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NPA NEWS

The magazine of the Northern Potters Association



March / April / May 2015

www.northern-potters.co.uk



in this issue:

A View from the Dark Side, From the Ismay Archive, My Favourite Pottery Tools

Editor's Comment

As this issue covers 3 months (see page 4), there won't be an opportunity for me to nag you for your events for craft & design month, but do make sure you add them (for free) to the website - craftanddesignmonth.net. You can even send the details to me to add to the NPA website!

We have a couple of small exhibition opportunities advertised in this issue, but no NPA selected ones have been finalised for this year. If you know of any venues that might be suitable (free access, invigilated spaces with good footfall and selling record, space for work from 20+ members) please let the exhibitions officer know. It is becoming harder to find such places, but if there's anything in your area please get in touch. NPA has a good record of organising successful exhibitions, which we would like to continue.

Jason Wood (no relation) has contributed a fascinating article about the first Studio Ceramics sale at Adam Partridge Auctioneers (page 8). With the next sale planned for 1 May, there's a great chance to add to your collections, or perhaps rationalise the work you own to make a bit of space for some new purchases. I'm hoping Jason will become a regular contributor, as he has a lot of knowledge from a different side of the ceramics world.

Alex McErlain's second article 'From the Ismay Archive' (page 12) features Eileen Nisbet, perhaps a lesser known name, but obviously a very worthy inclusion in this series.

Caroline Lee tells us about her favourite tools (page 16), including stamps which are used for decorating and as teaching aids, and others which are invaluable in her work. Do you have any particular favourite items, or tips?

The re-launch of York Art Gallery, including CoCA (Centre of Ceramic Art) will feature a large installation designed by Clare Twomey - 10,000 slip cast bowls will be arranged by Clare in the new gallery. York College students have been involved in making some of the bowls, and an article explains a bit more about the project (page 18).

We have a new regional coordinator for NPA-E, Lesley Anne Greene having stood down after several years of unstinting service. If you want to do more for NPA, why not think about joining the committee, or becoming more active in your region?

Cover :

Karin Hesseberg - Tall Hat with Feather No 1 - sculpture based on a portrait painting of Lady Elizabeth Knollys by William Larkin. Selected for the Royal Society of British Artists' Annual Exhibition at the Mall Galleris, London, 11 - 21 March 2015

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 25 May 2015

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. Please send images as separate attachments, **not embedded in the text**, and preferably **not zipped**, on SkyDrive, Dropbox, WeTransfer or anything similar that involves an extra process to make them accessible. The chance of them being included is improved if you make it easy to do so!

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.

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.

NPA News - Barbara Wood

Treasurer needed!

Our current treasurer, Alan Birchall, will be standing down at the AGM later this year. It is essential that we have someone to replace him in place before then - we can't manage without a treasurer. Contrary to popular belief, the role does not need any specialist knowledge. (though if you have some, that doesn't exclude you) If you manage your own accounts, you should be able to manage NPA's.

The role involves recording all income and expenditure onto a spread sheet, which is already set up with the relevant columns and headings, analysing items to show how much each event is costing, paying artists for exhibition sales, etc. The treasurer liaises with the membership secretary to make sure membership fees are accounted for, issues invoices for newsletter advertising, and attends committee (every 2 months or so) and reports on the financial situation. We have online banking with the Co-op, and most payments are now made by bank transfer.

Alan has put a lot of effort into making the processes straightforward and tidy, so that it should be quite easy for someone else to pick it up. However, we do want to make sure that person learns the role while Alan is still on the committee, so that any queries can be explained and resolved. We also benefit from free access to a qualified accountant, who has helped in getting the accounts to their current state, so if you do give it a go you won't be on your own.

If you can help, or would like to know more, please get in touch with Alan - doc.albirchall@ntlworld.com

New Committee Member

We are delighted to welcome Jenny Morten to the NPA committee. So far, she has not got a specific role (though is adamant it will not be Treasurer!), and is acting as a roving investigator and factotum.

Jenny has great experience in the ceramics world, and has recently returned to East Yorkshire after living in California for some years. She is a professional member of CPA, and has a new exhibition of her work at the New School House Gallery, York, opening on 13 March - do go along to the launch (6pm - 8pm) and introduce yourself if you can.

Newsletter timing

You may have noticed that this issue covers 3 months, rather than the usual 2 months?

This is a change that we have talked about in committee several times, and we are now acting on. Each year, the editor (moi) has to put the January/February issue of the magazine together over the Christmas/New Year break, which can be somewhat onerous. It is a very quiet time for submissions, and of course a time when most of us would like to spend time doing holiday/family things, so having to try and fill those empty pages is quite a responsibility.

It happens that I will be on holiday at the end of April, when the next issue would normally be due, and so this seemed the ideal opportunity to effect a change. Consequently, the next issue will be June/July, then August/September, October/November, December/January etc. Please make a mental note to check the deadlines (on page 3 of each issue), and send in images, articles, diary notes etc. when you can. It is surprising how few members make the most of this opportunity to publicise your own work and events.

Exhibition Opportunity - David Wright

A Rural Idyll

Members are invited to apply for a selected exhibition at Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston.

8 pieces of work will be selected; the work will be based on a rural theme to coincide with the major summer exhibition at the Gallery from July 25th to September 27th. The exhibition will draw work from the Gallery and Museum's collection of paintings and artifacts.

The piece of work must fit inside a glass case 50cm x 50cm x 45.5cm high.

The submitted pieces should be based on interpretations on a rural theme, either figurative, traditional or contemporary. Selection, from submitted images of finished work, will be made by Harris Museum and Art Gallery; final date for applications is 1st June.

All work can be offered for sale. The Gallery will take 40% commission of the selling price with 60% going to the artist.

There will be extensive publicity and the possibility of a short film featuring the makers and their work to accompany the exhibition.

Application forms from David Wright david.wright52@virgin.net

Exhibition Opportunity - John Cook

Water Street Gallery in Todmorden are planning a summer exhibition with the working title of **Naked Raku**.

