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members

# NPA NEWS

The magazine of the Northern Potters Association



May - June 2014

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



in this issue:

The Decorated Elephants of Oldfield Brow, Littlethorpe Potteries,  
The Trip of a Lifetime

## Editor's Comment

This issue includes several requests for assistance from members - we are asking for volunteers for a new Exhibitions Team (page 10), and to help organise a Potters' Camp (page 11). John Cook has resigned from the committee, (though he is still maintaining the website until we find a replacement), so if you are willing to join the committee in that capacity we would love to hear from you. We would also be grateful for more volunteers for general committee membership. Usually, members join without a specific role, and after attending a few meetings get an idea of which particular aspects they may be interested in taking further, so to discuss what's involved, please contact any committee member, and to express interest in joining us contact Julie Ward, the association Secretary.

The Turnstone exhibition has got off to a good start (page 5), and the next NPA selected exhibition will be at The Ropewalk, Barton upon Humber, one of my favourite 'arts destinations' in the north! As well as 2 good gallery spaces (NPA will be using the larger Artspace), there is an excellent gallery shop, café, framing service, and workshops/studios with a strong expertise in print making. They offer lots of activities which draw visitors in, so with a late autumn exhibition slot we should be able to attract good sales.

My favourite piece in this issue is John Slade's article about the school project he carried out to produce decorated elephants (page 6). The pictures are so charming, each beast is an individual, and the sight of a herd of them displayed in the school must raise a smile at every viewing.

Another Indian link is mentioned with Pollie and Garry Uttley's piece (page 26). I was delighted to hear they have the gallery exhibition at Rufford which launches on 20 June, to coincide with Earth & Fire.

An opportunity for members to enter a Potfest New Exhibitor competition is included (page 13). Any member who hasn't had a stand at any Potfest event, or taken part in an NPA selected exhibition, is eligible, so do give it a go. We are also asking for local members to help us out at the Pens - Alan Birchall and I give up our time to attend and promote NPA, process card payments for exhibiting members, and run the competition, but we need some help so that we get a chance to look round the show, talk to members, recruit new members etc. As so many members attend, we are planning to hold our AGM there on the Saturday evening, but full details will be in the next issue.

The final part of Steve Booton's Trip of a Lifetime (page 18) will leave quite a gap in the next issue, so I hope someone else is working on something substantial to keep us all absorbed (I have sown seeds, but suspect some nagging will be required!). Please keep sending items in, no matter how long or short. It is the wide variety of content that keeps the magazine alive.

Barbara Wood

### Cover :

**Pollie and Garry Uttley**, Wall panel inspired by the Surajkund Mela - see page 26

## Your Committee

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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 26 June 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, Dropbox, WeTransfer or anything similar that involves an extra process to make them accessible!

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

500 Figures In Clay – Volume 2	Nan Smith	\$27.95
Beyond Craft	Cindi Stranes	20.00
Ceramics Today	Jeffrey Snyder	\$50.00
The Complete Guide to High-Fire Glazes	John Britt	16.99
Collecting Chinese & Japanese Porcelain in Pre-Revolutionary Paris	Castelluccio	40.00
Crafting a Continuum: Rethinking Contemporary Craft	Held & Lineberry	
The Ceramic Art of Robert Hodgins	Retief van Wyk	\$69
Hand Building	Shay Amber	12.99
George Ohr: Sophisticate and Rube	Ellen Lippert	\$40.00
Image Transfer on Clay	P A Wandless	16.99
Ming: Porcelain for a Globalised Trade	Eva Strober	\$67.00
On Not Knowing: How Artists Think	Fisher & Fortnum	16.95
Pinch Pottery	Susan Halls	16.99
Pit Firing Ceramics	Dawn Whitehead	\$29.99
Wood-Fired Ceramics: 100 Contemporary Artists	Amadeo Salamoni	\$59.99

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## Book Review - Roger Bell

### NATURAL GLAZES

Publ: Bloomsbury (A & C Black)

Miranda Forrest

£16.99

What is it that inspires some potters to find their own natural materials rather than take, as most of us do, the easy route via a commercial supplier? Miranda puts her reason in the conclusion: 'Go for a walk and see what you can find! Some iron ochre? Paint it under or over a base glaze and it will not only give the piece of work an identity, but will also become part of the narrative of your walk – or is it your walk that becomes part of the narrative of the pot?'

