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NPA NEWS

The magazine of the Northern Potters Association



January - February 2014

www.northern-potters.co.uk



In this issue: Bill's Blue Plaque, The Trip of a Lifetime.....

Editor's Comment

Happy New Year to everyone.

This issue has been produced under some duress, as I am currently on holiday in Alnwick, with only occasional access to the internet (sometimes necessitating the purchase of alcohol or caffeine based drinks!), so I have been unable to verify some of the details I usually would, and cannot check for events which haven't been sent to me. Apologies if I have missed something important.

The first instalment of Steve Booton's trip of a lifetime will whet the appetite of many members with an interest in Japanese ceramics, and I'm sure the second instalment will be eagerly awaited. Steve acknowledges the help of fellow NPA member Steve Tootell, who is based in Tokyo for most of each year, with trips back to Wales in the summer. Steve (T) has been a regular contributor to this magazine, and I would like to add my thanks to him for his insights into his experience of the wider potting community. We have many members who have individual experiences and expertise which would be of interest - wouldn't it be great to hear from some of them?

Once again, we draw attention to the WA Ismay collection, with a review of the Hepworth exhibition by a non-potter (page 26), information about York's inclusion in the Google Cultural Institute via their Google Art Project (page 11), and Helen Walsh's article about the blue plaque to be erected on Ismay's former home in Wakefield (page 14). The SE regional group are holding their next meeting on 19 January starting at the Hepworth, so if you haven't seen the exhibition yet, that would be an ideal opportunity to go along and meet up with other potters to view and discuss it.

Jim Simpson throws light on his career in ceramics (page 18) - and very impressive it is too. I can appreciate his view that it's now time to do what he wants (ceramically speaking), and if he fancies building a salt kiln, he will!

After a slow start, there were a lot of contributions for the members' gallery, and if you sent something and haven't been included, you will be in the next issue. That doesn't mean if you didn't send anything you shouldn't - I always need more images to choose from, and like to include a broad cross-section of different styles and techniques where possible, so the more the merrier.

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Cover :

Steve Tootell, Raku ware using imported Japanese raku glazes, gas fired in Wales - to be shown in the UK in the summer

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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 20 February 2014

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 or anything similar that involves an extra process to make them accessible! Many members now embed files, and it makes my job much more time-consuming, so these are less likely to be included!

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.

New Books - Roger Bell

500 Teapots Volume 2	Jim Lawton	\$27.95
A Troublesome Subject: The Art of Robert Arneson	Jonathan Fineberg	41.95
Infinite Place: The Ceramic Art of Wayne Higby	Ed Peter Held	\$85.00
Interpreting Ceramics, Selected Essays	Dahn & Jones	19.99
With Fire: Richard Hirsch	Scott Mayer	\$34.99
The Pot Book	Ed Edmund de Waal	
Pottery Traditions of India (DVD)	Jane Perryman	20.00
Sculpting and Handbuilding	Claire Loder	16.99
Stephen De Staebler	Ed Timothy Burgard	24.95
Sustainable Ceramics	Robert Harrison	
With Fire: Richard Hirsch	Scott Meyer	\$24.99

Book Review - Roger Bell

SUSTAINABLE CERAMICS

Publ: Bloomsbury

Robert Harrison

£19.99

As the title says, this book is written to help potters go 'green' and reduce their carbon footprint. The late Janet Mansfield puts it in her foreword ' what we believe we can change, what good we can do. Or to put it another way, what harm we can avoid...'. At first it all seems simple. Use less, waste less, recycle more, compare alternatives and choose the best. But it soon becomes clear that it is not as simple as 'this or that' decisions.

Building your own kiln using largely recycled materials may be resource efficient in the making but not in the firing where modern kilns are so heat retentive that energy use is far better per firing. Research has shown that salt/soda kilns generally disperse far less harmful gases and acid than previously thought. The book is full of these comparisons and shows how much thought is necessary. It also gives plenty of simple steps which particular practices can take.

Reduce the energy use in firing by reducing as far as possible the number of kiln shelves. I remember Christie Keeney opening a kiln full of pieces just piled on each other (he uses slips and engobes not glaze) and thinking that the shelves had collapsed. But it will have saved a lot of fuel by getting more work in and not heating unnecessary materials. There are plenty of ideas on use of unwanted materials for firing – vegetable oil, old pallets, even landfill gas. Some suitable for large potteries only, some suitable for small. The University of Oregon collects glaze waste slurry mixes with waste clay and makes hard wearing bricks for paving.

There is also considerable consideration given to recycling / repurposing in finished products, most obviously in large sculptural pieces. This is a major part of Harrison's oeuvre of course. Examples of work and methodologies from around the world including China, Australia and the UK are included. Gwen Heeney, Dave Binns and Paul Scott are amongst them.

Plenty of lessons can be learned. Others that are impressed on my mind are: use manufacturers where they are more cost effective; and check the efficiency of your firing cycle – do not keep temperature gain any slower than is necessary to avoid faults or achieve specific finish effects.

An interesting and stimulating book.

Exhibitions - Sylvia Holmes

New Schoolhouse Gallery York Exhibition

The preview was well attended, and the gallery report that visitors have been very appreciative of the exhibition, though overall sales have not been quite as good as the last time we exhibited there. Final sales figures and analysis will appear in the next issue.



NPA exhibition at The New Schoolhouse Gallery



Turnstone summer 2014

The deadline for the Turnstone exhibition is 5pm Friday 24th January. Please get your application in early if you can!