NPA members are invited to apply for consideration in the exhibition who use either Naked Clay or Raku techniques.

The exhibition is to held in the main gallery and large sculptural pieces can be accommodated in the new basement gallery.

The gallery take 35% commission on sales and a small charge will be made to successful applicants to cover the costs of the preview evening.

Entries have to be made by the **13th of April**, and the exhibition is planned to run from the 28th of May until the 28th of June.

Exhibition details can be obtained from Rosemary Holcroft at www.waterstreetgallery.co.uk, by phone 01706 839714, and by email at info@waterstreetgallery.co.uk

'New Ceramics for Wall and Table': an exhibition and workshops with hand builder Anna Lambert.



Exhibition 13 March – 29 April

Community workshop 'Flock'

28 March £2 / hour

Workshop 'Platters and Place –

creating an image with slips and stamps'

2 May, 10.30 - 4.30 £30

at Sugar Store Gallery, Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal LA9 4HE

www.breweryarts.co.uk

project blog www.flatthings.wordpress.com

for more information contact anna@junctionworkshop.co.uk

01535 631341

Anna Lambert presents new wall mounted ceramics with supporting drawings and design notes. For 30 years Anna has exhibited hand built earthenware vessels, depicting landscape and wildlife, throughout Britain and internationally. In this exhibition of experimental pieces, the potential for making large slab formed wall pieces incorporating platters and spoons is explored. Initial motivation for the project included finding a way to continue working despite a deteriorating shoulder condition; the emergence of a new more painterly and sculptural approach to landscape has resulted in some unexpected new ideas.

Northern Potters are invited to join Anna at a special event organised by the Friends of Brewery Arts.

Anna will be talking about the project and exhibition in the gallery on 28 March.2015 at 4pm. The price for 'non-Friends' is £4 and booking is essential – please contact www.breweryarts.co.uk



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Short Committee Minutes 21 February 2015

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved and signed.

Exhibitions: Northern Fire at The Ropewalk made £47.66 loss. Reports received from DW and SH about possible venues. DW has submitted proposals as appropriate. Possibility of venues requiring invigilation as an option this year discussed. **Publicity:** A template has been developed and the DC will encourage all exhibitors to increase their local publicity. Some initial work on an NPA facebook page is in hand. **Events:** No further information has been received about National Year of Clay - the reopening of York Art Gallery is likely to be July 2015. Earth and Fire 2015 may be the last year of this event. Poffest 2015 will have NPA presence although the committee is looking at ways to reduce the cost to the NPA of this event. The annual CoCA lecture is planned to be in October 2015 - if possible the NPA AGM will be on the same day in York. Possible opportunities linked to Hull City of Culture will be explored. **Newsletter:** some savings were made on the last issue with fewer pages being printed due to lack of material but it is hoped that this will not continue. **Website:** More images for the top of each page are needed. **Finance:** Yorkshire Bank balance £1360, Co-operative Bank balance £8228 the committee looked at the finances over the past few years and discussed areas of concern. **Membership:** 456 members plus 16 joint total 472 members. **Regional Groups:** reports received and discussed. A new NPA-East coordinator has volunteered to send out the information **AOB:** 3 plinths that are no longer needed will be advertised for sale in the newsletter. The treasurer will be stepping down at the next AGM and a new treasurer is needed prior to this.

Date of next meeting: 24 May 2015.

Diary

- 11 - 21 March **RSBA Annual Exhibition**, Mall Galleries. London, including piece by NPA member Karin Hessenberg (see front cover)
- 13 March - 26 April **Parallel Journeys** - Paintings, Prints and Ceramics by NPA member Jenny Morten and her late husband Geoff. New School House Gallery, York, pv 13 March, 6 - 8 pm - all members welcome
- 14 March - 30 April **Potter in the Window** exhibition by NPA member Sylvia Holmes at Gallery 1611, Alston, Cumbria
- 21 March - 4 May **Unearthed** - an exhibition of mixed media paintings, ceramics and jewellery by Hilary Angle and NPA member Barbara Wood, Gallery 49, Bridlington
- 28 March **Textured Porcelain or Egyptian Faience Workshop** - NENPA event with Anna Whitehouse, Booth Hall, Catterick. £15 member, £25 non member - contact carol4npa@yahoo.co.uk to book
- 30 March Deadline for BCB **AWARD 2015** applications (see page 19)
- until 4 April 2015 **NPA-SW exhibition** at Althrincham College of Art. open Saturdays only. contact clive.weake@gmail.com for details
- 12 - 14 April **British Craft Trade Fair**, Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate - bctf.co.uk
- 13 April Deadline for applications for Water Street Gallery **Naked Raku** exhibition - info@waterstreetgallery.co.uk (see page 5)
- 17 - 19 April **Ceramic Art London**, Royal College of Art
- 2 - 3 May **Pocklington Open Studios** - 12 local artists, including NPA members Penny De Corte, Jill Ford, Gerry Grant, Margaret Lawrenson, Tony Wells
- 23 - 25 May 2015 **NPA-SW exhibition** at The Old Parsonage, Didsbury
- 12 - 15 June **Potfest Scotland**, Scone Palace - potfest.co.uk
- 26 - 28 June **Earth & Fire**, Rufford Abbey, Ollerton, Notts
- 3 - 5 July **International Ceramics Festival**, Aberystwyth, internationalceramicsfestival.org
- 3 - 5 July **Art in Clay**, Hatfield House
- 5 - 11 July **Holmfirth Art Week** - details and apply online at holmfirthartweek.org.uk
- 6 July Deadline for BCB **FRESH 2015** applications (see page 19)
- 25 July - 27 September **A Rural Idyll**, exhibition at Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston
- 26 - 27 September **Sheffield Ceramic Festival**, Meersbrook Park

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

A View from the Dark Side - Jason Wood

I take it all back. I used to think auctioneers had it easy; stick a few lot numbers here, bang a hammer down there, and sit back and watch the money roll in. Now I have seen life from 'the dark side' – as one fellow collector/dealer put it – let me tell you, I wouldn't begrudge them a penny.