The content of the book and arrangement into chapters is as you would expect in any book on glazing: What is a Glaze; Materials and Preparation; Testing; Application and Firing; Health and Safety; plus a section on the work of other ceramic artists. All of these are competently covered. But there are added chapters on materials derived from rocks and plants/animals which go beyond the standard section on ash glazes in similar books, plus an interesting few paragraphs on natural materials in raku firing.

Miranda has worked on South Uist since 1999 after graduating from Glasgow School of Art. The natural materials she describes are dominated by those found there which is something of a limitation. The section by other ceramic artists on their own work includes knowledgeable contributions by Mike Dodd and Phil Rogers who work in the Leach tradition. The wild, random work of Lotte Glob is interesting. But by far the best description of the use of natural materials to achieve different effects is from Fiona Byrne-Sutton.

Overall the book is well written and covers the ground reasonably well, but the illustrations of work are dominated by those of the author with a limited palette of colours on a restricted range of thrown forms. Excitement comes only from the work of some of the invited artists.

#### **10cu. Ft propane gas kiln for sale.**

Top fibre lined, base brick. Steel exterior casing, will dismantle.

Includes loads of furniture, 4 large gas cylinders, pyro, cones etc. 2 Aeromatic burners.

£ 1500. No offers, phone Pete on 07787 521 089 Harrogate.

#### **For Sale**

**Shimpo Whisper RK 3D wheel**

Very good condition

Used only twice

Sensible offers considered

Contact Petra 07527373120

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## Exhibitions - Sylvia Holmes

### Turnstone Gallery exhibition - 26 April to 8 June

As display space at the gallery is limited, work from only half of the 37 applicants could be selected for the show. Ceramics demonstrating a wide range of styles and techniques have been chosen by the panel to produce an exciting exhibition, and I do hope that members will support the NPA by going along to this lively gallery to see the show during its run.



The private view took place on Saturday, 26 April, and was well attended by participating artists and other members. Sales were encouraging (with one artist selling all 5 pieces to one customer!), and I hope that they continue throughout the show. With 2 Bank Holiday weekends in May, there should be a good stream of new visitors at the gallery. Bridget and Harry Casson, the gallery owners, were excellent hosts, friendly, and knowledgeable. Several members are regular gallery artists, and their work is also on show in the upper gallery, so it's well worth a visit if you're in the area. Parking charges will come into effect from 1 May, but it's only 20p for the first hour, so still a bargain.

BW

### Ropewalk gallery exhibition: Call for applications.

The Ropewalk, Maltkiln Road, Barton upon Humber, North Lincs, DN18 5JT

<http://www.the-ropewalk.co.uk/>

The exhibition will run for six weeks, from **Saturday 25th Oct to Sunday 30th November** and the closing date for applications is August 10th.

I will be resigning as EO at the AGM in August due to other commitments, so Barbara Wood has kindly stepped in to organise this exhibition. If you would like an application form, please contact her on [barbara.wood99@btinternet.com](mailto:barbara.wood99@btinternet.com)

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## The Decorated Elephants of Oldfield Brow - John Slade

Oldfield Brow Primary is a fantastic little semi-rural school situated in the parish of Dunham Massey in South Manchester. I have developed a good relationship with the school over the years as my 3 children attended, I was a parent governor and I organised a ceramic mural project, designed by the pupils and made by my students from Tameside College, some years ago.

The school has formed a special bond with the Garhwal English Medium School [GEMS] in India and the head teacher Lori and her husband and village head Kunwar were coming to visit. The children have been studying Indian culture and the school decided they would like to mark the visit by doing a project that reflected what they had learnt from some of their studies.



After some discussion with staff it was decided that the children in year 5 would make decorated elephants inspired by the Jaipur elephant festival. I made a sample elephant; the body and head made from pinch pots and the legs and trunk from thick coils that were squeezed in to shape to give them some texture. The children had already produced artwork based on Mehndi henna patterns and these were to be used to influence the decoration. The class teacher, Lynn Thornton, and I were initially a little concerned that the project may have been a bit ambitious for 9 and 10 year olds but we needn't have worried. The children were very enthusiastic and extremely well behaved and had no real problems with the construction. Some wonderfully characterful elephants were produced.