Turnstone Gallery is changing its opening hours, and will be closed all day on both Tuesday and Wednesday all year from now on. It will be open 11am - 5pm Thursday - Monday inclusive during the run of the NPA exhibition. Please check the website for winter opening times.
<http://www.turnstonegallery.net/>

Ropewalk Exhibition October 25th - November 30th 2014

Application forms for this show will be available in April.
<http://www.the-ropewalk.co.uk/>

Earth and Fire Shared stands 2014

Applicants for the shared NPA stand(s) will shortly be informed by the Earth and Fire selection panel whose work has been selected for the show. We will need a volunteer from amongst the exhibitors to take charge of the NPA stand covers and publicity banners, so please email sylviaholmes.npa@gmail.com if you are willing to take this on.

From the Heart of the Kiln - Brian Holland

The SE regional group's 3rd Thoresby exhibition, 'From the Heart of the Kiln', was intended to be a two week event, but due to staff absences and overbooking, we ended up with only one week. In some ways it was our best exhibition so far, and in other ways our worst!

Our best because we had more space since the gallery had closed off a route through to another room and created another display space giving us plenty of room for each person's work. All the work could be seen to advantage with no overcrowding.

Our worst because of the timing. The weekend we had for a meet the artist and usually a time to attract more people clashed with several other events in the area in this busy period. Timing is important and next time I intend to push harder for a date that ties in with another major event at Thoresby itself, thus maximising the foot fall.

The above said, Michelle (though I know I have a bias) did a wonderful job, making maximum use of the space and tweaking everyone's display to its full potential. Everyone's work looked good and the comments in the Comments Book were all very positive. The show was visited by David Binch of the online OAKWOOD GALLERY, and Andy McInnes of the ART IN CLAY events who were both suitably impressed.

Thanks to everyone who participated:

Christele Askew, Janet Burton, Paul Burton, Steve Booton, Olinda Everett, Brian Holland, Debbie Michaels, Darrell Milnes, Ruby Sharp, Gillian Sykes,



Steve Booton and Brian Holland relax among the artworks at Thoresby

Diary

14 - 17 January	Exploring porcelain - throwing and hand building - West Dean College course, tutor Jack Doherty - westdean.org.uk
17 - 19 January	Art at the Priory - 11 Inspirational artists, including NPA member Steph Jamieson - Priory Barn, Syningthwaite, LS248BL - priory-arts.com
19 January	NPA-SE meeting at The Hepworth, Wakefield (1pm)
24 January 2014	Deadline for applications for NPA selected exhibition at Turnstone Gallery , Sandsend
26 January	NPA-NW get together at Bob & Denise Park's - contact Ruth Charlton for details - ruthcharlton5@gmail.com
26 - 31 January	Sculpting animals in clay - West Dean College course, tutor Jon Barrett-Danes - westdean.org.uk
27 January - March	Raku wall hangings - Roger Bell. Oswald's Café, Crnston's Food Hall, Ullswater Road, Penrith
3 March	BOTZ (brush on glazes) workshops - potclays.co.uk
18 March	NPA-W meeting - Bitter Suite pub, Preston (7.15pm)
20 - 23 March	Experimenting with paperclay - West Dean College course, tutor Claire Ireland - westdean.org.uk
27 March - 27 April	Ceramic Vessels - exhibition at Water Street Gallery, Todmorden
until 31 March	Track Across Time , exhibition by Cluster Contemporary Art at Darlington Railway Museum, DL3 6ST. New work by NPA member Carolyn Corfield
24 - 27 April	Exploring Japanese pottery - West Dean College course, tutor Kaori Tatebayashi - westdean.org.uk
9 - 11 May	Ceramics at the Mill , Higherford Mill, Barrowford - contact Julie Miles info@juliemiles.co.uk for details

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

The Trip of a Lifetime - Steve Booton

The trip of a lifetime began with an early start. The 3.15am train from Sheffield to Manchester airport. I thought this part of the journey would be uneventful, maybe a few airport travellers, possibly a few shift workers, but no, I got an inebriated 21 year old lad in shirtsleeves trying to get to Liverpool to profess his undying love for a girl who had recently dumped him, and two very worldly 14 year old girls trying to get back to Manchester from a Gig in Derby after missing their coach home. An interesting start to say the least.

I flew to Narita airport via Abu Dhabi, arriving bleary eyed the following day at 2.30 pm. A further 90 minute coach journey had me in Tokyo at the ANA Hotel where I was met by Steve Tootell, the man who made the whole trip possible. It was his excellent organising, advice, and contacts that were to make this the most memorable holiday I have ever experienced.

On Friday, after a good night's sleep, Steve set about showing me a little of Tokyo. We visited the The Meiji Shrine in Yoyogi in the morning, Gallery St.Ives, owned by Koichiro Isaka, in the afternoon and in the evening we travelled to Rappongi for a trip to the top of the Mori tower (one of the highest buildings in Tokyo) where the top floors contained a museum/art gallery and a viewing floor giving uninterrupted views of Tokyo where we sat with a beer or two and watched the Tokyo landscape come alive with millions of lights as the sun set.

Not a bad first Day.



Saturday promised to be eventful. Since arriving, I had followed Steve's lead and hopped on and off various trains with the knowledge that, with him, I couldn't get lost. Now it was time to travel from Tokyo to Mashiko alone...!

Before I left the UK I purchased a JR Unlimited rail ticket and at Ebisu Station, with Steve's help, booked the connecting trains to get me to Mashiko.

