie Ward and Gaynor Ayres threw the dinner service, and the other potters used their imagination to make an abundance of delicious looking food - so realistic it actually seemed good enough to eat!! William and Kate were skilfully modelled out of the clay, William being dressed in his bright red jacket complete with sash - though one eagle eyed visitor noticed that it had been put on the wrong way round!!!



A beautiful three tiered wedding cake provided a fitting centre piece. Throughout the day the professionals were helped by members of the public. Some of these will be our future artists! The plates, bowls and dishes were filled up with cakes, sandwiches, fruit and even a plate of baked beans on toast. Each bean was carefully rolled and shaped by one of our youngest helpers - he certainly had staying power!

At 4pm the three trestles were brimming with food, and a photographic session ensued. People who were milling around expressed an interest in taking some of the pots home, so it was decided to let them go for a small donation towards charity.

It was a fantastic day - the potters hope that a similar event could be staged next year!
(Lyn Grant)

Thanks to CTM Potters Supplies for donating the clay and slip that we used.

In the East Riding of Yorkshire, 5 ceramic artists got together with invited practitioners from other media and opened our doors for the first 2 days of May. The potters were the hosts, with up to 3 'guests' at each venue - 13 of us in total. We produced a leaflet with a suggested route around the venues, and a little bit of information about each of us. We were fortunate that our event took place shortly after the York open studios, as many of the artists there were happy to hand out our fliers.



For most of us, it was a commercially successful and highly enjoyable couple of days - as good as our annual county-wide open studios (in October), but with much lower outlay and no commission to pay afterwards. Many of the visitors commented that having a small number of venues, which could all be visited in one day, made it more attractive as a day out (no difficult decisions about who to see, and who to miss out).
(Barbara Wood)

If you have images and / or text about the events you participated in for NCW, please send them to me - barbara.wood99@btinternet.com. We're hoping to show them all at Potfest in the Pens.

'Transformations' in Sheffield Cathedral - John Rivers

The NPA -SE regional group has booked into Sheffield Cathedral for November. It will be a double-edged show, with site-specific, quasi-architectural work, and work to sell.

It's the first time since OXO¹ that I feel really excited about a show's potential, and it allows what OXO couldn't: a ready-made cohort of visitors (cathedral staff, drop-in visitors, clergy, visiting musicians and audiences...etc.), and the chance to generate visitors because the Cathedral is central to the city.

The Cathedral has an encouraging policy for arts ("Emmy the Great" did a gig last week singing about her despair and anger at "divine neglect" so it's very open-minded) and on multi-faith activities. But any 'cathedral' will impose unspoken criteria too. I love Philip Larkin's phrase "a serious house on serious earth" describing a church he wandered sceptically into, only to find its history and atmosphere triggering all sorts of serious thoughts.

Brian Holland is co-ordinating the site-specific work and I the 'market' side of it. But we both want new work, work challenged by this new environment, and many of the intending exhibitors want to be involved in both aspects.

Which leaves the question of getting people in! It's up to us to drive this, (and I feel it's where so many galleries fail). So far we're setting up: a throwing demonstration focussing on communion chalices for the clergy of the diocese; a tea-ceremony for which people can make tea-vessels at a workshop and after their firing the Japanese community will assess them and we'll all sample tea; Pollie and Garry Uttley will put on two power-point presentations about their astonishing Indian-fabric-ceramics (with the city's Asian communities invited); there's a lovely project offered by a younger potter on "reclaiming" discarded ceramics....

All these are designed to be inter-active with the people of the city, and to reveal our processes – the infinite "transformations" of clay. We may forget how astonishing these are to outsiders. I recall the first sight I had of throwing: on an Indian railway station in 1960. Tea was served on the platform in little bisque'd round bowls, thrown and fired on the platform, used and tossed out of the train windows later. His "wheel" was on a vertical spindle in the ground, and spun by hand – the impetus generated about four revolutions and the thing was thrown and whisked off. My eyes stood out. Twenty years later I "threw", and a further thirty years later I'm setting up this show!

