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# NPA NEWS

The magazine of the Northern Potters Association



March - April 2014

[www.northern-potters.co.uk](http://www.northern-potters.co.uk)



in this issue:

On Top of the World,  
Down Under,  
Passing it on,  
The Trip of a Lifetime

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## Editor's Comment

So, this time I've had no broadband and no phone landline as I reach the final day of newsletter preparation, and it's possible that some late submissions haven't got to me (and if you've tried to ring to confirm I've received them, sorry, I can't hear you!). As it happens, there's been an awful lot to include, with some substantial and fascinating pieces from Rachel Wood (page 6), about her residency in Australia, and Alex McErlain (page 10), about the archive left to MMU by Derek Clarkson. As a 'crystalline dabbler', I can really appreciate the work that Derek Clarkson put into investigating the topic, and I'm sure it's his dedication to the subject, and willingness to share what he found, that make it possible for someone as imprecise as me to follow a recipe and get a half decent result occasionally!

Rachel actually wrote 2 versions of her article, and I had to use the shorter one, as there was so much other content to include. Perhaps, if I'm running short of copy one time, I'll be able to put together the bits she cut out and make them into part 2. Steve Booton's 'trip of a lifetime' has now been extended to 3 parts (at least), as he has so much that he doesn't want us to miss out on. If all the talk of exotic places is making your feet itchy, you might be tempted by the discount to NPA members being offered by China Links travel (page 21).

The NPA exhibition at Turnstone Gallery will open on 26 April, and we will also have a selected exhibition at the Ropewalk, Barton on Humber, in October/November (details in the next issue). The Ceramic Vessels exhibition at Water Street Gallery, Todmorden, opens on 27 March, so if you're in the area do call in. A late addition to our schedule is an opportunity at Joe Cornish Galleries, Northallerton, in June/July, so please email me for an application form if you want to be considered for selection.

In what is probably the last mention for a while, Liz Robison writes about the unveiling of the blue plaque for Bill Ismay (page 15), which took place at the Hepworth, Wakefield, in January. It was a lovely evening - I learned a lot about Wakefield Civic Society (!), and, like Liz, was moved by the quiet words about Bill Ismay from both Jim Malone and Helen Walsh.

Finally, on a sad note, NPA member Peter Lascelles died in January, after suffering from leukaemia for a year. Syl and Ray Macro write a few words to commemorate him (page 26), and we send our condolences to Peter's widow, Anne, and their 3 children.

### Cover :

**Rachel Wood** Ghost gum bark,  
32cm h, 15cm dia.  
See article page 6

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 24 April 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](mailto:npanews@btinternet.com), sent on CD or in long hand with photographs to Old Mills, Seaton Ross, YORK, YO42 4NH.

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## New Books - Roger Bell

Stephen Bowers: Beyond Bravura	Moon & Neylon Aus	\$49.95
Ceramic Glazes – The Complete Handbook	Taylor & Doody	28.00
Ceramic Throwing Class – Pro Hiroaki Takahata	C C Kashu	
William Daley – ceramic artist	Ruth Fine	
Fired Earth, Woven Bamboo (Contemporary Ceramic & Bamboo Art)	Todate & Morse	19.95
Japonisme and the Rise of the Modern Art Movement	Gregory Irvine	45.00
Understanding Glazes	John Britt (DVD)	\$69.95
Guy Wolff: Master Potter In The Garden	Suzanne Staubach	\$24.95

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## Book Review - Roger Bell

5000 Years Of Tiles  
Publ: British Museum

Hans van Lemmen  
£25.00

Look up books on tiles and tile making and you will find a long list ranging from pamphlets to substantial volumes. Most are simple and very limited. The best generally cover one particular area –Iznik, medieval, Pilkingtons etc. Some of the best of these were written by van Lemmen, who is a tile historian, author and lecturer, and is current President of the Tiles and Architectural Ceramics Society.

Being published by the British Museum, with their large collection of tiles from all eras, it is as expected - comprehensive, accurate and well written. But it is not overly academic and heavy going. It includes an excellent technical glossary, bibliography and index which take only 13 of the 300 plus pages. It is overall well organised, comprehensively illustrated, and readable without being oversimplified.

Chapters are organised logically in date sequence from ancient beginnings through to current artists and designers. I did not know that the earliest 'tiles' were clay cones used as protective covering for mud brick walls in Uruk, Mesopotamia dated between 3600 and 3200 BC. Soon, patterned and glazed tiles were being used along the Tigris, Euphrates and Nile including large tile walls.

Subsequent chapters take the reader through Islamic designs, the middle ages, renaissance and baroque. The industrial revolution saw technical innovations allowing mass production through pressing dry clay dust, transfer decoration etc. Though the Arts and Crafts movement reacted against the technology, artists have always made use of such developments to extend the boundaries.

At £25.00, '5000 Years Of Tiles' is very good value for money.

FOR SALE £850 ono  
Shimpo 'Whisper' RK-3E electric wheel.  
Mint condition. Clockwise/Anticlockwise spin. Height adjustable.  
Heavy so local collection - meet you halfway? Contact: Eric Moss  
(01423) 525807 or [raku@fsmail.net](mailto:raku@fsmail.net)

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## Exhibitions - Sylvia Holmes

### New Schoolhouse Gallery exhibition

After a slow start, sales were fairly good overall, though not as good as the last time we exhibited at the New Schoolhouse. A total of just over £6000 was taken over the five week run.

89 pieces were sold in total covering a wide price range:

Over £400	2 pieces
£200-£300	3 pieces
£100-£200	8 pieces
£50 - £100	22 pieces
£30-£50	28 pieces
Less than £30	26 pieces

Lowest priced item sold was £16, highest was £595

Some exhibitors will be aware that at the end of the show a few small pieces of work seemed to have gone missing. I'm pleased to say that all items were subsequently found by their owners, or otherwise accounted for.

### Turnstone Exhibition - 26 April to 8 June 2014

37 applications have been received, and competition will be stiff as space at the venue is limited. Selection day is Feb 25th, and I'll aim to inform all applicants of the results by mid-March.

The problems I grumbled about after the last application process have mostly been avoided this time (thank you for paying attention everyone) although one or two peoples' approach to image/file labelling is still rather unconventional.