The first train was the Shinkansen (bullet train) to Oyama, then a local express train to Shimodate, then a delightful little two carriage train to Mashiko station.

From the sublime to the absolutely delightful. Every train was timed to the minute; if the ticket says arriving at 12.22pm it arrived at 12.22pm. I was definitely not in the UK. All rail employees were extremely helpful and by the time I arrived at Mashiko I was a seasoned traveller.

Mashiko, the home of Shoji Hamada.

At the time of his arrival, in the early 1920's, there were only thirty or so potters living there, eking out a meagre existence. Today, due to Hamada's presence, there are over 400 potters working there and the town has become an integral part of Japan's ceramic cultural heritage.

Twice a year Mashiko holds a pottery festival, one in the spring and one in the autumn, the main reason for my visit. I had read extensively and heard many anecdotal accounts of visits to the festival but I was still not prepared for the size and variety on show. Every car park, shop forecourt and side road was crammed full of stalls selling every conceivable style, size and range of pottery, from individual sculptural work through traditional studio pottery



to mass produced factory ware. I was there four days, eight hours a day, and only just managed to see all of the work on show. Every time I thought "that's it, seen them all" I would turn a corner and there would be another row of stalls. I was in Heaven. Not only were there 400 plus stalls, every shop in the town sold pots, and high on the hill overlooking the town is the Toge Messe, The National Ceramics Museum, containing amazing work by Japan's National Living Treasures along with work by Bernard Leach and other 20th century English potters.

I had arranged to meet up with Euan Craig, an Australian potter who moved to Mashiko over 20 years ago and who has now become an integral part of the Mashiko pottery world. His story deserves an article in itself. His home and kiln were destroyed in the 2011 earthquake and he has since moved from Mashiko to his wife's hometown of Minakami, 150 miles north of Mashiko and literally rebuilt his, and his family's life. I have yet to meet a braver, tougher, more resilient family. They are an inspiration. I had arranged to travel up to Minakami with Euan for a few days after helping him pack away at the end of the festival and help pack and fire his soda kiln full of work to be exhibited in his annual exhibition in Tokyo - more of that later.

Earlier in the year, while still in England, I met Ken Matsuzaki at his exhibition at Goldmark Gallery in Leicestershire, where he kindly invited me to visit him when I was in Mashiko. So, on the Monday of my visit I took a break from pot watching and travelled a mile or so out of Mashiko to his home and studio set back off the road amongst the trees. He too did not escape the earthquake and his kiln had to be extensively rebuilt. It is a large anagama kiln fired twice a year and luckily he had recently completed the firing and unpacked it days before the quake, and over 900 pots survived to reach his exhibitions around the world. I spent a delightful couple of hours with him and his daughter discussing pots and getting a close up look at around 50 huge pots in his show room waiting to be transported to a solo exhibition in Tokyo later in December. A real treat.



Also while in Mashiko, I visited the Hamada museum housing many of Shoji Hamada's personal collection of pots and furniture gathered over many decades of travelling the world. He loved English slipware and American shaker furniture, all things that he said echoed the mingei philosophy he and Bernard Leach followed while making pots.

During my time in Mashiko I stayed at a traditional Japanese B&B owned by Mr Furuki. It was a 200 year old house containing 8 Japanese style rooms with tatami mats and futon beds with a huge communal living space complete with open fires for heating and cooking food.

Mr Furuki also has western style accommodation but that was never a consideration!

As I was travelling alone, and the main rooms held 5-6 people. It was decided that I would sleep in the Tea room just off the communal living area. Just big enough for one person and very cosy. Plus, they were very busy during the festival, so it made sense. The Furuki family, as with ever other person I met in Japan, were wonderful. Nothing was too much trouble, I really felt at home.

It was hard to leave Mashiko, but the inviting prospect of a two and a half hour journey to Minakami in Euan's old K truck filled to bursting with wood for the firing I was to help with once we got there was enticement enough to leave the most amazing place, I as a potter, had ever visited.

My stay with Euan Craig, a trip to Sasayama to help fire John Dix's anagama kiln, the Nezu Museum exhibition of 16th century Korean tea bowls, the folk museum in Tokyo and the visit to meet Tomoo Hamada at his exhibition in Tokyo the will have to go in the next NPA News.



To be continued

I took over 1000 photos during my trip many of which can be seen on my facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/stevebootonceramics>



All photos ©Steve Booton

York Works of Art go Global

York Art Gallery joins some of the best museums in the world on the Google Art Project

A new exhibition created by York Art Gallery will be seen by a global audience thanks to a new partnership with Google. High definition images of 52 works along with video and detailed information have been uploaded to create this unique exhibition for the Google Art Project.

Entitled *W A Ismay: Collector, Connoisseur and Potaholic* the exhibition gives a snapshot of the collections and life of Ismay, who bequeathed his collection of 3,600 pieces of British Studio Ceramics to York Museums Trust when he died in 2001.

This is the first of a number of proposed exhibitions by York Museums Trust, who also look after the Yorkshire Museum and York Castle Museum, using the Google Art Project platform.

To view the exhibition go to:

<http://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/exhibit/w-a-ismay-collector-connoisseur-of-studio-ceramics/QRpzaaM2>

Mike Linstead, e-communications co-ordinator, said: "Partnering with the Google Art Project is an incredibly exciting step forward for York Museums Trust. We feel it is important to make the many wonderful and historic works in our collections as accessible as possible. Through the Art Project we are able to showcase many works in a dedicated online space."