Organising last October's inaugural auction of studio ceramics at Adam Partridge's saleroom in Macclesfield was the most intense few weeks of work I've experienced in years. It was also the most enjoyable.

It all began with a chance encounter with John Maltby, or rather a sloping vase with side handle made by John Maltby. Some might call it a large cup form. Anyway it was big and a beauty, covered in mottled blue glaze with a black and white painted design; an early piece, probably dating to the late 1980s. And there it was, poking out of a box on the floor, in the company of a nice Derek Emms celadon dish, and both surrounded by, but happily not damaged by, a mixture of holiday souvenirs and evening class pots, all masquerading as a job lot estimated to sell for £20 - 30.

This was May 2014. I had been at the Mallams sale of studio ceramics in Oxford and heading back home to Lancaster. I hadn't bought much in Oxford. I was tired, and nearly didn't bother pulling off the motorway to view the upcoming sale at Adam Partridge's. I had spotted a few lots on the website and thought they were worth a closer look. They were, but it was the box under on the table that immediately caught my attention. How could such a stonking pot have been missed? - especially when it had MALTBY painted in big letters on the base.

In the auction trade, this is known as a 'sleeper'; a lot whose value (sometimes large) is not obvious. It wasn't asleep very long. Of course others viewing the sale had spotted it, and the next day, after a torrent of online and telephone bidding (during which my measly contribution was washed aside), the Maltby and those dozing off in the saleroom woke up with a start. It was worth £1000 of anybody's money; and that, with the premium, is what it made.



Adam Partridge doesn't like sleepers, so my drawing this to his attention in an email the following week could have backfired. It didn't because the reason for making contact was to offer my services in helping with identification and lotting of a large collection of studio ceramics earmarked for a future auction that had been mentioned in passing during the recent sale. I thought my experience, which included cataloguing the National Trust's collection of studio ceramics, might be of some use.

As we know, studio ceramics is a specialist field with only two or three auction houses holding regular sales, exclusively in the south. But it is increasingly turning up at auctions across the country accompanied by all-too-often limited or erroneous catalogue entries. This is great for dealers and persistent collectors but the true values of some of these pieces are not being realised for the vendors or the auction houses. Given Macclesfield's location, perhaps there was an opportunity for Adam Partridge to become the go-to saleroom for studio ceramics in the north?

Adam agreed, which was both pleasing and daunting. Not only, at our first meeting, did he agree to my offer of assistance but he enthusiastically embraced the idea of a dedicated auction of studio ceramics and to me 'curating' the sale. A date was set for 10 October 2014. I had three and a half months to learn the trade, as well as drum up trade.



Adam's regular antique and fine art sales are two-day affairs often comprising upwards of 2000 lots. Interspersed with these are his occasional one-day specialist sales. The studio ceramics auction would be one of these. This meant getting together 500 lots or so. That's a great deal a studio ceramics when you consider that sales say at Mallams rarely exceed 200 lots at any one time. The first decision, therefore, was to widen the net to include a selection of art pottery and small decorative arts items. This would reduce the quantity of studio to be sourced and also broaden interest. Importantly the higher values often achieved for decorative arts would offset the relatively modest commissions anticipated for a studio ceramics-only sale.

Next, we had to advertise. Conveniently, the September/October issue of *Ceramic Review* was due out in August and so just in time to publicise the sale and put out a call for entries. The advert declared this to be our inaugural auction as we didn't want people thinking it was a one-off. If successful, we were in this for the long term. We also reprinted the advert as a flyer for distribution at events like Potfest.

At this point, I hadn't seen the large collection that Adam had consigned earlier and the initial reason for me approaching him. As this would now be forming the basis of the October sale I thought I better take a look at it. This was easier said than done. The storeroom was jam-packed and most of the collection was securely boxed and unreachable but I could see from a number of the too-big-to-box pieces that there were some significant pots. Thankfully the owner was a knowledgeable collector and had given Adam an inventory. A glance down this revealed a Who's Who of studio potters. A telephone conversation later and I knew the collection had come from

Southport and belonged to Michael Ascott. Built up over many years with his wife Stella, they had bought mainly directly from the potters concerned and so most of the collection was new to the market.

The inventory comprised some 250 entries. By grouping several together, I estimated that this would result in about 200 lots. If so, I was going to have to source maybe another 200 lots from somewhere, maybe less to avoid swamping the market. There was a delicate balance to be struck to ensure there would be sufficient quality as well as quantity. I needed some big-hitting names in order to generate plenty of interest. I also needed pots that would complement rather than duplicate the range in the Ascott collection.

In the end I managed to bring in about 180 additional lots. Some of these came from contacts I already had amongst fellow collectors/dealers, some from potters themselves (I was particularly keen to include a few contemporary pieces by younger ceramicists), and some from the call for entries advert (including a substantial collection from Kent, most of which had to be held back for a second sale). In my opinion, the star of the show was a selection of work by Edward Hughes, sourced directly from Edward's widow (courtesy of Alex McErlain), and from Edward's own collection and last firing.

The three weeks before the auction was non-stop. Everything had to be catalogued and photographed, and the printed and online versions of the catalogue ready, ten days before sale day. I had nine days including a weekend. During that time I could be found camped out in the storeroom, surrounded by pots and empty boxes, searching desperately for flat surfaces on which to lay everything out while each pot was described, measured and its condition assessed before being passed to the photographer. Once all this was finished, it was time to decide the order of sale, grouping the Ascott collection together and listing potters in order of date of birth (just to make life difficult for myself), and finally assigning the 450 or so lot numbers. All of which involved learning new software and shouting at the computer.

With the printed catalogue proofs checked and sent to the printers and some inevitable last minute glitches to the online catalogues corrected, I could now start to wind down. All the hard work had paid off. The catalogue looked great and everyone was full of praise. I could relax and even forgive the late insertion of a bust of Margaret Thatcher that had been slipped in at the end of the catalogue without my knowledge.