After the bisque firing the elephants went back to school where they were decorated with underglazes using a variety of designs influenced by the Mehndi patterns the children had already been working with. Normally I like to apply underglaze at the dry, pre-bisque stage but I thought the elephants would be far too fragile. Unfortunately,

some of the elephants still suffered a little during the painting process and a few lost the odd tusk, tail, trunk or ear.



Before glazing I re-fired the elephants to 'fix' the stains. I had found through prior experience that sometimes the glaze crawled back from the underglaze during the firing and left bare patches and I wanted to avoid spoiling the decoration. Once glazed the results were outstanding. The underglazes we used produced bright clean colours and could be used for very fine detail. I was able to re-attach some of the broken parts using the glaze and the rest using a two part epoxy resin.



There was still the odd crack but that did not detract from the overall finish of the pieces.

On reflection the project was very successful. Despite initial concerns I think it was an appropriate project for the age of the children. I was kept busy with the heat gun and generally



helping with shaping and attaching, but the work is the children's own and I think they were all proud of their achievements. They were certainly very excited when I returned the bisque fired elephants and they were able to start painting them. If I was to do a similar project again I would pay closer attention to how the children made and attached the more vulnerable parts but I think that a certain amount of breakage was inevitable due to the amount of handling. Maybe a higher bisque temperature would have made the elephants more durable for the painting stage? The use of good quality materials – particularly the underglazes which I was very pleased with – has certainly helped ensure an excellent outcome and was definitely worth the extra expense [we had originally considered smoke firing to keep the cost down].

All in all a good time was had by everyone involved.

#### Technical Information:

Clay – New White Crank from Potclays

Contem ready mixed underglazes by CTM Potters Supplies

Transparent earthenware glaze, applied very thinly and fired to 1060°C



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## Diary

- 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
- 17 - 24 May **Africa Week** at Joe Cornish Galleries, Northallerton, featuring ceramics by NPA members Alan Ball, Dianne Cross and Laura Hancock
- 24 - 26 May **Derbyshire Open Arts** - includes NPA members Ann Bates, Olinda Everett, Brian Holland, Darrell Milnes, Lesley Nason, Jim Simpson and Gerald Unwin - derbyshireopenarts.co.uk
- 24 - 26 May **NPA-SW Exhibition**, The Old Parsonage, Didsbury
- 6 - 8 June **Potfest Scotland**, Scone Palace - potfest.co.uk
- until 8 June **Northern Potters at the Turnstone Gallery**, Sandsend, nr Whitby. A selling exhibition of selected work by 18 NPA members turnstonegallery.net
- 20 - 22 June **Earth & Fire**, Rufford Abbey Country Park, nr Ollerton, Notts. includes many NPA members!
- 21 - 22 June, 28 - 29 June, 5 - 6 July **Pots in the Byre**, Broadwood Hall, Allendale, Northumberland, NE47 9AD Exhibition by 12 ceramic artists, many of them NPA members broadwoodstudios.co.uk
- 22 June **Drawn to Clay** - Laurie Shaman, Chicago ceramicist, will demonstrate her painterly approach to drawing on ceramics. Higham Hall, Cockermouth - highamhall.com
- 25 June - 20 July  
24 July - 20 August  
26 August - 30 September **Greystoke Artspace**. Greystoke Church, near Penrith. Local artists respond to the space, including NPA members Christine Hurford and Thora Talling
- 28 June - 30 July **Ceramics** - an exhibition by NPA members at Joe Cornish Galleries, Northallerton, N Yorkshire
- 17 - 20 July **Art in Action**, Waterperry House, Oxford - artinaction.org.uk
- 25 - 27 July **Potfest in the Park**, Hutton in the Forest - potfest.co.uk
- 1 - 3 August **Potfest in the Pens**, Skirsgill Auction Mart, nr Penrith, potfest.co.uk
- 5 - 7 September **Ceramica** - biennial demonstration weekend organised by South Wales Potters at Cardiff Metropolitan University. Demonstrators are Ruthanne Tudball and NPA member Jim Robison - southwalespotters.org.uk
- 15 September - 3 October **NPA-W exhibition** at PR1 Gallery, UCLan, Preston. contact ghwilcock@uclan.ac.uk for details
- 9 - 13 November **Expressing Essence in Ceramic Form** - NPA member Antonia Salmon is running this course at West Dean College, Sussex. westdean.org.uk

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

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## Review : Ceramic Vessels - Gary Thomas

Water Street Gallery, Todmorden, 27 March to 27 April, 2014

An exhibition of ceramics in my home town of Todmorden? What a pleasure to deliver my pots and only drive two miles down the road - now that makes a refreshing change!