Helen Walsh, assistant curator of decorative arts, said: "York Art Gallery has one of the best collections of British Studio Ceramics in the country and part of this is because of the strength of the W A Ismay Collection. The Google Art Project has given us a fantastic platform to promote these works and Ismay to a new audience around the world."

The collections of York Art Gallery will now sit alongside some of the biggest arts institutions in the world using the Google Art Project, including the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Museums of Modern Art in New York, the Musee d'Orsay in Paris and the British Museum and Tate Britain in London.

The 52 works shown in the exhibition offer a snapshot of the ceramics collected by Bill Ismay. The Wakefield librarian was the UK's most prolific collector of post-war British studio ceramics and filled every spare space of his small terraced home with his collection. The exhibition offers visitors the chance to learn about this remarkable man and see some of his star pieces in high definition. It also includes scans of documents and images from Ismay's extensive archives. One of the main tools on the exhibition pages is the ability to use a custom built zoom. This allows visitors to discover minute aspects of works they may never have seen up close before. The online exhibition complements an exhibition at The Hepworth, Wakefield, entitled Matthew Darbyshire and the W.A Ismay Collection, running until January 26 - www.hepworthwakefield.org

The Art Project is part of the Google Cultural Institute which is dedicated to creating technology that helps the cultural community to bring their art, archives, heritage sites and other material online. The aim is to increase the range and volume of material from the cultural world that is available for people to explore online and in doing so, democratise access to it and preserve it for future generations.



1 Jar, Elizabeth Fritsch, 2 Jug, Mick Casson, both ©York Museums Trust

Bill's Blue Plaque - Helen Walsh

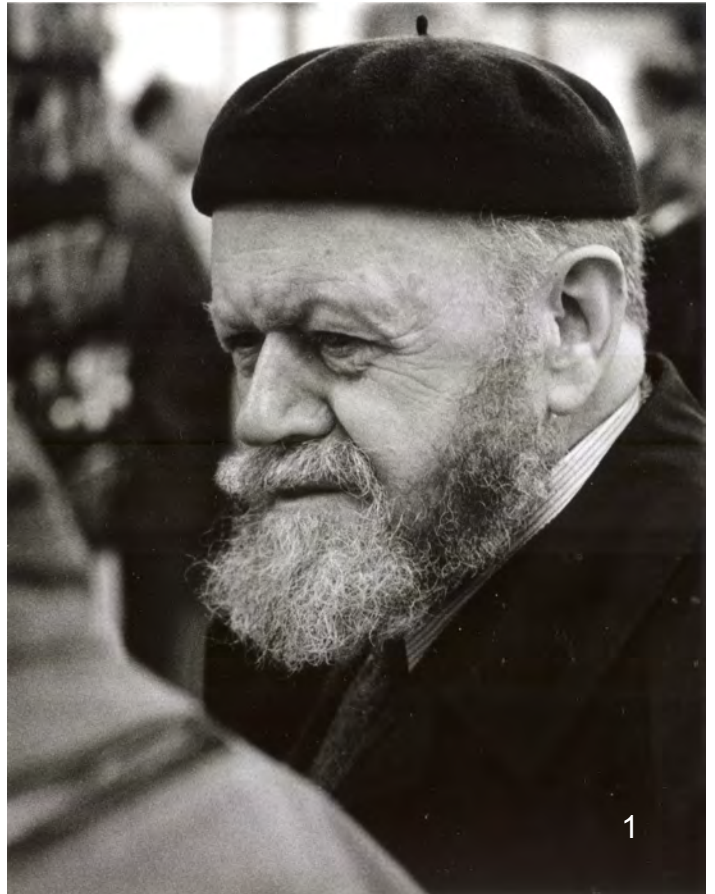
Like it or loathe it, the exhibition at The Hepworth Wakefield, 'Matthew Darbyshire and the WA Ismay Collection', has succeeded in highlighting Bill Ismay and his collection. Presented in a very unorthodox, challenging fashion, the exhibition has drawn attention to Ismay and his great achievement in creating the most representative collection of post-war British studio pottery in the world.

I've had the pleasure of working with the collection since 2004 and Ismay has become a real hero for me. The sacrifices he made in order to build his collection, his generosity in sharing it with visitors to his home and his determination to ensure it stayed complete and in his beloved Yorkshire, is hugely admirable. The positive impact he had on the potters who he supported is clear from the affection he still inspires. This is why I suggested to Wakefield Civic Society that Ismay was a deserving candidate for a blue plaque.

Though his collection has a new home in York, the importance of Ismay's home at 14 Welbeck Street, as the place the collection was created is undeniable. Photographs taken whilst Ismay was alive and the collection in-situ, capture something of the spirit of the space and they are brought to life by the recollections of the many people lucky enough to visit, people such as Michael Cardew, Edmund de Waal, Ray Finch, Tanya Harrod and many many more. The small two bedroomed terraced house was the exhibition space and the storage facility for his 3,600 pots, his archive and his extensive library. From the small strip of space at one end of his kitchen table, he not only ate but also kept up correspondence with the many potters, curators, collectors, writers and students he helped and supported over the years.