### Display/Sales Opportunity

Tullie House, Carlisle, are keen to support the NPA by displaying members' work for sale in their museum shop. Please email two or three images plus dimension/price info and contact details in a covering email to [michael.spencer@tulliehouse.org](mailto:michael.spencer@tulliehouse.org) if you are interested.

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## Membership Payments

**So, what can I say? I have been asked to mention, yet again, that some members have not changed their subscription standing orders from the Yorkshire Bank to the Cooperative Bank. NPA changed accounts in September 2011, and since then have been asking members to make sure they update their standing orders so that the money goes into the correct account. Many of you have done so, but a significant number still pay into the wrong account. We have put reminders in this publication, Margaret, the Membership Secretary has asked everyone individually, when their renewal is due, to make sure they fill in a new form (I believe she even fills in the correct details and sends the form to you, so all you have to do is sign it and send it to your bank!) and yet still the money goes into the Yorkshire Bank. So, please, if by any chance you're reading this, and you're one of those who hasn't changed, do so now, before you forget!**

**To change**, retain the same date your payment is made and make sure you cancel your existing standing order, e.g. if your payment is due in February, ask for the new mandate to start in February.

From previous bank :	Yorkshire Bank plc,	<b>To new bank :</b>	<b>The Co-operative Bank</b>
Sort code:	05 07 17,	<b>Sort code:</b>	<b>08 92 99</b>
Account number:	35683010	<b>for the account of:</b>	<b>Northern Potters Association</b>
		<b>Account number:</b>	<b>65488052</b>

The payment reference should be the member's full name, please - we can't always tell who the payment relates to from the account name.

*If you have any queries on this, please contact Alan Birchall, NPA Treasurer - email: [doc.albirchall@ntlworld.com](mailto:doc.albirchall@ntlworld.com)*

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## On Top of the World, Down Under - Rachel Wood

The Customs official at Sydney international airport called me 'Darl'. I smiled. Hello, Australia! I'm here! Sturt Craft Centre is snugly situated in a charming creative island on the edge of a town called Mittagong in the middle of the Southern Highlands. It's only one hour in a car or two hours by train south of Sydney. A tremendous amount of rain had fallen recently so the vegetation was very leafy, very lush. The Highlands is a popular tourist region, known for its welcome fresh air, vivid with an abundant array of vibrant deciduous trees. The awesome Australian bush towered everywhere.

The sheer overwhelming scale of the bush, the vast distance from anywhere, from home, from people I know... it gradually began to dawn on me. Maybe I'd bitten off a bit more than I could chew this time, but before long, I began to feel as if I'd been there ages.

Ivan Mcmeekin set up Sturt pottery in 1954 after returning from England, having worked with Michael Cardew. My own workspace was right in the middle of the workshop – a scrubbed wooden table, an electric wheel, a few wooden shelves and a great big dollop of 'High Expectations' plonked on my stool (only I could see that bit!). The pottery had also been home to the creative energies of eminent potters such as Gwynn Hanssen-Piggott, Svend Bayer, Ryoji Koie, Col Levy, Les Blakeborough to name a few, an awesome roll call to follow. Occasionally I pretended our creative spirits were all there together and bouncing off each other in that space. Now Sturt pottery was a lively hub for students and resident potters alike. T.A.F.E. (technical and further education) courses at local colleges had recently closed, so Sturt pottery presented a timely alternative for homeless ceramic students. As the visiting international artist, there's a natural curiosity to see what you're doing; you're partly on show so that students and visitors can learn and be inspired.

Getting going in an empty workspace is always a tease. The wheels (of my brain, that is) were spinning, but nothing was sticking. Adapting to a new workspace poses challenges to work practice and mental attitude. I also felt very exposed, self-conscious and lacked confidence. But then I remembered I'd been awarded grants from the Arts Council, and the CPA Trust for the project, and that gave me a lift. There are certainly pros and cons of working in a communal workspace. At times a shared space could be very frustrating and difficult to concentrate, whilst on the other hand, the company was very welcome with good camaraderie.

A residency involves spending a lot of the time on your own, and consequently the ability to draw on my own resources was essential to stay motivated (an occupational hazard, even at home). I was aware that the key to a fulfilling experience was as much about life outside of the workshop, as the time spent within it. The Outdoors is important to me - to breathe fresh air, to feel the outside as a physical presence, and be physically active. On investigation at the local Tourist Information office, it was clear that walking, particularly alone, and a woman with a poor sense of direction, was not advisable. You don't have to wander far before you are in natural bush with the challenging addition of snakes, deadly spiders, ravines, rare signposts, no people, and falling trees, to keep you on





your toes. I didn't find the story about the missing (definitely murdered) bushwalkers very helpful either; nor the fact that, if you walked in one particular direction, it would be 4 days before you reached the next town. Luckily I made contact with a local bush-walking group and I jumped at the opportunity to join in. Bush walking Tuesday became a regular event in my weekly diary, a welcome punctuation to my simple workshop routine. Terrain varied from pockets of rainforest, open fire tracks, narrow tracks and the occasional bit of bushwhacking – there was plenty to choose from in Morton National Park, a mere 404 square miles.

If I'm honest, I found the bush very claustrophobic to start with. It's there, everywhere you look. My view soon changed. I loved it. I soaked it in through every pore - the vistas, the stories, looking and listening all the time. I was starting to synchronise with my Australian habitat and get a real feel for where I was. I was compulsively drawn towards the amazing structures, textures, bark, and power of the bush.