In the compact, light filled rooms of Water Street Gallery in the centre of Todmorden, alongside an eclectic mix of art and craft items, the Ceramics Vessels Exhibition looks simply spectacular.

As soon as you enter, the imposing front elevation of Judith Davies's pale blue porcelain pot is a sight to behold, what a presence! Almost an Elizabeth Fritsch-esque optical illusion of size, scale, form and balance, cleverly displayed just above head height, for maximum effect. Not surprising then to see that this pot was the first one sold on the open evening.

All the vessels here have been presented to perfection. A credit to both Rosemary and Mike Holcroft, the present owners of Water Street Gallery.

Some top quality ceramics here; look closely at all the work on show, there is a full and varied range of skills, techniques and methods. I'm sorry that I have room only to mention a few but Julia Blackman's beautiful, delicate, thin walled russet forms with unusual surface textures of an almost metallic quality must be highlighted. Contrast these with the bold, graphic smoke-fired heavyweight pots by Laura Hancock. They make such a strong statement placed against a white background on their own personal, individual, plinths. It would be interesting to see one on a white background and one on an adjacent black background. The negative positive interplay is in very close balance here.

Bryony Rich, well what can I say, how can any pot be so blue? The Matt Lapis blue bottle is outstanding, one of a number of blues on show here. How on earth can anyone create this from basic elements?

I have been a member of the NPA for a number of years now but this is my first exhibition alongside other members. I just had to apply as it was being held on my own turf, so to speak. It's a privilege for my pots to be included with work of this quality.

This Gallery has been in business since 2010 and it seems to go from strength to strength with a continuous programme of new and exciting exhibitions. Long may that last.

Go on take time out, forget work, forget shopping and spend some quality time soaking up some three dimensional visual stimulus and inspiration.



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## Establishing a new NPA Exhibition Team

An important part of the work that NPA does for members is to provide opportunities to show work in prestigious galleries throughout our area and beyond. Although there is no guarantee of selection, submission is open to all members, at whatever stage in their ceramics careers they may be, so recent graduates and expert hobbyists have an opportunity to exhibit alongside seasoned professionals on an equal footing. Often, members who have met the gallery through one of our exhibitions become gallery artists on a regular basis, so this is of mutual benefit to artist and gallery. It also helps promote ceramics to a wider audience, by showing what a wide, almost infinite, range of work can be produced from a single source material.

We aim to organise 2 selected shows each year, in various locations, and are constantly seeking suitable venues. To do this involves a significant amount of work from the committee members responsible, as much of the research that goes on behind the scenes does not result in an exhibition, so members only see the tip of that particular iceberg. Over the years there have been various ways of sharing tasks between volunteers, but with Sylvia's resignation from the AGM (in August), we are looking to recruit a team of 2 or 3 people to share the duties.

As a rough guide, the sort of tasks involved for each exhibition are:

- Find a suitable venue
- Negotiate terms with gallery management\*
- Prepare a budget to present to committee, for approval to proceed\*
- Produce application and submission forms and handle the application/submission process\*
- Create a Powerpoint presentation of all applicants' work for selection meetings\*
- Find appropriate selectors and organise selection meetings
- Attend selection and extract /record constructive feedback from selectors to forward to unsuccessful applicants
- Produce print-quality artwork for invitations and posters\*
- Produce artwork for email flyers\*
- Distribute publicity material
- Oversee delivery of work and setting up of exhibitions, usually in conjunction with gallery staff
- Generate and maintain Excel stock list of all work delivered to the gallery\*
- Make exhibition labels for all work delivered to the gallery\*
- Oversee and attend preview/organising refreshments
- Oversee takedown of exhibition and collection of unsold work
- Write Exhibition News articles for newsletter

(There are templates or guidelines available for items marked\*)

The actual tasks will vary each time, as some galleries will handle labelling, publicity, preview to at least some degree, but it is often a good negotiating tool for us to offer to take on this work, and we may be able to reduce the gallery commission to reflect that. We do have a publicity officer who will assist with the distribution of publicity material, placing advertisements and press releases in suitable publications and websites etc.