My next visit to the saleroom would not be until two days before the viewing day ahead of the auction. Plenty of time I thought to retrieve everything from the storeroom, decide on the best layout and apply all the lot number stickers. How little did I know? This proved to be a much more time consuming operation than I had imagined but the result was a rewarding one and the saleroom looked great with every table top and showcase crammed with pots.

The viewing day started with a question. Asked if I wanted to hear the good news or bad news first. I said bad. The bad news was that one of the lots had been withdrawn – an instant concern but soon countered by the good news that it was Margaret Thatcher's bust. Much merriment.

Viewing was busy and brisk. All the time promoting the sale through relevant associations like NPA and groups like the Contemporary Studio Ceramics Specialist Subject Network (which immediately resulted in an invitation to speak at their next event) had paid off. I even broke a vow and joined Facebook in order to spawn interest among the British Studio Pottery Collectors Group. All this created quite a buzz and a new cluster of enquiries. As a result many new clients and potential buyers, new to the auction house, visited that day or signed up to bid online. I'll save a description of the actual sale day for another time, as I'm already over my word limit. But safe to say that it was a success, except for my initial feeble efforts on the rostrum, and virtually everything sold.

Consequently, we're having a second specialist auction on 1 May 2015. I hope you will join us. It promises to be a good one.

Jason Wood is Specialist Consultant in Studio Ceramics, Adam Partridge Auctioneers

Images: Viewing day at the auction. Photographs: Jason Wood.

ADAM PARTRIDGE
AUCTIONEERS & VALUERS

**Auction of Studio Ceramics
& Glass with Decorative Arts**

The Cheshire Saleroom, Macclesfield
Friday 1st May 2015

Items already consigned include works by Michael Cardew, Janet Leach, David Leach, Mary Wondrausch, Svend Bayer, John Maltby, Rosemary Wren, John Ward, Mo Jupp, Edward Hughes, Elaine Peto.

Inviting entries until 3rd April 2015

Free valuations every Monday at Macclesfield from 9:30am - 7pm

For details, contact our specialist **Jason Wood** on **01625 431 788**

A vase by Janet Leach, sold for £420



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Withyfold Drive
Macclesfield
SK10 2BD
01625 431 788

The Liverpool Saleroom
18 Jordan Street
Liverpool
L1 0BP
0151 709 8070

The Altrincham Office
38 Hale Road
Altrincham
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*A sculpture
by John
Maltby,
sold for
£840*



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From the Ismay Archive - Alex McErlain

Eileen Nisbet 1929 - 1990



Earthenware dish, semi matt yellow glaze, 45cmd x 9cmh. c1970.
Photograph Phil Sayer.

Eileen Nisbet was a particularly innovative potter, hand building sensitive work in earthenware and porcelain. She lived and worked in London and taught at Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design. Nisbet is now known mostly for her adventurous work in porcelain which she made from 1975 onwards, however, I find her early work just as strong and distinctive, the epitome of a thoughtful maker.

This large dish is decorated with what I regard as a modernist take on a traditional meander pattern, usually found on slip combed country wares. A slip comb cuts several lines at once but here Nisbet has engraved five individual lines to form the meandering design. In the photograph, the lines progress from the bottom right hand corner to the top left. As the pattern develops through six looping turns, the lines crisscross over each other in a manner that traditional patterns rarely do. This produces a complex linear effect made especially vibrant because of the inlay technique. You certainly don't read this pattern in the same way as traditional slip combing, there is intrigue in following the individually scratched lines and a more pronounced focus on the negative space. The deeply engraved lines were filled with black slip, scraped back when leather hard. The potter has deliberately left traces of black slip to discolour the background to the pattern. Nisbet also pays homage to a traditional galena based honey glaze but in this instance the glaze is softly matted and very inviting to the touch.

The dish has a skinny feel about it, made by press moulding, pinched thin at the rim, with the addition of a coil to form a foot ring and fired on a three pronged stilt. The underside of the dish is more matted and there is a prominent lime spot chip. I was surprised to see the chip on the reverse, many potters would have abandoned such a flawed piece without glazing it, however, it must not have been such a big issue for the potter as she has rubbed stain into it before glazing.

In the Ismay archive there is a statement (archive item 5861) written by Eileen Nisbet in September 1979. The statement was written in connection with an exhibition of her later work in porcelain, however one paragraph resonates with this earlier work and reveals some of her thinking. *'The bowls originated through 'flat' drawings (as against 3 dimensional drawings) made when I was designing stained glass. The silhouette had to convey the object immediately and include all the important details from a single viewpoint. These ceramic bowls (which to me) are like drawings, flat, but showing shape, rims, inside, handle at a glance.'* Ismay's paper archive contains many exhibition lists, which provide a fascinating glimpse into the pottery world of the period.

Nisbet made a series of these earthenware dishes from the late sixties to the mid-seventies. There is a similar piece illustrated in Michael Casson's book 'Pottery in Britain Today' (picture 49) and she features in Casson's BBC series 'The Craft of the Potter', episode 3, where she incises lines in a pressed dish. There is a good website about Nisbet which includes many images of her work together with a group of beautiful line drawings, some of which reveal the way she developed her ideas for linear decoration.

Plinths for Sale - Sylvia Holmes

Any offers?

This set of three plinths, owned by NPA, is available in exchange for a donation to the NPA, buyer to collect. They are 36 x 36 x 111, 43 x 43 x 90, and 50 x 50 x 70cm respectively.

They can be used upright as shown, or on their sides (the bottom is open). The tall one will fit inside one of the others for transport, and the set will fit into an average-sized hatchback car with the seats down.

They are currently in Yorkshire, approx. 20 miles north-east of York. They need sanding down and repainting but are otherwise sound.