The brief I'd set myself was to see what impact my surroundings and being in Australia would have on the work that I'd make there. It was important to stay open. Eventually I had a creative breakthrough. Time spent walking in the bush was starting to take effect. When all these huge gum trees surround you, you can't help but be affected or influenced by them. At that moment, I was enjoying this stage of the making, that moment of a certain degree of control, but allowing plenty of room for the unknown to happen, accidents, mistakes, surprise and



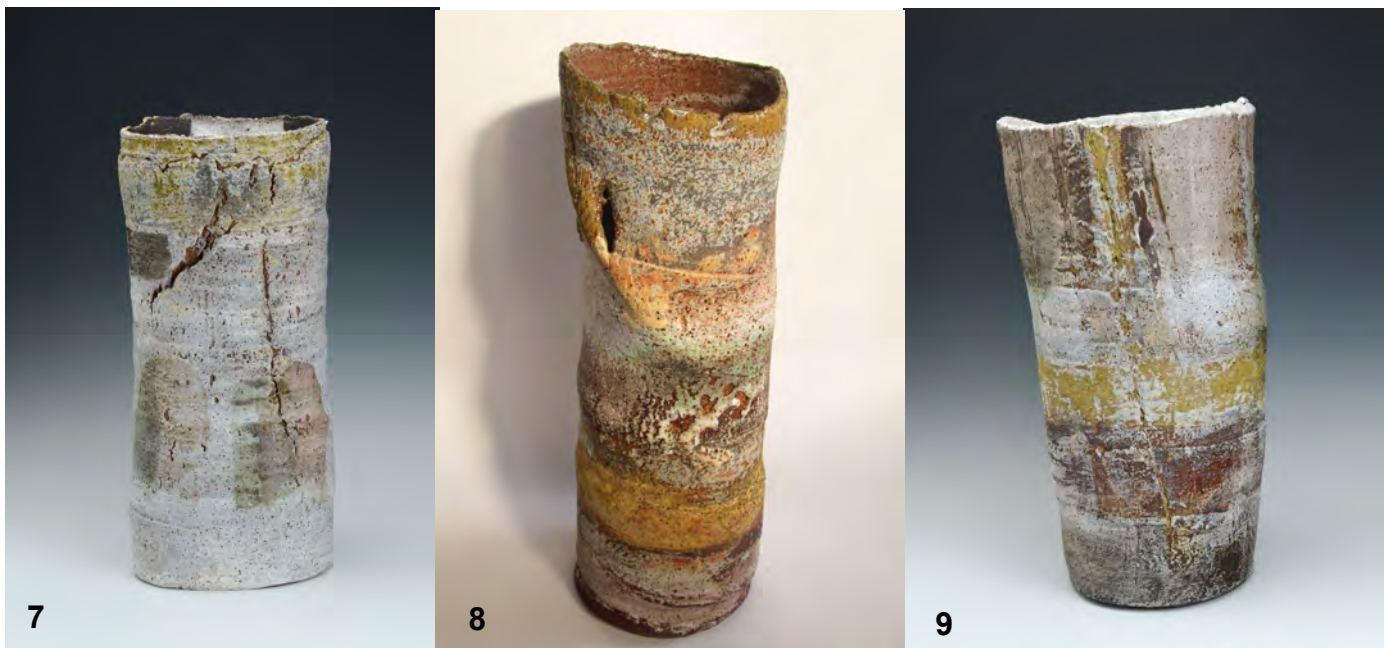
excitement. I also reflected on the treks we'd done, walkabouts of those who came before us, footprints, escarpments, bush debris on the ground. At the end of that weekend I was delighted with the results. I christened them Barks, the first in the series. I'd finally made the breakthrough I'd been hoping for. These barks had so much potential. I couldn't wait to make more.

The residency was fantastic. It was also a testing and challenging time too. I knew it would be good, but I didn't realise I'd get so much out of it, and connect so well with my environment and to make such good friends. It was immensely satisfying to get to a point and acknowledge that I'd gathered genuine inspiration and a positive outcome from the residency, something from which I could develop in the future. That, after all, was why I wanted to come here. I had fulfilled my brief, and beyond, more than anything I had dreamed of. I came back with very special memories of a once in a lifetime experience.



What happens now? The Barks merit and deserve a space on their own, for me to see how they interact with each other, and to have the opportunity to observe them in a designated exhibition space over a period of time. So far, I've only seen them on dusty workshop shelves or on a market stand. Of course the inevitable thought goes through my mind: will people like them? I know some definitely will, and some won't. Will they sell? Definitely yes – they have done already. Will they sell well? I don't know, but I must park those thoughts in my sub-conscious lay-by, and continue to take risks and explore. It's time to move on.

7 West Workshops, The Harley Foundation, Welbeck, Worksop, Notts, S80 3LW  
[www.rachelwoodceramics.co.uk](http://www.rachelwoodceramics.co.uk)



Images (all © Rachel Wood):

1 Misty morning in Kangaroo Valley; 2 Sturt Pottery; 3 Assembling barks; 4 Bundanoon Creek;  
 5 Kangaroo Valley; 6 Rachel in Tahmoor Gorge; 7 Bark; 8 Iron bark; 9 Bark

## Exhibition Opportunity - Barbara Wood

### Joe Cornish Galleries, Northallerton

Following a successful NPA exhibition in 2012, Joe Cornish Galleries have invited NPA members to apply to take part in a show from 28 June to 29 July 2014. Loosely themed to the natural world, the gallery invite members to apply with images of the type of work they would like to submit, including but not limited to sculptural, decorative, domestic, jewellery, and wall pieces.

The gallery will select artists from those who apply, and I will be doing the admin, set up and take down. A £5 submission fee from all applicants will go towards my travelling expenses, and the artist will then receive 60% of the sales value, with 40% commission going to the gallery.

For those who took part in or visited the NPA exhibition there, the area which we used then is now the café. This attracts a good number of visitors, as the cakes are very good! There is a gallery area on the ground floor which we will use, as well as the 'long gallery' (pictured), on the first floor, which opens up many more display possibilities, so if you have any ideas for an unusual way to display your work, please apply.



**For an application form**, please email me at [barbara.wood99@btinternet.com](mailto:barbara.wood99@btinternet.com). Completed applications must be returned to me by 27 April, and selection will take place on 9 May.