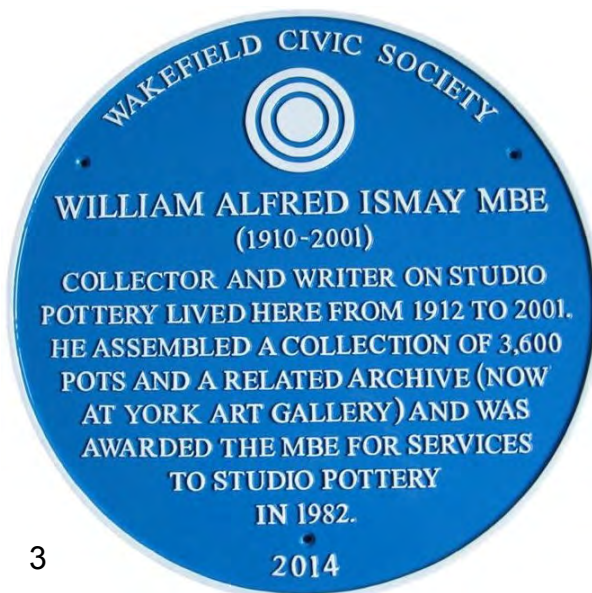
One comment from a visitor to the exhibition at The Hepworth Wakefield really sums up for me what is special about Ismay's collection, "It is great to have a collection of art & pottery that isn't reflecting only aristocratic & upper class lives". I hope that those seeing the blue plaque will take inspiration from it and see that you don't have to be a rich Lord *something or other*, living in a mansion to do something amazing, like Ismay did.

I am extremely grateful to the Northern Potters Association for supporting the blue plaque for Ismay. He was one of the founding members of the NPA, supporting it continuously, attending and writing astute reviews of events and exhibitions, not only for the NPA newsletter but also for Ceramic Review and CRAFTS, ensuring national coverage for potters across the UK. He also provided real-world support to potters by buying their work and offering them encouragement and his collection holds many examples of work by past and present members. Emmanuel Cooper once said that 'collectors



were the lifeblood of the studio pottery movement', but pots and potters were surely the lifeblood of WA Ismay. The blue plaque is a fitting tribute to him.

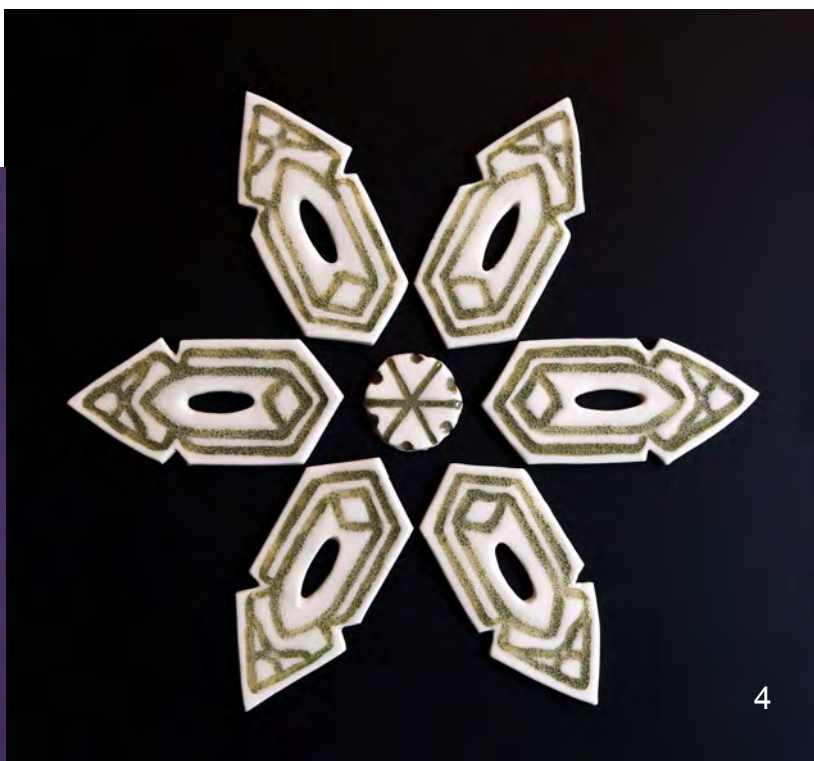
Wakefield Civic Society unveil the plaque at a special ceremony at The Hepworth Wakefield in January 2014 and will install it on the exterior of 14 Welbeck Street soon after.



- 1 Bill Ismay at an exhibition pv: ©John Anderson
- 2 At home among his pots: ©Janette Haigh
- 3 The text of the blue plaque
- 4 14 Welbeck Street, where the plaque will be installed

Members' Gallery

Please let me have images of your latest work for inclusion in the Members' Gallery - Ed



- 1 Gerald Unwin, **Badger - Culling** (Mr Brock has the 12 bore, and has bagged a couple of Tory MPs!)
- 2 Lorraine Clay, **Trilobites**
- 3 John Hawkins, **'Our Postie'** (endangered species) - hand built stoneware, with iron oxide 48cm h, glasses patinated copper
- 4 Ann Bates, **Segments**, Limoges porcelain. Were exhibited at the DH Lawrence Heritage Centre



5



6



7

- 5 Clare Farley **'Hobbit'** stoneware planter
 6 Linda Yates, **Flower forms** - T material and
 porcelain, hand built, tin glaze
 7 Caroline Lee, **Bandstand piece**, waxed raku

Members' Gallery (continued!)