If interested, please email
sylviaholmes.npa@gmail.com



Members' Gallery

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



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Gwen Humble - Planter with bramble decoration , stoneware | 5. Caroline Lee - Raku Pendant , with impressed decoration using hand made clay stamp |
| 2. Joan Hardie - Long Leaf Wall Collage | 6. Alasdair Nelson - Porcelain Gemstones hand formed vessels with crackle and crystalline glazes |
| 3. Barbara Wood - Saggar fired boxes , hand built, burnished | 7. Brenda Wright - Lidded Pot , thrown, stoneware fired |
| 4. Alan Birchall - Large Plate , gas fired, wood ash glazed | |



My Favourite Pottery Tools - Caroline Lee

We've all got them haven't we, those tools we use more than others and those unusual tools that perhaps have only one purpose? I would like to tell you about some of the tools that I use most often in my workshop. I will also describe a few others which I keep for specific purposes and some of my own hand-made creations.

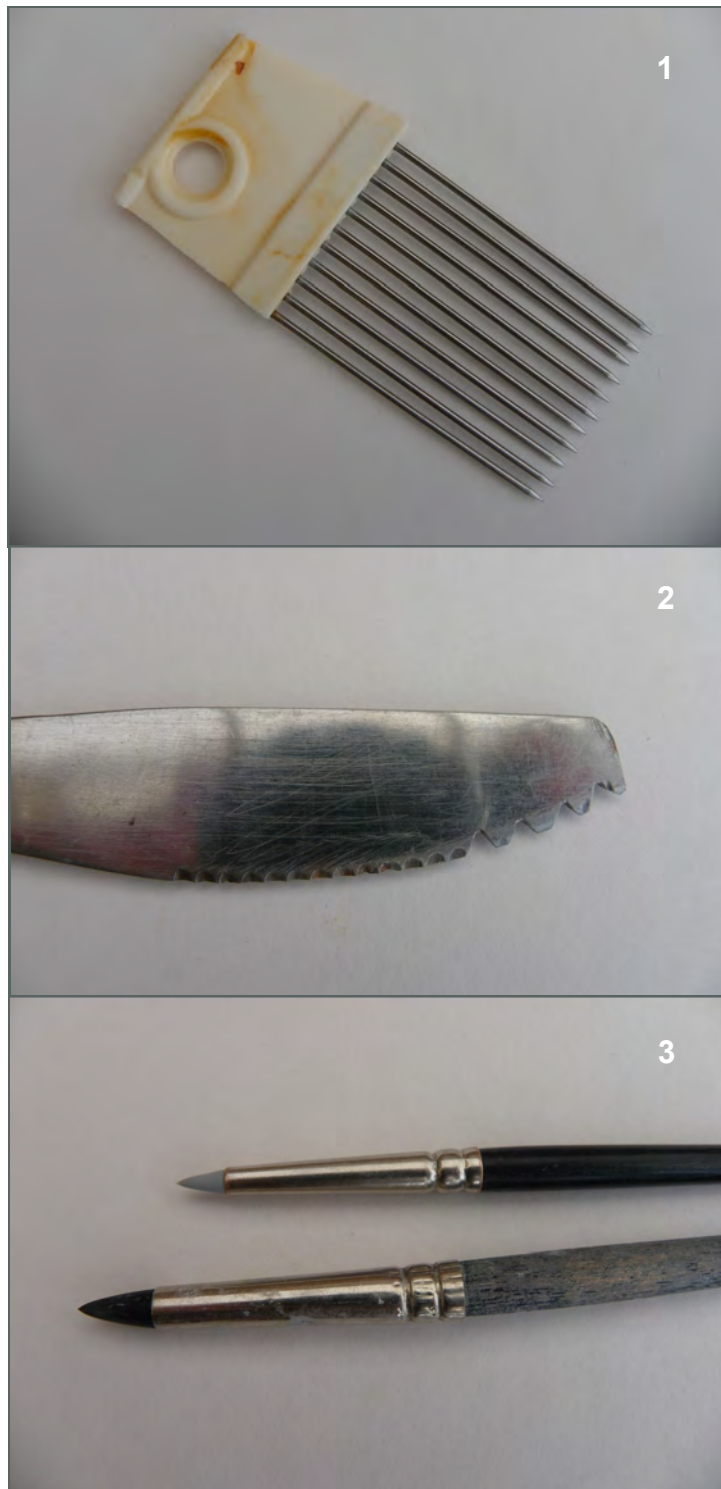
The first is a plastic- handled comb with metal teeth which I inherited from the late Paul Allsopp. I never met Paul but his lovely wife Hilda let me take what tools I wanted when I bought his kiln after he passed away. Paul was a thrower and a great tool maker. I use this comb every day in my workshop – it's perfect for speedy scoring and slipping (fig 1). It's one of a few of tools I wouldn't be without.

Paul made a lot of strip tools too which I use for turning and a nifty tool out of a dinner knife which I use for making lines on thrown pots (fig 2). Paul also made callipers out of vinyl records. I often wonder which record he sacrificed to make them!

The other tools I just couldn't be without are my rubber tipped tools which I use for tidying up lines (fig 3). They are called Colour Shapers (other brands may be available!) and are marketed mainly for use with oil or acrylic paint. I first bought one just to try it out and now have them in several sizes. I use leaves a lot in my clay work, often rolling the leaves into the clay. Sometimes, with handling, the print left by the veins of the leaves gets smudged. These tools come in handy for redefining the veins. They also come with different shaped tips, e.g. chisel tips, but I really only use the tapered point ones. They come in soft and hard options. They are great for tidying up small pierced holes too.

I make my own tools sometimes too. A couple of years ago I was approached by the local museum who asked me to lead a series of workshops with children, inspired by the local pottery of the Rotherham area in the 1800's, called Rockingham Pottery. This led me to creating myriad clay stamps for the children to use, inspired by the decoration and patterns characteristic of the pottery. I spent some time studying the pottery collection in the museum, in particular the decoration adorning the pots.