## Website

The upcoming ceramics exhibition at Water Street Gallery, Todmorden, includes work from mostly NPA members. We were invited to apply, but the gallery also used our website to source and invite additional artists. That means, if you're not on the website, you won't get the invitation. There are still barely 25% of our members represented there, which seems like a wasted opportunity. **There is no additional cost to members to be represented on the website.**

In future, to be considered for an NPA selected exhibition, you must appear on the website, so if you're not there already, please take this reminder to send up to 4 images of recent work (suitable for web - not high resolution) along with your contact details (email, phone, website) and a statement of up to 100 words to John Cook - [mr.jccookie@gmail.com](mailto:mr.jccookie@gmail.com).

private view Invitation   
Ceramic Exhibition of Fine Art

 Thursday  
27 March  
6 - 8 pm  
please RSVP  
Drinks  
Canapés

Alan Ball Juliet Blackman Daniel Bridge  
John Cook Jennifer Ellis Jill Ford Carl Gray  
Laura Hancock John Kirshaw Moz Knohar Ruth Livesey  
Fiona Mazza Eric Moss Paul Muchan Beverley Porter  
John Scott Alex Shimwell Gary Thomas  
Stephen Valentine Julie Ward  
Anna Whitehouse Emma Williams

This is a changing exhibition All works are for sale  
Installment plan -Gift Vouchers  
25 Water Street Todmorden OL14 5AB  
[info@waterstreetgallery.co.uk](mailto:info@waterstreetgallery.co.uk)  
01706 839714  
[www.waterstreetgallery.co.uk](http://www.waterstreetgallery.co.uk)

## Passing it on - Alex McErlain

### Notes on an outstanding archive

The notable northern potter, Derek Clarkson (1928-2013) was renowned for making elegant decorated stoneware bottles, fine porcelain bowls and later for crystalline glazed pots. He was also a gifted teacher, generous with both information and advice. In 1989, following his retirement from higher education, he embarked on what was to become a ten year study into the development of crystalline glazes. Derek's family have donated his archive of notes from this investigation to the Special Collections at Manchester Metropolitan University (for more information about access contact the curator, Stephanie Boydell).



When Derek began his research little was published on the subject of crystalline glaze and very few potters were working in this specialised field. Most of his investigations were empirical in nature, try it and see what happens, record the results and learn from them. Fortunately for us, he kept some of the most detailed notes about an investigation that I have ever come across. The archive consists of five folders containing precise information on every pot made during the exploration. Each pot was a test in some way, a variation on a theme or a completely new trial, undertaken in the most meticulous manner. There are 168 separate firings documented, each accompanied by a photographic record of every pot in the kiln. Firings contained between six and eleven pieces so altogether well over 1000 trials were made.

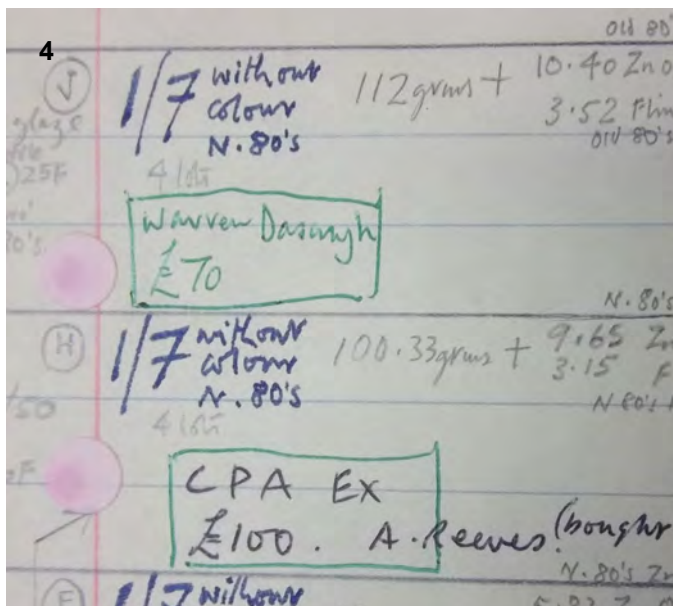
In the early stages Derek was trying to grow crystals using a few glaze recipes gleaned from the scant material available. He acknowledged input from Canadian potter Diane Creber. The notes from the first firing, on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1989, record a top temperature of 1275, a dwell of 4 hours at 1085 centigrade, and note 'some crystals 1 3/4 inches across'. The first few firings were a slow accumulation of knowledge on all fronts; the best ways to apply the glaze; how high to fire; how long to hold the kiln during the cooling cycle to enable crystals to grow and how to deal with the glaze overflow and detaching the pot from its support. There are so many difficulties in making crystalline glazed work it's no wonder most potters shy away from it. I happened to visit Derek during this early period and remember his enthusiasm for the project despite all the difficulties. Later, whilst helping a student to explore the technique, I was to experience these difficulties first hand.



A year later, in July 1990, Derek was up to his 27<sup>th</sup> firing and the accompanying images show he had clearly mastered the techniques and was obviously confident enough in the quality of his output to record a piece being exhibited in the CPA. The notes also record that the piece sold for £100 and that Emmanuel Cooper asked him for the glaze recipe (which he gave). From this point on, the archive is extremely detailed, recognising the importance of every aspect of production. For example, one actual pot is typically recorded as being a bottle 9 1/2 inches high 5 5/8 diameter before firing, then 8 5/8 by 5 1/8 after firing. The amount of glaze applied (by brush) weighed 119.53 gms which was made up of 100.33 gms of glaze base recipe plus 9.65 gms zinc oxide, 3.15 gms flint and 6.4gms copper carbonate (not sieved).

He began to record the critical cooling and dwell schedule when the crystals actually grow using differing kinds of graph which enabled him to learn progressively the degree of control he might try and exercise. A graph of concentric rings is perhaps the most easily read format for information about the hours and minutes of soak times. Book one ends on the 50<sup>th</sup> firing. In book two he records that during Feb 1992 he briefly explored firing in a gas kiln. This experiment was short lived, as only seven firings took place before it was abandoned. Following the 100<sup>th</sup> firing, it was noted that he was now using Limoges porcelain (which around that time was becoming readily available).

It is fascinating to see how he continued to record so many tiny details when many other potters might have stopped or begun to use shorthand. The images which accompany each firing really help to see his progress through the investigation. These were the days before digital cameras were commonplace, and he would have taken a roll of film to the developers to get prints. The prints are annotated and numbered, sometimes recording the pots as they came from the kiln still attached to the glaze catcher, occasionally showing a disaster where a piece had broken and quite often revealing the washing hanging on the line in the background.