If you think you could become involved in this team, in any capacity, please support the NPA and contribute a little of your time!

If you'd like to join the Exhibition Team, or if you'd like further information, please contact [sylviaholmes.npa@gmail.com](mailto:sylviaholmes.npa@gmail.com) or [barbara.wood99@btinternet.com](mailto:barbara.wood99@btinternet.com)

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**Barbara Wood** - Exhibitions assistant, 2004 - 2006, Exhibitions officer 2006 - 2009

I joined the NPA committee back in the dark ages, with a specific desire to learn about exhibition organisation. As a natural administrator (aka bossy boots / control freak) but with an artistic penchant, it seemed the natural thing to do - lots of paperwork followed by some freedom of expression in displaying the work as well as I could. My 'apprenticeship' as exhibitions assistant was largely a manual role. In those days, actual pots were submitted to the gallery for possible selection, just days before the exhibition opened, and the selection day was a whirl of unwrapping, placing, identifying, separating selected from unselected, re-wrapping the latter, and trying to make sure everything ended up in the right box ready for collection at the private view (yes, unsuccessful artists were expected to turn up to the pv to take their work home while the successful ones were knocking back the wine and mixing with guests).

Moving to selection from images simplifies that process so much, and reduces the travelling time and costs for applicants. It also means that the exhibition can be better balanced - if a particular style of work is selected, and another not, the EO can ask the artist to provide the chosen work only, and so ensure that all artists are represented fairly equally.

There have sometimes been formal assistants, and I have always called on local help when setting up and packing up exhibitions, so it has never been a solo role. Each exhibition is a collaborative effort between NPA and gallery, and is a great way to learn about galleries and other people's work!

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**Sylvia Holmes** - Exhibitions officer 2012 - 2014

I took on the NPA Exhibition Officer role when it last became vacant, mainly because I wanted to find out at first hand how the gallery/exhibition world works. It's been an interesting and sometimes challenging experience, and I've discovered a lot over the last two years. I can recommend the role to anyone who wants to learn how to approach galleries, how to negotiate terms for a show, how a selection process works, how to design presentation and publicity materials, and how to deal with sometimes scatty and disorganised artists! The main benefits for me have been increased confidence in interacting with galleries and other outlets, a clearer understanding of the whole exhibition process, an enlarged network of ceramics-related contacts, and the acquisition of some new software and design skills.

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## Potters' Camp

As part of the 2015 Year of Ceramics celebrations, we are contemplating holding a potters' camp, with demonstrations, firings, workshops, exhibition etc. Currently 3 venues are being explored, but the main elements to making this a success are to find a team of volunteers to take on the organisation, and then to get the support of members in attending!

If you would consider getting involved, please contact [barbara.wood99@btinternet.com](mailto:barbara.wood99@btinternet.com)

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### Expressing Essence in Ceramic Form

How might we use ceramic form to express the essential nature of the world we experience around us? Putting aside preconceptions, and using all our senses we will work through a series of experiments and explorations in clay to enable you to draw out essence in the forms you create. Tutor Antonia Salmon (November 9–13 Four Days £451) Suitable for all Booking reference 4D4977.

Book online or through our flip book and receive a 5% discount at [www.westdean.org.uk](http://www.westdean.org.uk).

Gift vouchers are available to purchase to the value of £10, £20, £50 or £100, which can be used for full or part payment of short course fees.

## Event Listing with Craft & Design - Dianne Cross

NPA now has a facility to list events in Craft & Design magazine and on their website.

This is how it will work:

Any event organised by a regional group of NPA committee can be listed. Also, if five or more NPA members are participating in an event, eg. open studios, joint exhibition, workshop, lecture, this can be listed along with one image.

The information will need to be sent to Dianne Cross at [diannecross.npa@gmail.com](mailto:diannecross.npa@gmail.com) in plenty of time to meet publishing deadlines and should contain all relevant details – dates, opening times, location, event and participants details and so on.

If you're not sure just e-mail me.