I'd never made my own clay stamps before and was surprised by how easy they were to make. When making them I use a smooth clay, I make sure that the edges of the patterns are precisely carved or incised enough to make a clear mark in the clay and that the whole stamp is easy enough to hold but not so thick that it could blow up upon being biscuit-fired.



Rockingham pottery typically displays lots of leaves (including acanthus and oak leaves), flowers, grapes, honeycomb patterns, scrolls, half-circles and other patterns (fig 4).



I enjoyed carving them and spent many happy hours doing so. The stamps were easy for the children to hold and simple to use. They glazed their biscuit-fired work and I raku-fired it in the museum's new raku kiln (fig 5). I have also used the stamps in some contexts where learners have difficulties. The stamps also led me to take my work temporarily in a new direction and I produced some pieces of my own with them. I also now make clay stamps whenever I have a spare minute or two and probably have about 60 now (fig 6)!

Some of my tools are precious to me, and can play a part in defining my work, but, like me as a maker and a teacher, my tool boxes are evolving. Who knows what will be thrown in them next!



Ten Thousand Bowls

Opening installation to launch the Centre of Ceramic Art (CoCA)

Ten thousand ceramic bowls will be piled high to create a spectacular installation of pots inside York Art Gallery for its reopening this summer.



The work by internationally renowned artist Clare Twomey, will see 10,000 handmade slipcast ceramic bowls, identical in form and colour, be placed on scaffolds in the first floor mezzanine gallery which is home to the new Centre of Ceramic Art (CoCA). The precarious nature of the stacked works alludes to how collections often grow, and the challenges this presents to collectors. The number of bowls being produced relates to the belief that it takes 10,000 hours of practice to become a master craftsman.

Twomey has invited local groups, including York College students and NPA members, to help make the bowls which will be used to build the installation.

Helen Walsh, Curator of Ceramics, said: "For the reopening of York Art Gallery and the launch of CoCA we wanted to

have a striking and bold installation that shows ceramics in an imaginative and original way.

"Clare is an artist we have admired for some time and we were delighted when she agreed to create what will be a focal point for everyone coming to visit the new look gallery for the first time. "

Helen added: "Her work acknowledges the way collections can often become obsessions which grow so much they consume all the free space available to them. This was certainly the case for W.A. Ismay, whose collection of ceramics will be shown in CoCA. His fantastic collection of 3,600 works were once kept in his tiny terraced house in Wakefield, filling every room, with objects often stacked high, covering all surfaces, including the floor."

Clare Twomey said: "I am thrilled to be given the opportunity to work with such a personally formed and rich collection. Making this work will build dialogue around the roles of the collector, objects and the communities that can appreciate them"

York College was one of the first groups to work on some of the slipware pieces. Helen Ventress, Head of Division for Art & Design says: "Students and staff are very excited to be able to work with Clare in our ceramics studios here at York College and actually be a part of the making process for such an ambitious piece. The recent national interest in ceramic installations has captured the nation's imagination and the project sounds perfect for the launch of the new look gallery. The students will gain ideas for their own work and a first-hand insight into a week in the life of a successful artist working on a fantastic commission for the city."

The installation is part of a rich and varied opening programme of art and exhibitions, with more details being released shortly.



Helen Walsh, practising for Bake-off, Britain's Best Potter (!) or making bowls for the CoCA installation

Photos: Gaby Lees

British Ceramics Biennial - Call for applications

AWARD 2015

The celebrated AWARD exhibition will sit at the centre of the fourth British Ceramics Biennial taking place in Stoke-on-Trent from 26 September to 8 November 2015.

This year, AWARD will emphasise new work, work with little previous exposure, work which projects ceramic practice forward to match the ambition of BCB as a national showcase.

You are invited to apply for the BCB AWARD 2015 - a prestigious exhibition that celebrates the vitality and standing of contemporary British ceramics, in the context of its long history in Stoke-on-Trent.

Deadline for applications: Monday 30 March 2015

Building on the success and growing reputation of the AWARD exhibition by siting the show at the centre of the programme of exhibitions on the Spode site. A new selection panel chaired by Alun Graves (Curator of Ceramics & Glass at the V&A) will choose 10 artists, giving each exhibitor more space, providing a platform and more focused opportunity for critical appraisal.

A single cash prize of £5,000 will be made together with an offer to the winner to be involved in both the selection process for AWARD 2017 and the subsequent BCB 2017 exhibition programme.

Artists are asked to submit proposals, outlining what work they would seek to present if selected. It is a condition that all work proposed will be current (no more than 3 years old). It is anticipated that many of the artists will propose to make new work for the 2015 exhibition.

FRESH 2015

Graduates (BA, MA) of UK higher education universities and colleges who graduated in 2014 or 2015 are invited to apply for the BCB FRESH 2015 - a prestigious exhibition that celebrates the emerging talent in contemporary British ceramics, in the context of its long history in Stoke-on-Trent.

Deadline for applications: Monday 6 July 2015

What is Fresh?

FRESH is:

- A curated survey exhibition of new ceramic work by recent graduates from UK Higher Education programmes
- Organised by the BCB and the National Association of Ceramics in Higher Education

Venue: BCB Exhibition Space, the original Spode factory site, Stoke Town, Stoke-on-Trent

Dates: 26 September - 8 November 2015

FRESH will:

- Promote the high quality work of graduates to a professional and public audience through a combination of visitors to the show, symposium, journal articles and reviews.
- Represent the range of practice of graduates within the field, which is anticipated to include work from across the ceramic spectrum: studio pottery, tableware and industrial design, figurative and abstract sculpture and installation.
- Provide an invaluable launch pad for the exhibitors as they embark on their professional careers.
- Award commendations for three exhibitors demonstrating talent and professional potential in the disciplines of craft, design and fine art.