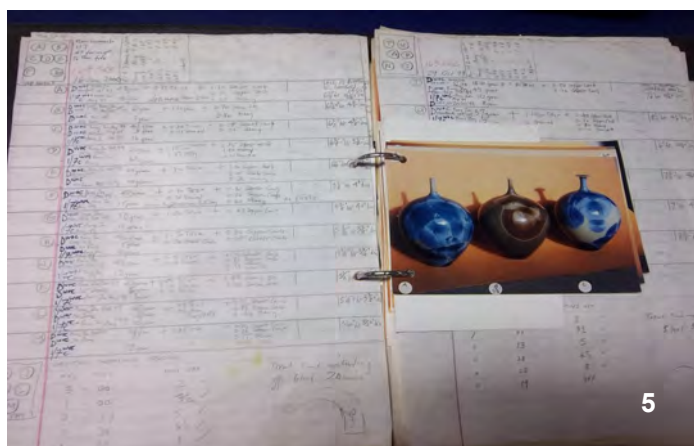
The notes often record who purchased the particular piece and at what price. A piece was acquired by Manchester Art Gallery from the 96<sup>th</sup> firing. In the early years, it seems that most of the work sold readily but in later years sales are mentioned less frequently, making me wonder if perhaps the market was becoming saturated, an effect caused by more potters working in this field that he had raised interest in.

The bulk of the regular firings took place during the first five years and by 1995 he had recorded 122 firings. From this point on there are longer breaks between firings, sometimes as much as a year but more usually a few months before another batch of firings took place. The last firing was in August 2000. It was obviously not

planned as the final firing as the next page reveals firing number 169 written at the top of a blank page.

Glaze and frit recipes are mostly recorded separately at the back of the books and illustrate that he continued to experiment throughout the period. A set of typed notes by RSW Braithwaite of the chemistry department at UMIST (University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology) record 'analysis of two sets of glazed pottery containing fans of acicular crystals from Mr Derek Clarkson, the potter of Bacup'.

Derek freely gave others the benefit of his acquired knowledge, publishing an article in Ceramic Review in 1992, speaking at many potters' events and advising younger potters such as Kate Malone, who were now beginning to take up their own investigations into crystalline glazes. Some serious publications on the subject followed, 'Crystalline Glazes' by Diane Creber in 1997 and 'Macro Crystalline Glazes' by Peter Illsley in 1999, both of which acknowledge the pioneering work undertaken by Derek Clarkson.



Thanks really must be extended to Derek's family for donating the archive to a university collection which will ensure it is looked after properly and made available for future generations who may wish to expand on the study of the subject. The level of detail contained in the archive would contribute substantially to a serious study into empirical research methodology and perhaps of equal importance will enable any display of crystalline glazed pots to have interpretation material displayed alongside showing the complexity of investigating such a difficult subject.



I wonder if there are any other detailed archives out there looking for a home?

Images:

1 The five notebooks: 2 Page from the notebooks 'the 14<sup>th</sup> firing': 3 A tall bottle with very sophisticated crystal control: 4 Detail of the 27<sup>th</sup> firing page: 5 A typical double page spread with notes and images: 6 Record of the 50<sup>th</sup> firing, pots on the windowsill

## Advertising in NPA News

<b>Cost of advert for one issue:</b>		<b>Repeat Adverts:</b>	Six consecutive inclusions for the price of five
<b>Diary listings:</b>	free	<b>All adverts have to be paid for prior to publication (Cheques made out to NPA, sent to the editor)</b>  Barbara Wood Old Mills, Seaton Ross, York, YO42 4NH e: npanews@btinternet.com	
<b>Small ads:</b>	up to 30 words free to members		
<b>Boxed Adverts:</b>			
<b>Colour</b>	half page £30 quarter page £18 eighth page £10		
<b>Black &amp; white</b>	half page £20 quarter page £15 eighth page £8		

### NPA Membership

<b>Subscription Rates:</b>	
<b>Individual</b>	£22 (if paid by standing order) £25 (if paid by cheque or Postal Order) £30 (for overseas members)
<b>Joint membership</b> (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](http://northern-potters.co.uk).

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



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](mailto:margaret@sevenfirs.karoo.co.uk)

## Committee Meeting Minutes - Saturday 11 January 2014

Previous minutes approved and signed. **Exhibitions - New School House Gallery** - sales totalling £6,106: **Turnstone Gallery** (26 April - 8 June) £5k in sales needed to break even. 10 – 15 exhibitors will be selected. **Ropewalk** (25 October - 28 November) BW to manage the setting up of this exhibition. Possible exhibition venues for the future are being explored: inc. Gallery Oldham, Cartwright Hall, Old School Gallery (Otley), Tullie House (Carlisle), Waterside Arts Centre (Sale), Lowther Castle. **Earth and Fire 2014** 4 members have been selected for the NPA stands. Committee will investigate other ways of working with galleries **Events - Year of Clay 2015** - it is still hoped that there will be an event at York Art Gallery but this has not been confirmed. Committee will look at an alternative event for members.

**Newsletter** printed and in the post. **Website** Changes are up to date and membership and artists are current. Google analytics discussed. Changes needed to website to ensure that Google android phones can scroll site correctly.

**Finance** - Coop Bank £11,252 Yorkshire Bank £500. Mobile POS system is dated and expensive compared to newer option now available. AB will look for replacement for events (not individual members). **Membership** 459 members, 14 joint memberships, total 473. **Regional Groups** Reports as per newsletter reports. Jim Simpson has agreed to take over the coordinator role for the committee. **d.o.n.m.: 12 April '14**