- 8 Julie Butterworth,
Large Bowl with Leaf Impressions
- 9 June Roddam -
Woodfired bottles
- 10 Brian Holland,
Abersoc1, woodfired

Welcome To New Members

Colin Jowitt	Wakefield	W. Yorkshire
Claire Orange	Carnforth	Lancashire
Ann Robbins	Doncaster	South Yorkshire
Linda Southwell	Sheffield	South Yorkshire
Yvonne Taylor	Chesterfield	Derbyshire

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

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:

Six consecutive inclusions for the price of five

All adverts have to be paid for prior to publication

(Cheques made out to NPA, sent to the editor)

Barbara Wood
Old Mills, Seaton Ross,
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NPA Membership

Subscription Rates:

Individual	£22 (if paid by standing order) £25 (if paid by cheque or Postal Order) £30 (for overseas members)
Joint membership	
(2 members at one address)	£34 (has to be paid by standing order)
Full time student/unwaged	£10 (has to be paid by cheque or PO)

(please send evidence of eligibility e.g. photocopy of SU card, UB40 etc.)

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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Back to the Beginning - Jim Simpson

It has been said before that life is like a journey down many paths, sometimes though coming back to almost where you started but never quite. You have changed, have more experience and skills and a different way of looking at what you are doing and why. Then there is the choice of path which can seem to be random but also due to what has gone before.

What if I had not gone to that Valentine's party in 1968 and met my wife Marion? We would not have moved from London in 1975, to Chesterfield where she came from. In 1977 I would not have joined the adult education pottery course where Geoffrey Fuller was tutor and where, in two terms, I was hooked line and sinker to pottery. Within a year I had given up my wonderful job as a telecommunications engineer with company car, expenses and everything else, and was on the vocational ceramics course at Chesterfield College of Art.

Before going to college I had found out that Marion's grandfather had been a thrower at Barker Lane pottery, one of the Brampton potteries in Chesterfield which I believe closed in 1956. These Chesterfield potteries had a profound and long lasting effect on me. I was determined to salt glaze and make pottery in the style of Brampton ware. Brampton ware is a general term to describe salt glaze from a number of potteries that were making salt glazed stoneware in Chesterfield from the early 1800s. The pots were usually sprigged with the most wonderful and delicate images. Tankards, tea pots, storage pots, cookware, puzzle jugs and water filters were exported all over the world.



Vicar and Moses tankard

My time at college furthered my interest in Brampton salt glaze ware. Geoffrey Fuller, who lectured there, also had a collection of it. Chris Jensen, who is somewhat of an expert on Brampton ware, came several times as a visiting lecturer. Chris fortunately got to Barker Lane before it was demolished and rescued many sprig moulds and also the brass dog handles originals. These handles in the form of dogs can be seen on many of the jugs and tankards. Many of the sprig moulds were available to use and I certainly did occasionally. However, I am not sure now if this was a good thing or not, as some were badly treated, and they all must have disappeared by now.

The course concentrated heavily on throwing and as soon as I could throw cylinders I started to make tankards. I have included a picture of one of my first, which I sprigged and burnished to emulate Brampton ware. It denotes the Vicar and Moses, Moses being the night watchman taking the drunken vicar home. This was a famous image of those times often made into prints and figurines or sprigged onto drinking vessels. These were often sold to farmers who in those days had to pay a tithe to the church.

I also built a wood fired kiln to salt glaze my pots at the college. I now think that I was lucky to have gone to Chesterfield College at that particular time. There was a remarkable group of students on the course, John Gibson and Josie Walters among them to name just two. I think the skills we learnt enabled us to go on and make our way in pottery in one way or another.

The path then took me to The Coach House at Lea near Matlock where I found myself with a large workshop, a shop, and part of a field to build a kiln in beautiful countryside. This time I built a 90cu ft salt glaze kiln which I fired



A load from the salt glaze kiln

on oil with 2 Swirlamizer burners. The second picture is of a typical load from that kiln. By this time I was making my own sprigs which led on to making slip cast moulds and buying equipment as pieces came up for sale. I stayed for nearly 5 years. In that time I converted some of the stables at The Coach House to a shop. The farmer and I then won the gold award for conversion of farm buildings to business use from The Country Landowners Society. Shortly after this the path turned again, this time to Chatsworth, the most famous of country houses. In 1984 I was head hunted to do a similar conversion at the Stud Farm next door to their then farm shop. The next 15 years at Chatsworth were to be a big adventure, but that's another story.

I have no regrets with my life along the pottery path to the present. Now at the age at which I find myself, I think it is my time to make whatever I wish. I mix my own black clay body which I throw, hand build and slip cast. I also paint pictures and designs which are applied to my pottery. I have made about 150 plaster tile moulds so that I can make Islamic style patterned tiles from white earthenware. Then last year I got involved with the smokeless wood fired kiln in Sheffield run by Penny Withers and Sarah Villeneuve, for which I made some stoneware pots. These stoneware pots were the first I had made since the end of 1984 when I stopped salt glazing. Whilst making these pots I once again felt the

influence of Brampton ware, although some 38 years later other experiences and influences would necessarily ensure that my work would not be slavish copies or reproductions that would not do justice to Brampton ware or myself. And so the path comes almost full circle.

I recently got out some drawings I did of Brampton ware sprigs and have included some of them as my third picture.

I am helping a few potters who want to build kilns, two of whom want to soda fire and the call to build a salt glaze kiln for myself again is becoming irresistible.



Drawings of Brampton sprigs

Photos ©Jim Simpson

Mossy's Yorkshire - Eric Moss

Extract from an interview with NPA member Eric Moss, published in the Yorkshire Post

What's your first Yorkshire memory?