For more information and to download an application form visit <http://bit.ly/1LbngKh>

Welcome To New Members

Margaret Brown	Heaton	Lancashire
Denise Evans	Didsbury	Manchester
Kate Gummer	Sheffield	South Yorkshire
Gabi Komar-Dixon	Hale	Cheshire
Sheridan McInnes	Sheffield	South Yorkshire
Eileen Oo	Norton	Cleveland

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

NPA Membership

Subscription Rates:

Individual

£22 (if paid by standing order)

£25 (if paid by cheque)

£30 (for overseas members)

Joint membership

(2 members at one address)

£34 (paid by standing order or cheque)

Full time ceramics **student**

£15 (has to be paid by cheque)

(please send evidence of eligibility e.g. photocopy of SU card)



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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

Advertising in NPA News

Cost of advert for one issue:

Diary listings:	free
Small ads:	up to 30 words free to members
Boxed Adverts:	
Colour	half page £30 quarter page £18 eighth page £10
Black & white	half page £20 quarter page £15 eighth page £8

Repeat Adverts:

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York, YO42 4NH
e: npanews@btinternet.com

New Regional Coordinator - NPA-E

Following the resignation of Lesley Anne Greene, we are pleased to announce that Gillian Holt has volunteered to take on the role of regional coordinator. Lesley carried out the role for several years, and we would like to thank her for her dedication!

Here's a bit of background information about Gillian:

Having followed a first career in insurance and business administration, qualified as a Fellow of the Chartered Insurance Institute and a Master of Business Administration, Gillian embarked upon a second career in the visual arts. After a part-time Access course at Todmorden College, she took a BA in Art and Design, at Bradford School of Art, focusing on textiles and ceramics. She then went on to take an MA in printmaking followed by an MA in Visual Art, specialising in ceramics. She is a Member of the Society of Designer Craftsmen and the Hallam Members of the Society of Designer Craftsmen.



Following the untimely death in October 2011 of the celebrated Mytholmroyd potter and NPA member, David (Constantine) White, Gillian, with a small group of ceramists and potters, brought together by David's friend, fellow potter and local teacher, Sue Turner, took on the workshop and much of David's materials and equipment at Brier Hey Pottery where they continue to produce ceramics.

Gillian works in hand-built stoneware and slip-cast porcelain and parianware. The larger, stoneware pieces are partially glazed and the porcelain and parianware work takes the form of slip-cast bottles and small dishes, usually unglazed. She prints images on the surfaces using old family photographs, documents and text, reflecting her own family history and the themes of memory, memorial, war and loss.



Gillian's latest work has been inspired by the WW1 Commemoration Project to remember the forty five men named on the Luddenden and Midgley War Memorial, including her grandfather's brother and her husband's grandfather.

Her most recent exhibitions include a joint exhibition from late November to early January with the Hallam Members of the Society of Designer Craftsmen at Rufford and, in January, at the Mall Galleries in London, at the special Designer Crafts Exhibition of the Society of Designer Craftsmen to celebrate their 25th year of exhibiting at the Mall Galleries.

Contents of pottery for sale following retirement

Nabertherm Electric kiln "Top 140", Toploader - Bargain price £1,000 with programmable controller, 4 circular shelves and as many props as wanted. Used only for biscuit firing and in excellent condition. Runs off normal household electricity, needing only a cooker-type socket. **(New price, plus furniture, is £2,500)**

Pugmill on stand in excellent and clean condition- £500

Wall-mounted **extruder**- £50

Also many **books**, props, **glaze materials** and oddments, all priced at **below 2012** levels. I am willing to sell the glaze materials as a job lot at a great discount.

Newer potters - also a complete set of **Ceramic Review**, from Issue 93 (1985)-Issue 250 (2011) - only 2 copies missing. An excellent resource! Offers invited.

Please contact michele@michelebeverley.co.uk for list of items, books and any further details.

NB Buyer collects- (York area) but delivery and installation of kiln can be arranged.



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Regional News

Contact your regional coordinator with ideas for events, exhibition visits, ceramic related items for sale / wanted etc. Most of our members can be contacted by email, so you can get your message out quickly to a wide audience. Any member can join any regional group, so if you want to know what's going on in an area other than where you live, contact the regional coordinator and ask to be added to their mailing list. To send information to all members via the regional coordinators, email the details to Sylvia Holmes - sylviaholmes.npa@gmail.com

East

Co-ordinator: Gillian Holt
Email: lgmholt.npa@gmail.com
Tel: 01422 883024



A final report from Lesley Anne Greene:

Before writing this report I have been in touch with the Chair to relinquish the position of regional coordinator. I hope to be moving home in early March and feel that this is an appropriate moment to request that another member may wish to take up the opportunity. I have recently checked my emailing list against the master copy and updates provided by the membership secretary. Please inform the membership secretary if your contact details change.

I would like to thank all those members who encouraged and supported me during my time in this post. I think the deadline of 23rd February for applications for Crafted by Hand Summer Event in Masham may have passed by the time the NPA News is published so I do hope members were able to apply in response to the email forwarded from Charlotte Morrison on the 5th of February as this is now a well established selling venue. I am looking forward to catching up with members at Potfest in the Pens this summer and the new Sheffield Ceramics festival in September and wish everyone all the best for the potting year.

South East

Co-ordinator: Brian Holland
Email: brianhollandceramics@yahoo.com
Tel: 01909 724781



Arrangements for the Sheffield Ceramic Festival are going well, and several NPA members attended a meeting with the organisers to discuss any issues they may have and to see the site. I believe everyone was impressed by the charm of the place. I will publish a full list of exhibitors shortly, mostly but not all, NPA members. There are still a couple of places left but be quick!

The Sherwood Forest Wood Firing Association (again not all but a large contingent of NPA members) had their first and very successful firing of their newly built mini anagama kiln, which had cone 10 flat, back and front in 11 hours yet provided good reduction and ash deposits. The kiln performed beautifully, and now that the association has access to a free wood mountain, will be fired on a very regular basis. New members always welcome. (contact BH).