**FOTOS and FAUNA**  
An exhibition of photographs and sculpture  
by Janie Cook and Judy Taylor

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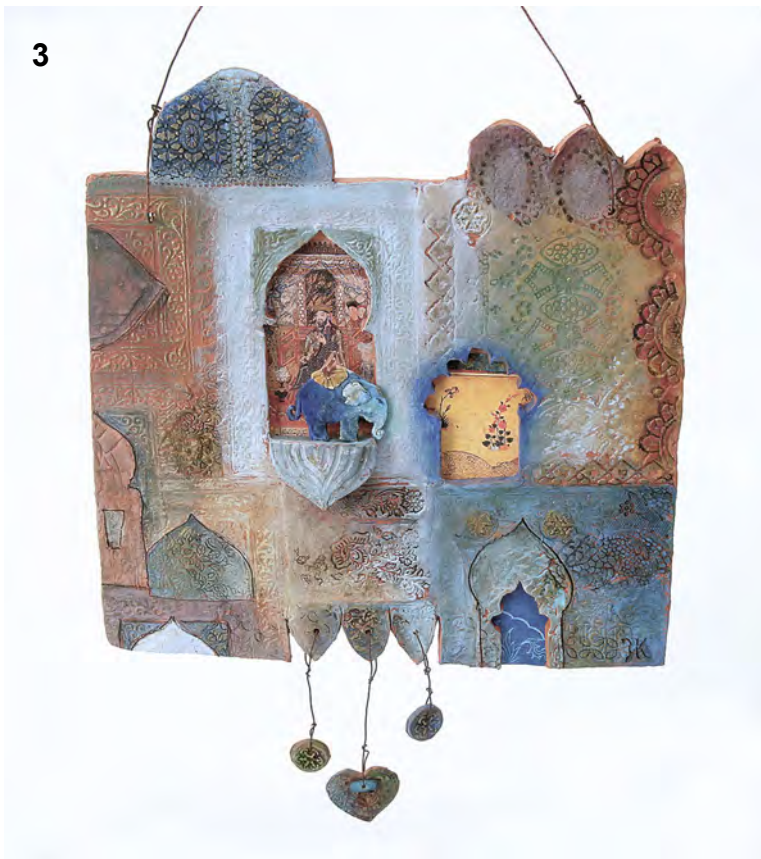
Email [jim.robison@virgin.net](mailto:jim.robison@virgin.net)

**LAST YEAR'S PRICES.... HELD FOR ANOTHER YEAR**



## Members' Gallery

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



- 1 Viv Rumbold, **Plate**, 10" dia., red earthenware with slips & underglazes, inspired by Kandinsky
- 2 Stephen Breuer, **Plate**, thrown stoneware, inspired by some Ben Nicholson landscapes
- 3 Pratima Kramer, **Wall Piece**, Prtima will be on one of the NPA shared stands at Earth & Fire



- 4 Jim Slicer '**Precioso**' Tea Set
- 5 Ruth Charlton, **Catrain** - porcelain with sgraffito decoration
- 6 Carolyn Corfield, **Dove Nest** - impressed and glazed stoneware with polished porcelain

---

## A Potter's Moll Writes..... - Liz Robison

Much has already been written about the Matthew Darbyshire / W A Ismay installation at The Hepworth, Wakefield, but am returning there for this article because it has been such a riveting event causing controversy and delight in equal measure. At the opening, opinions seemed evenly divided between those who thought the installation innovative and thought provoking and those who were fairly unimpressed by the lack of 'exhibition' features such as display, labelling and catalogue.

During the course of the show there was an evening discussion with Matthew Derbyshire and York Art Gallery curator, Helen Walsh, and an invited audience as a result of which several people came around to seeing the point of Derbyshire's seemingly 'philistine' approach by inserting new white goods in the display along with pots and period pieces of furniture.

A friend who knows nothing of studio pottery visited the show with me and was very intrigued with the question of just how do you put a 'value' on an article if you know nothing of its provenance and are judging it purely from its aesthetic qualities or functionality.

Anyway, apart from anything else, The Hepworth, Wakefield, has been buzzing for the months of the show and according to staff there, the footfall has been 'amazing'.

Recently we were invited to a very special evening at the gallery, to celebrate the unveiling of a blue plaque in memory of W A Ismay (Bill) to be sited on his life-long home in Wakefield. By coincidence, Wakefield Civic Society is 50 years old, and has ambitions to up its current total of 38 blue plaques to 50 to celebrate the anniversary. By great serendipity, Helen Walsh approached them about a plaque for Bill's house at just the right moment. She spoke movingly about her 10 year involvement with the collection and also about Bill's support for potters, festivals, the NPA, and his written articles and catalogues throughout his period as a collector.

Jim Malone gave an eloquent and moving account of his relationship with Bill, (who bought the first pot Jim sold from his graduate show) and then he unveiled the plaque. I was agreeably surprised by how much information it has been able to accommodate.

For the last weekend of the Darbyshire/ Ismay show, the gallery had two days under the title 'I Collect' when visitors were invited to bring in and display their collections, have valuations on objects from their ceramics, glass or oriental goods collections made by Lars Tharp and to attend a lecture by him on his experiences of collections from across the world and seeking answers to the question 'Why do we collect?'

So I say Hats Off to York Art Gallery for staging a fantastic show even though they are closed for renovation, and to The Hepworth, Wakefield, for vibrant and exciting events.



Colour coordinated, Jim Malone and Helen Walsh show the blue plaque which will have a permanent home on the wall of 14 Welbeck Street, where Bill developed his collection.

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## Diary

- until March                    **Raku wall hangings** - Roger Bell. Oswald's Café, Cranston's Food Hall, Ullswater Road, Penrith
- 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
- 22 March - 3 May              Solo exhibition by NPA member **Roger Bell** at Bristol Guild Gallery
- until 23 March                **Fotos and Fauna** - photographs by Janie Cook, and ceramic sculptures by NPA member Judy Taylor, Bollington Arts Centre, Bollington, SK10 5JR
- 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
- 4 - 6 & 12 - 13 April           **York Open Studios**, including NPA members Ann Decker, Isabel Denyer, Fiona Fitzgerald, Jill Ford, Dawn Ridsdel - yorkopenstudios.co.uk
- 13 - 18 April                   **Glaze and Surface course**, Jim Robison ceramics, (see page 13) boothhousegallery.co.uk
- 24 - 27 April                   **Exploring Japanese pottery** - West Dean College course, tutor Kaori Tatebayashi - westdean.org.uk
- 27 April                         Deadline for completed applications for exhibition at **Joe Cornish Galleries**, Northallerton (see page 9)
- 9 - 11 May                      **Ceramics at the Mill**, Higherford Mill, Barrowford - contact Julie Miles info@juliemiles.co.uk for details
- 17 - 18 May                     **Art in the Garden** event at Cow Ark Pottery, Whitewell, nr Clitheroe. Includes work from 3 NPA members - cowarkpottery.co.uk/artinthegarden
- 24 - 26 May                     **Derbyshire Open Arts** - NPA members Ann Bates, Darrell Milnes and Gerald Unwin will be at Tansley Village Hall - derbyshireopenarts.co.uk
- 24 - 26 May                     **NPA-SW Exhibition**, The Old Parsonage, Didsbury

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

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## The Trip of a Lifetime, part 2- Steve Booton

After a wonderful four days in Mashiko came to an end, it was time to help Euan (Craig) pack away his remaining pots and head off to his home in Minakami, about two and a half hours' drive north east of Mashiko. We had to leave the boxes of pots behind in storage in Mashiko to be collected at a later date, as Euan needed to replenish his wood supply for the next two firings of his soda kiln, by filling his little K truck to the brim with bundles of firewood. These little trucks are everywhere in Japan, incredible little workhorses, filled with an amazing array of cargo and goods.