The organisation still remains, and that's the real terror!

contact John at riddingspottery@hotmail.com, 01773 603181
www.riddingspottery.co.uk

¹ *Northern Fire, 2005 & 2007, NPA's exhibitions at the.gallery@oxo, Oxo Tower, London*

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NPA Website - Barbara Wood

As you may have read in my email, we are having the NPA website completely re-designed in a simpler form, which we believe will be much easier to maintain. The company carrying out this work, Strategy Plus, offer an economical way for us to update details more quickly, so we can keep it current. Initially, please send the following information to me (npawebsite@btinternet.com) for your individual member's page:

Name

Contact (phone, email, website) - only send details you want publishing

Statement - up to 100 words about you/your work

Up to 4 images of your recent work

Please note, NPA represents you as an individual, so the page will be in your name, not in a company or trading name.

Send this information to me as soon as you can, but by 23 July at the latest. Email is the easiest format, but if you really can't send it that way post a cd or hard copies to me at Old Mills, Seaton Ross, York, YO42 4NH.

Events and exhibitions will be listed on a diary page, with images of posters/fliers where these are available, so please send them to me for the newsletter (npanews@btinternet.com), and I will also add them to the website.

Once the new site is up and running, members' details maintenance will be collated by John Cook. New members will be added straightaway, and members can update contact details whenever they change, and submit new images and / or statement up to once a year. Contact John at websitenpa@gmail.com.

To summarise,

for the new site, send personal details to:

to update your page, send to:


for the diary page (both newsletter and website), send to:

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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	



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Contact the membership secretary:
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Regional News

Please send ideas for any events you'd like to help organise, or suggestions for regional group activities. Remember, regional activities should be open to all members, so inform Sylvia Holmes - sylviajaneholmes@yahoo.co.uk - of your plans so that she can let other members know via their regional coordinators.

North East

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



The Crook Hall exhibition went well (see Shirley Hetherington's report in this issue). We are now discussing ideas for future events.

East

Co-ordinator:
Email:
Tel:



We are in need of a new coordinator for the East region as Ann Decker has resigned, having completed the year she volunteered to serve.

The essence of the role is to forward emails to all the region's members as and when necessary, and to provide a central contact point for any of the region's members who wish to organise a selling event, workshop, exhibition, a trip out to a ceramics fair or show, or a social event etc. It's not a demanding role, on the other hand, as with most things, the more you put in the more you'll get out.

If anyone would like more information, or to volunteer, please contact Sylvia Holmes - sylviajaneholmes@yahoo.co.uk

I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you to Ann for the sterling work she's done over the last couple of years for the NPA East region.

South East

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



Work is progressing on our two planned exhibitions - Thoresby in October and Sheffield Cathedral in November. If anyone is interested in the Thoresby show I will need 3 images by 2nd August for publicity purposes.

Whilst we are approaching the deadline for involvement with the Cathedral show, we could still accommodate one or two more, so if interested please get in touch ASAP. The site specific aspect of this event will begin 1st November and continue until the 30th. The selling and demonstrations aspect is on from the 11th through to the 26th November, with a preview on the 11th. Lots of exciting plans and ideas are coming in for site specific pieces and plans for demonstrations and public involvement include making tea bowls and a tea ceremony, members demonstrating methods and sources of imagery, throwing demonstrations etc. - (see *John Rivers' article, page 20*)

If anyone else wants to be involved please get in touch before the end of July.

South West

Co-ordinator: Clive Weake
Email: clive.weake@tiscali.co.uk
Tel: 01772 330895



We had a very successful and enjoyable session at Kirsti Fattorinis' impressive studio in May. Sylvia Glover led a workshop on producing Mocha ware which we all found to be great fun.

Next meeting is at mine (Wilmslow) on Friday 8th July 2.00pm onwards when we will be experimenting with transferring images onto clay. Members need to let me know if they are going to attend.

Also we are now gearing up for our exhibition at Knutsford Heritage Centre which will run from the 9th August to the 4th September. We have 14 exhibitors lined up and will also be doing demonstrations on the weekends. www.knutsfordheritage.co.uk

October will see us meeting at Sue Hudsons' refurbished workshop in Middleton - date still to be fixed.