South West

Co-ordinator: Clive Weake
Email: clive.weake@gmail.com
Tel: 01625 536388



These are our upcoming exhibitions, they are all full!!
Altrincham College of Art Pre-View Thursday 26th February then open Saturdays 7th, 14th, 21st March and 4th April. www.altrinchamcollege.com
The Old Parsonage, Didsbury Saturday 23rd, Sunday 24th and Monday 25th May.
www.didsburyparsonagetrust.org.uk
Foxlowe Arts Centre Saturday 18th July until Saturday 22nd August. Pre-View Friday 17th July.
www.foxloweartscentre.org.uk

West

Co-ordinator: Dave Harper / Geoff Wilcock
E-mail: ghwilcock@uclan.ac.uk
Tel: 01772 862852



Thanks to all members that attended our last meeting in the 'Ale Emporium' Preston, some journeyed from distant corners of the region. Around 30 members enjoyed our annual Jacobs Join

Forthcoming Exhibitions

7th April – 16th May at Cross Street Arts, Standish, nr. Wigan

28th May – 28th June 'Naked Raku' at Water Street Gallery, Todmorden

21st May – 26th September 'Fusion' at Arteria Gallery, Lancaster (8 members showing)

June – July 'It's all about clay' at Lytham Heritage Centre showed their ceramic pieces with the theme of 'festive food and drink'. (details to follow)

2nd – 21st November at PR1 Gallery, UCLAN, Preston

Details of exhibitions will be forwarded to members - for any further information contact ghwilcock@uclan.ac.uk.

Ceramic Art Lab UCLAN Preston

The new session of the annual Ceramic Art Lab, which run on Monday evenings 5pm – 9pm in the workshops at Victoria Building, UCLAN, has now started with 21 members, 15 are NPA West members.

We now have 149 likes on our facebook site - N.P.A. West

Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place at 7.15 pm on Tuesday 24th March at the 'Ale Emporium', Preston, our ceramic theme will be 'Spring'

North West

Co-ordinator: Ruth Charlton, Old Barn Studios, Ruthwaite, Ireby, Wigton, Cumbria, CA7 1HG
Email: ruthcharlton5@gmail.com
Tel: 016973 71690



There is no activity to report at the moment. We haven't had any socials and none of the members have contacted me with any information about forthcoming events.

North East

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



We have had a good response of applicants for the planned exhibition "Oriental Inspirations" in Autumn 2015, at the Oriental Museum in Durham.

Our next planned event is the Textured Porcelain and Egyptian Faience Workshop on Sat. 28th March 2015. Details are included below.

There are still some places available on the ANNA WHITEHOUSE workshop which NENPA has organised for NPA members. We are now also able to offer a few places to non members if you have friends who would like to come. If you would like a booking form, please email Carol Metcalfe on carol4npa@yahoo.co.uk as soon as possible. If it is absolutely impossible for you to use email, you can obtain a booking form by sending a SAE to Carol at:-

Wintylow Farm Cottage, Brough Park, Richmond, DL10 7PL

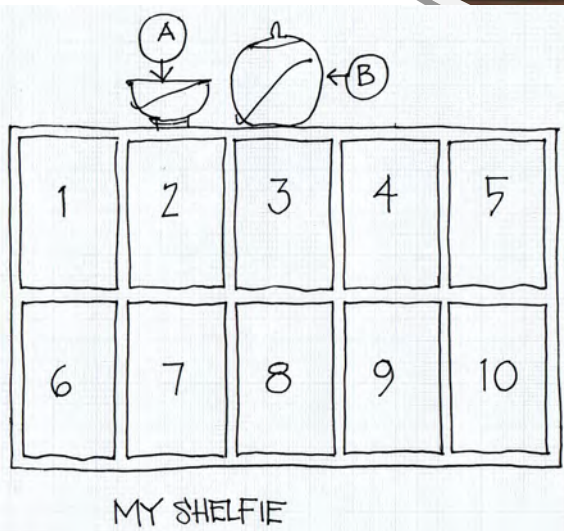
Venue: Booth Hall, Catterick, Richmond

Cost: NPA Members £15, Non members £25 [payable on booking and non-refundable since npa committee has stipulated that the event should be self funding and that we must have at least 25 attendees]

Description: A hands-on workshop day delivered by Anna Whitehouse, comprising a morning session [10-12am] of making innovative tools with which to texture clay and an afternoon session [1-4pm] when these tools will be used to make textured items in a choice of either Porcelain or Egyptian Faience. All materials will be supplied by Anna. We envisage this workshop also being very popular and so we have arranged for a maximum of 30 places to be available.

On the Shelf - David Wright

Twenty years of accumulated treasures!



- A. Catherine Wolfe - very coarse clay with oxides rubbed into the surface. There is a wonderful oil spot glaze inside, it looks wood fired, but is fired in an electric kiln.
- B. Linda de Nil makes these wonderful boxes, carved from loosely thrown clay.
- 1 An anagama fired bowl by Linda de Nil. This was a pot swap
 - 2 A gift from Steve Booton when he spent a couple of days helping to pack and fire my kiln.
 3. Lee Kang Hyo. This little bowl is paper thin and so light. Lee makes huge pots with coils in the traditional Onggi style.
 - 4 Porcelain beaker by Margaret Frith. It falls to the hand perfectly.
 - 5 A rope impressed beaker from an anagama firing by Peter

Swanson.

- 6 Aki Moriuchi. I bought this a very long time ago. Aki gave up ceramics to be a painter.
- 7 Rizu Takahashi. This was my first pot by a Japanese master. It came complete with Kibako (signed wooden box).
- 8 I was given this yunomi by Masakazu Kusakabe. It is underfired, the kiln he built at Aberystwyth did not reach temperature and some of the pots were dunted.
- 9 This little beaker by Fumihiko Fuyushiba is hand built and delicately painted. A souvenir from his stay with us.
- 10 A yunomi by Lisa Hammond was in the clearance sale at City Gallery Leicester. A bargain!

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Linda Southwell -
Magnolia Lidded Form.
Coiled, smoke fired, glazed
lid. 26cm diameter