It was after dark that we finally set off on our journey, rattling along in this wonderful vehicle. I was so taken with the truck that I have recently bought a little Suzuki Carry of my own - but I digress.



Halfway through our journey we stopped at a sushi restaurant. It was part of a chain of restaurants spread across Japan. After being seated in a booth we were able to order plates of sushi via a touch screen and the plates duly arrived moments later with the most amazing food I had eaten for many years. Fresh salmon, tuna, and prawns along with fish I could not name all melted in the mouth, delicious, although the sea urchin was an acquired taste.

After dinner we continued our journey to Minakami and late that evening I arrived at my accommodation. Euan is renovating his amazing home so I elected to stay at a local hotel with its own onsen. An onsen is a natural hot spring communal bath that relaxes and replenishes the body after a long day. It was too late to use it that night, but I did avail myself of its properties the following evening.

The next morning at 6am I was woken by what sounded like a very elaborate door chime, on answering the door there was no one there, so I climbed back into bed only to be startled by the loudest bang I had ever heard. It sounded like a cannon going off outside my window. Time to get up.

After walking up to Euan's house, I explained my rude awakening to be told (between sniggers) that the "door bell" was a tannoy chime relayed around the village to tell people to go off to work in the fields. There is a further one at midday announcing lunch time and one at 6pm to go home. The "cannon" was a scarer that is used during apple season to frighten away the local monkeys (there was an orchard outside my window!).

After a wonderful breakfast, we started the packing of Euan's kiln. My first job was to batwash 40 plus shelves, made easier by using a large tub and a watering can full of bat wash - very clever. It took the best part of the day to pack the kiln and after another amazing meal I set off to return to my hotel and the onsen.

Before I left, Euan and Mika explained the etiquette of the onsen. Put on the robe provided in my room walk across to the corridor into the men's onsen. Here's where it became complicated. I couldn't remember what colour sign (red or black) was the men's entrance



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I plumped for black. Luckily it was empty. Then I was to shower first, which I did. Then enter the warm pool, It was supposed to be a relaxing experience but I couldn't help wonder if I had used the right entrance and after enduring 40 long minutes waiting for an unsuspecting female guest to enter and scream, I beat a hasty retreat. I must pay more attention next time. More sniggers over breakfast the next morning.



### Firing the kiln

Euan started with a small kindling fire in the lower part of each firebox and added small pieces of wood until ash had started to build up then over a couple of hours he moved the fire further inside the fire boxes. Then we started placing 5 pieces of wood in alternate fire boxes in a kind of cross formation to allow as much oxygen to reach the wood as possible. Once a substantial ash bed had developed we move the stoking to the upper part of each fire box, alternately, with bundles of wood. This continued steadily for the next few hours until the temperature had risen high enough to start adding the soda.



Euan usually fires alone and finds that adding soda by spraying interrupts the flow of stoking, which by this time is almost constant, so he devised a simple but brilliant process. Earlier, during a quieter period of stoking, he mixes the hot water and soda mixture to a bag of sawdust until it is the consistency of porridge. This is then spread onto the top of each bundle before adding it to the firebox thus giving an uninterrupted stoking process. The firing was steady, measured and controlled, with no dramas. All done and dusted in just under 14 hours. At which time the kiln was clamped up and left to cool slowly for a couple of days.

Unfortunately I wasn't going to be there for the opening. I had planned to travel the following day down to Sassayama near Osaka to visit John Dix, an American potter who has lived in Japan for many years, who by chance would be half way through a 7 day firing of his anagama kiln. To get down to Sassayama, which is in the Bizen area of Japan, I took the Shinkansen (bullet) train. A three and a half hour journey, at speeds approaching 200 mph, which still got me to my destination within 2 minutes of my designated arrival time.

I was collected from the local station in Sassayama by John's friend (he was sleeping after a night of stoking) and we drove slowly through a delightful small town on a flat plane surrounded by fields and distant mountains. The weather was markedly different from Minakami, where a coat was needed during the day. Here it was mild and people were still in shirt sleeves even though it was November.

John's kiln was on the outskirts of the town, nestled in a small valley surrounded by trees. There was a main house and studio at the entrance to the valley and the kiln site was a hundred yards or so further into the valley, accessed via a rickety bridge across a small stream that meandered down the valley.

The bridge was very springy with rotten boards (a result of sub tropical weather) and on the second day I offered to help repair it. We took a trip to the local lumber merchant and armed with fresh timbers and boards we



strengthened it up no end. The pace and cadence of the two styles of firing were very interesting to observe so close together.

Euan's kiln being a fast fire soda kiln, showed a steady and progressive rise in temperature measured in tens if not hundreds of degrees per hour. John's more prolonged firing was measured in hundreds of degrees per day. It also required a number of people to help with the stoking as it was to take 6 or 7 days to complete the firing. My two days were taken up with helping replenish the wood stock near the kiln by pushing a loaded barrow of wood across the now much sturdier bridge and stacking it near the kiln. Although I helped stoke the fire boxes of Euan's kiln, I politely declined the offer to throw wood into the anagama, in and around pots

near the fire mouth, for fear of breaking one of them. Cowardly maybe, prudent definitely.



My time at Sassayama passed all too quickly and it was soon time to journey back to Tokyo for the last few days of my trip. I did, however, take a break from the firing and had a couple of hours walking around Sassayama which had a section that dated back several hundred years. Some of the walled gardens and building had not changed since the time of Shogun and samurai.