A family holiday to Staithes, before my 2nd birthday. My mother, who was expecting my younger brother at the time, took me and an elder brother, Ron, on a pleasure boat trip. It got a little choppy so the crew covered the passengers with a tarpaulin to keep the spray off. Whether incubated under tarp or not, soon afterwards my brother and I came out in chicken pox. A few months later, I remember being upset when my mother returned from hospital with my new baby brother. When she refused my request to 'take him back where she'd gotten him' I ran away from home and was found walking up the middle of Starbeck's main road in just my vest (there were very few cars on the roads in the early 60s).

Has Yorkshire influenced your work?

Not directly; my ceramic sculpture begins with observation of natural form in my surroundings but it's distilled to a geometric minimum before evolving into new composite shapes; so one of my 'squidpots' may evoke an aircraft engine, seashell, artillery shell or a swimming squid. 'Nested sharks' sculptures began from studies of physalis and conkers in their shells. With a canted assembly of the components they now suggest flower heads, dancing flames or the snouts of sharks in conversation (at least to my eyes). My interest in exoskeletal creatures, in learning how things work (often by dismantling them into things that no longer work), product design and science fiction hardware have also influenced the things I make.



What do you think gives Yorkshire its unique identity?

Hard grit, soft water, industry, nature and the people that shape it all.

How do you think that Yorkshire has changed, for better or for worse, in the time that you've known it?

For better: "It were all fields round here when I were little" is probably the battle cry of every middle aged person? I grew up in Knaresborough and a real full-size castle was my playground in junior school. Out of school, I played near home in meadow fields until, one by one, they were excavated for gravel. This left a series of disused water filled pits which, naturalising over time and with good management, have greatly increased biodiversity in their surroundings – I've seen significant changes in my local area but I think the net result has benefited both people and wildlife. For worse: there's a lot more traffic on the roads and life moves at the frenetic pace of the car rather than the pedestrian or cyclist.

Who is the Yorkshire person that you most admire?

Jake Thackray, born in Richmond, was a quiet genius, a word and song-smith, painting vivid and entertaining pictures of Yorkshire life and landscape. Listen to 'The Kiss', 'The Widow of Brid', 'Go Little Swale' or 'The Poor Sod' for a sample of his mastery of observation, language and pithy style.

Name your favourite Yorkshire author/artist/performer.

Richard Snowden is a local farmer growing soft fruit and salad crops at Dunkeswick; when he's not doing that, he's a self-effacing, driven, charming, prodigiously energetic self-taught artist. I've known him since he dropped into life-drawing classes I attended at the turn of the century and it's been fascinating to watch his work develop. His paintings shout out the joy of life, love, local wildlife and Yorkshire landscape both urban and rural. Generally substituting pink pigment for green, initially by accident through his colour-blindness but increasingly by design, his large, vibrant paintings bring a fresh dimension to well-known views of Yorkshire.

Photo ©Eric Moss



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Regional News

North East

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Our "pot-handling" visit to the Shipley Gallery, hosted by the Craft Curator, Sim Panesar, was much appreciated and included a closer look at the pots in the Study Centre. The Elspeth Owen lecture was well supported by Friends of the Shipley and NENPA members. We enjoyed our Christmas lunch in Durham. A happy New Year to you all.

East

Co-ordinator: Lesley Anne Greene
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Tel: 01943 431823



At the time of writing this report I have not received any communications / news from NPA East members. I hope all have had a good Autumn and are looking forward to a creative and busy 2014. Please do not forget to send me your news, reviews and ideas to pass on to members and can I take this opportunity to ask that wherever possible please send publicity for events at least 7 days before the start date to : lesleyannegreene@gmail.com
Best wishes Lesley

South East

Co-ordinator: Brian Holland
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Tel: 01909 724781



Meeting at Brian Holland's Studio Sunday 1st December.
Apologies Linda Bullement, Gary and Pollie Utley, Steve Booton
Attendees: Jim Simpson, Gillian Sykes, Gerald Unwin, Brian Holland
Gillian thanked Brian and Michelle Holland for organising the Thoresby Exhibition.
Much discussion was had around the theme of other exhibition possibilities. Some dislike expressed about NPA choosing galleries with a commercial, and fashionably safe remit to exhibit in. It was pointed out that if one went to any such gallery in the UK how alike the work and spaces look. Why can't the NPA hire spaces where it would have more control, be more adventurous? We discussed alternative venues.
Jim is researching possible sites in Sheffield for exhibitions and also pop up shows.
Activities
Studio visits
Linda Bullement kindly offered her studio for the next visit, meeting first at the Hepworth and then going on to her studio for a meeting.
I offered a raku day here, date to be arranged. This was welcomed. I especially want it to be a day of exploring possibilities.
Gerald raised another popular issue, applying to the NPA for funding for educational events for members, eg on photography, web site building, presentation and display, etc. I offered my studio and we are looking at a programme.
2015 is the year of clay!
We discussed ideas around this and a potters camp proved most popular and we are happy to organise this. We discussed more details but before making these public the executive needs to be consulted. I agreed to contact Linda and organise a January date. This I did.

next meeting: January 19th, meet at The Hepworth Wakefield at 1.00pm. After viewing the galleries, including the installation of Bill Ismay's collection, moving on to Linda's studio.

South West

Co-ordinator: Clive Weake
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Tel: 01625 536388



Our Exhibition at Altrincham College has gone well with more interest and sales than expected. A very nice purpose built gallery but limited opening times.

Details for our exhibition at the Foxlowe Arts Centre in Leek will be sent out shortly.