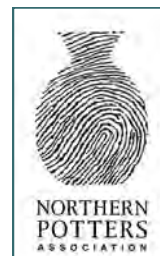
To see how the listing will look, go to [www.craftanddesign.net/craft-guilds/](http://www.craftanddesign.net/craft-guilds/) and select Northern Potters Association. With craft & design month upon us, there must be lots of events to list!

### 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)

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## Potfest New Exhibitor Opportunity - Barbara Wood

Once again NPA hopes to have a promotional stand at Potfest in the Pens, Skirsgill Auction Mart, Penrith, and would like to offer eligible members the chance to show a small amount of their recent work to an enthusiastic audience of pot lovers.

The event takes place from 1 to 3 August (set up on 31 July). Stands are allocated on a first come first served basis, with no selection, and a wide range of styles and qualities of work is on show. There are many visitors to the show, lots of them are regulars, and most leave the place laden with carrier bags full of pots. It is a great chance to meet other potters, meet the pot-buying public, and generally get a feel for what's going on with ceramics today. If you haven't visited the show to date, you really should! You can see who is participating this year at the Potfest website - [www.potfest.co.uk](http://www.potfest.co.uk).

**No fewer than 66 of the exhibitors listed this year are NPA members.**

We are inviting any member who has not participated in an NPA selected exhibition\*, or had a stand at any Potfest event to submit a small quantity of work (just enough for a display 30cm x 30cm) to be shown at Potfest, for the public and other exhibiting members to vote for their favourite. The prize is to have your stand fee for next year paid for by NPA. There is also a £50 cash prize for the entrant receiving most votes from exhibiting members.

Last year, Gary Thomas won both the public and the potters' vote, and consequently picked up two prizes. So, if you are eligible, please get in touch and I'll send full details out nearer the time. We will try to arrange for the work to be delivered by an exhibiting member who lives close to you, to keep your costs to a minimum. If you would like to attend for a day, you can help out on the NPA stand, and also have a chance to look around the show. **To apply, email [barbara.wood99@btinternet.com](mailto:barbara.wood99@btinternet.com), or phone 01759 318146 by 30 June.**

\* An NPA selected exhibition is one that is organised by the NPA exhibitions officer. Participating in a regional group exhibition does not exclude you from this opportunity.

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## Derbyshire Open Arts

Derbyshire Open Arts will take place at various venues throughout the county over the Bank Holiday weekend, 24 - 26 May. This year it will include NPA members Ann Bates, Olinda Everett, Brian Holland, Darrell Milnes, Lesley Nason, Jim Simpson and Gerald Unwin, with Ann, Darrell and Gerald showing work at Tansley Village Hall.

Gerald writes "This year I have extended both my range of sculptural illustrated idioms (Getting the Ball Rolling, He's Got a Chip On His Shoulder, etc., etc.) and also my domestic ware - with slip decorated mugs, bowls etc. covering the themes of farmyard and fields (chickens, ducks, doves, running hares, etc.) .

I hope to be making sculptural pieces whilst in attendance at Tansley Village Hall, with several artists having displays, and doing demos."



Bank Holiday weekend 24th, 25th, 26th May  
FREE brochure, FREE admission to artists venues countywide  
Opening hours 10am-5pm



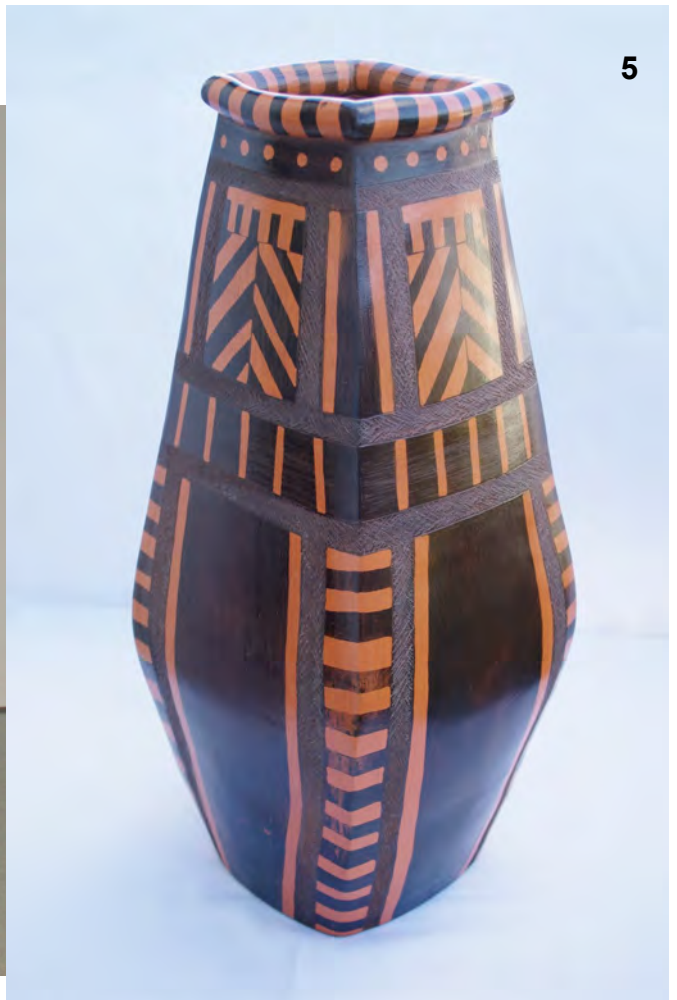
[www.derbyshireopenarts.co.uk](http://www.derbyshireopenarts.co.uk)