The last three days of my trip were spent visiting a Tomoo Hamada exhibition at the Misukoshi department store, the Nezu museum holding an Ido bowl exhibition which included the famous Kizaemon bowl, the only pot to be designated a national treasure and the Mingei museum. Plus a last morning visit to Electric Town, home to the neon lights and anime/manga characters and their amazing costumes.

But more of that next time.....!

All photos ©Steve Booton



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## Regional News

### North East

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



We are researching new exhibition venues and also exploring ideas for our next educational event. Hopefully, we will have some more news on these matters soon.

### East

Co-ordinator: Lesley Anne Greene  
Email: [lesleyannegreene@gmail.com](mailto:lesleyannegreene@gmail.com)  
Tel: 01943 431823



At the time of writing this report, members Dianne Cross and Lis Holt are preparing to exhibit at the Station, Richmond. The group show of four Airedale artists is on until 21<sup>st</sup> March and further info can be found at [www.richmondthestation.com](http://www.richmondthestation.com)

Member Jenny Smith is participating in an open studios event "Artists around Wetherby" on 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> May between 10.a.m and 4p.m.

I am participating in Ceramics at the Mill, Higherford Mill, Barrowford near Colne which is organised by Julie Miles for craft and design month. See [www.facebook.com/ceramicsatthemill/info](http://www.facebook.com/ceramicsatthemill/info) for details and to view other potters who are participating some of whom are also NPA members from the west region. It would be great to catch up with anyone who can make it.

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 me publicity for events at least 7 days before the start date.

### South East

Co-ordinator: Brian Holland  
Email: [brianhollandceramics@yahoo.com](mailto:brianhollandceramics@yahoo.com)  
Tel: 01909 724781



On Sunday, January 19th, we had a good turn out for a visit to the Hepworth, seeing, amongst other things, the installation based on Bill Ismay's house and collection - various opinions about this! We were met at the Hepworth by Linda Bullement and two other members from Wakefield (Paul and Alistair- please forgive me if I miss remembered your names), who took us to her studio at ARTHOUSE. We then were treated to a tour of ARTHOUSE and finally to a meeting- plus coffee etc- in Linda's studio.

Amongst the items discussed at the meeting were the possibilities of a potters camp in 2015 (still to be discussed by the NPA committee) and feasibility, exhibition opportunities in our area (Jim Simpson looking at possibilities in Sheffield), and events for meetings perhaps drawing upon the NPA 's education fund. Gerald suggested for instance another session on photographing one's own work to be led by a professional photographer.

We thanked Linda for a very enjoyable day and thought it was a brilliant idea to combine a meeting, a gallery visit and a studio visit. Ideas for future meetings included an experimental raku day at Brian Holland's studio.

Next meeting to be arranged.

Steve Booton, Darrell Milnes and Jim Simpson, as Pop-Up Potters, are having a pop up shop in the Sheffield Winter Gardens the first two weeks of May. They will be writing about the experience to encourage others to do similar small events in their regions.

## South West

Co-ordinator: Clive Weake  
Email: [clive.weake@gmail.com](mailto:clive.weake@gmail.com)  
Tel: 01625 536388



We have had a very successful exhibition at the Foxlowe Gallery in Leek. They have been excellent hosts, plenty of visitors and sales. We have been doing demonstrations and people have enjoyed having a go.

Our next exhibition is at the Old Parsonage in Didsbury, Saturday 24th May to Monday 26th May 2014. For those that are interested, we will be having a stand for members who have not exhibited before.

[www.didsburyparsonagetrust.org.uk](http://www.didsburyparsonagetrust.org.uk)

## West

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



no report received

## North West

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



**Next social event** Bob and Audrey March's house on Sunday 9th March from 12 noon. I have emailed everyone with the address but if you need a reminder let me know. All welcome.

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 Jim Simpson - [jim@handmadestudiopottery.com](mailto:jim@handmadestudiopottery.com).

## Welcome To New Members

Vinny Commons	Birkdale, Southport	Lancashire
Janet Halligan	Church Minshull, Nantwich	Cheshire
Christine Hurford	Maiden Hill, Penrith	Cumbria
Bev Jennings	Kidsgrove, Stoke - on -Trent	Staffordshire
Alasdair Nelson	Sale	Cheshire
Glynis Neslen	Hull	East Yorkshire
Joanne Pipkin	Shevington, Wigan	Lancashire
John Simon	Morecambe	Lancashire
Julie Smith	Gosforth, Newcastle on Tyne	Tyne and Wear
Carolyn Thorpe	York	North Yorkshire
Kathryn Watson	Sheffield	South Yorkshire

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

---

## PETER LASCELLES: 1941 - 2014

Peter died on 26<sup>th</sup> January after fighting leukaemia for over a year. His sign, Pennine Pottery, well known to passers by on the road into Alston, was only 2 miles from our own pottery. Over the 22 years he has potted in Alston we have kept up with his development from amateur potter to a fully dedicated craftsman spending all and every day in his workshop, perfecting the wildlife designs that came to be his speciality.

He was educated at Eton, then Baliol College, Cambridge, reading History and later Zoology. It was at this time he met Anne, his wife. In 1971 he was appointed to teach Biology at St Paul's School in London, where he took up pottery as a hobby encouraged by the art teacher and potter, Dave Wakefield.



He and his wife Anne were avid collectors of ceramics, and spent holidays and weekends driving around the British Isles, with their 3 children, visiting the workshops of many well known potters. Their collection reached 90 pieces, including work by Bernard Leach, Michael Cardew and Michael Casson.

Peter took early retirement from teaching in 1991, and, searching for somewhere "wild" to live, ended up quite by chance at Clargyll Head, 1500 feet above sea level, in the North Pennines. With his children leaving for university, he set up his pottery and teashop helped by Anne and family members. He made bread by night and pots by day. The bread was for the the teashop where visitors were delighted to be able to watch him working at his wheel.

Peter sold at Potfest a few times but preferred to sell his work directly from his workshop. He carried out commissions, including the pottery used in the teashop at Little Salkeld Mill, near Penrith. He worked right to the end of his life requiring the help of Anne and friends (under his supervision ) to glaze his last pots .

Syl and Ray Macro



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Colin Jowitt - Colin will be sharing one of the NPA stands at Earth & Fire in June