West

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



The June meeting was held at UCLan to coincide with their final year Degree Shows. Twenty eight members attended, which was an excellent turnout.

Five of our student members' work was on display after completing their B.A. Hons Ceramics. Congratulations go out to – Davina Breckenridge, Fiona MacPherson, Jan Thirlwell, Pam Allen, Terrence Bunce.

Four of our members in attendance participated in the National Ceramics week and gave interesting feedback on their experiences. A discussion followed regarding our third Exhibition of the year at Lytham Heritage Centre, Title "Clay Matters" 21st June – 10th July.

Chris Mortimer offered to run a summer project from his workshop for members with the possibility of making and firing a group Mural. (Theme to be decided)

The meeting ended with an invitation to a glass of wine or soft drink and a tour of the Degree shows.

Next Meeting

Tuesday 20th September. 7.15 pm
"Bitter Suite" pub, Preston.
Theme for the next vessel is "Harvest"

North West

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



A goodly number of NW potters had stalls at Potfest Perth recently.

Hopefully a good crowd will be going to the talk by Christie Brown, organised by Liz Collinson, in Lancaster in October.

As always it would be great to receive some input from NW members as to what they would like organised and what they could help organise.

First and Worst - David Wright

I have always made things; I must have driven my mother daft. Wood, metal, paper or card, anything really. None of those fancy plastic kits mind you, that was too easy or expensive.

Clay evaded me; we only had drawing lessons at school, drawing the same Swiss cheese plant from every angle. At Art College I did graphic design, oblivious to the ceramic design being produced on the floor below us. Besides which, it was the swinging sixties and all the best-looking girls were on the fashion course that was upstairs. It wasn't until a spell in an advertising agency made me take evening classes as a release from producing the commercial stuff that was demanded by our clients that I came into contact with clay.

I did a beginners course and then the intermediate course. That was in the mid seventies and on and off I have made pots ever since. I could never get on the wheel though; I was always too late or didn't fancy cleaning out the sea of slurry when someone else had finished. Making coil pots became my preferred activity; it satisfies my craftsman's desires to make things slowly with very little equipment.

Most of my early work has not survived, either squished or recycled or the hammer was employed. Occasionally one comes back to haunt me, but the beer jar was the first to survive intact. It took weeks to make, wrapping in plastic at the end of each lesson. The decoration took the whole of the three-hour lesson to complete. Yes I know the beer tap is set too high, but it has had best bitter inside. (Not for long!)

My day job eventually took over, and children took up all my spare time so clay was deserted for nearly ten years. A need to do something creative for myself drove me back to evening classes. The three bottles were the first of the new era. The forms are truly awful and they weigh a ton. One was used as a doorstop for a while and they only survived as a permanent visual reminder to do better.



Coiled Beer Jar, iron under glaze, electric fired to stoneware. Height 35 cm.



Three bottles, school sludge glaze, electric fired to stoneware. Height approx 25cm

Doing better is difficult when only spending two hours a week in a school art room. Eventually, I realised that the outside toilet at home could be used as a workshop and I bought a small electric kiln and took the plunge. I now pot full time and have a wood firing kiln at the bottom of the garden. The pots have improved; some still get squished and the hammer has always enjoyed full employment, as the path to the chicken coop will testify, as it is made from shards of broken pots. All of my work is still coiled and I get asked all the time why I don't throw. It has taken thirty years to get this far and there is always a better pot waiting to be made, besides, I don't need thirty thrown tea bowls right now.

*I suspect some members will be depressed that these are the 'worst' David has produced - they still look pretty good!
Please send in your own 'first and/or worst' memories - Ed*

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Viv Rumbold - Square dish fish magic

White faience earthenware clay, hand painted with slips and underglazes, with sponge decoration and sgraffito, fired to 1080°C. Viv's inspiration comes from painters such as Paul Klee, Howard Hodgkins, and Henri Matisse.