West

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



Regional meeting Tuesday 10th December 2013

As always, thanks to all members for attending from all corners of the region at the Bitter Suite pub, Preston and contributing to our Christmas 'Jacob's join', the meeting was kept fairly short for members to enjoy our festive treats with enough left over for pub regulars. Regional exhibitions were discussed and members were encouraged to apply for the forthcoming exhibitions in the region:

'Water Street Gallery', 27th March – 27th April 'Ceramic Vessels', Todmorden, contact Rosemary Holcroft: info@waterstreetgallery.co.uk tel. 01706839714

'Ceramics at the Mill', 9th, 10th, 11th, May, Higherford Mill, Barrowford. There are still a few places left for this event, contact Julie Miles, e-mail: info@juliemiles.co.uk as soon as possible.

PR1 Gallery, UCLAN, either October or November info sent out when it has been confirmed.

Towneley Hall, Burnley, title of exhibition yet to be decided, it will run from September 2014 – January 2015, info will be sent out nearer the time.

Garstang Arts Centre, Preston, 15th November – 13th December 2014, this exhibition is for ceramic wall pieces only, title of exhibition yet to be decided, info sent out nearer the time.

The meeting concluded with the presentation of our themed ceramic pieces 'Christmas songs' enjoyed with food and drink.

Next Meeting: Tuesday 18th March at 7.15 pm, 'Bitter Suite' Pub, Preston.

Theme for ceramic piece at this meeting is 'Grand National'

Finally, our region wishes all readers 'best wishes' for 2014.

North West

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



Following an enjoyable pre-Christmas social at Thora Talling's house, we will be meeting at Bob and Denise Park's house on for another lunchtime get-together on Sunday 26th January from 12 noon. I have emailed everyone but if you need details let me know. Best wishes for 2014.

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.

Matthew Darbyshire and the W A Ismay Collection - Emma Gee

12 October 2013 - 26 January 2014
The Hepworth Wakefield

Whose idea was this? Bloody genius all round.

Back in the day a quiet librarian, (it's always the quiet ones isn't it?) quietly collected pots. Lots of pots.

Like Mr Benn, Mr Ismay had a double life that was equally magic: he went to shows, exhibitions and studios and quietly, oh so quietly bought the best pots. Lots and lots of the very best pots. These he brought back to a small terraced house in a quiet street in Wakefield and there amassed a collection and a knowledge unsurpassed.

Around the Country and the World it quietly got out that Bill (thanks to the delightful accompanying films The Hepworth have kindly supplied I feel on first name terms now) was quietly collecting and if you got selected you were on your way - quietly. Potting is a quiet art form. No loud noises here.

Wakefield became a site of pilgrimage; a Mecca for pots (I know!) as year by year potters, ceramicists and curators made their way to the little terraced house to see Mr Ismay and his pots. Lots and lots and lots of the very best examples of studio pottery of the 20th Century, crammed into the tiny terraced house with such love, care and discernment.

It may please people who knew Bill well to see these pots as his family but I saw a quiet educator, quietly and generously supporting, informing and educating a generation of makers and curators and collectors about the essence of the best in every genre of pottery going. Bill Ismay will have had a profound impact on makers and what they made next and curators about what to collect next, the world over. Bill had the eye to match the potters feel for clay.

Matthew Darbyshire has presented a glimpse into Ismay's world in framing the collection within fragments of the domestic setting within which it once resided. Sadly I didn't know to write a letter and see the collection first hand but this installation is a close run second.

In the muted cacophony of clay - it's got a bit noisy now! - Derbyshire playfully sets white and blue trimmed logo'd consumer 'white goods'; a Pifco here and a Davina McCall exercise bike there. Each of these mass produced items is found wanting against the hand crafted and aesthetic variety of the pots. That's the point and that's quietly clever.

Bill Ismay had a modest income and collected the best pots. Matthew Darbyshire shows us, for approximately the same kind of outlay, how we populate our own aesthetic worlds often choosing the noise of new technology for immediate gratification and gain or as a necessary 'evil'. We could choose differently. Even now ceramics are the most affordable niche of art collecting and what is more some of these objects, in addition to their beauty, are also pretty useful. William Morris has much to merit him when he says "Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful." With this exhibition this is emphasized again and again by Darbyshire's playful engagement with Ismay's day to day living with pots. It tantalizes, displays and obscures in equal measure.

I come from a pot obsessed family. Mum is a ceramicist. Playing eye-spy the potter with my sister was huge fun. But you don't need to know a thing to enjoy this exhibition, it speaks for itself joyously - it is of human scale, warm, funny and truly beautiful. I'm coming back. With my Mum.

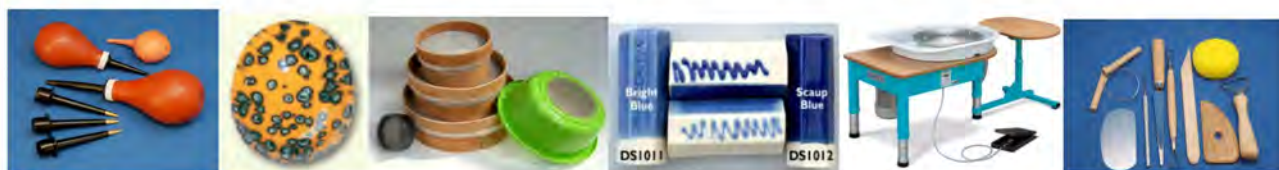
My only disappointment was the lack of a catalogue for the exhibition. What an opportunity missed.

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