## Members' Gallery

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



- 1 Debbie Michaels, Hand-sculpted glazed stoneware, from '**singing or screaming**' series
- 2 Antonia Salmon
- 3 Rene Cryer, **Abstract figurative sculpture**, slabbed earthenware clay with brush on antique bronze glaze.



- 4 Alan Ball
- 5 Laura Hancock
- 6 Dianne Cross

These artists are featured in the 'Africa Week' exhibition at Joe Cornish Galleries, Northallerton

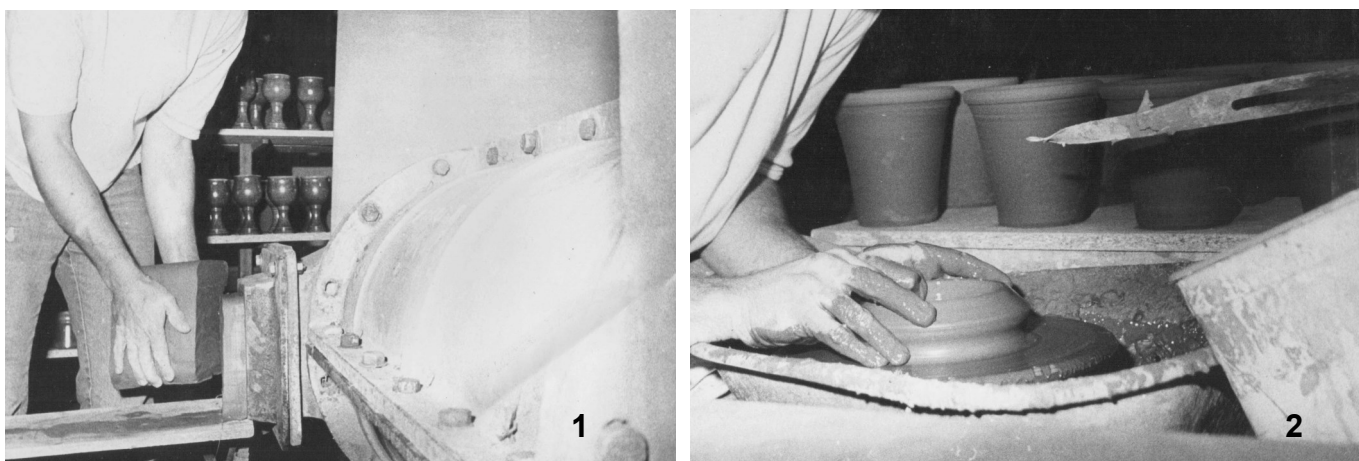
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## Littlethorpe Potteries - Jim Simpson

In my last article I wrote about how I had been influenced by the Brampton saltglaze potteries of Chesterfield when I first started out making pottery. A few years later, a visit to the Littlethorpe potteries in Yorkshire in 1983 was to bring about another change in direction.

I was salt glazing then and had my workshop and retail shop at the Coach House, Lea, near Matlock in Derbyshire and decided that I would also like to sell other potters' work. I was recommended to go to see George Curtis to buy some flower pots and so off I went to Yorkshire in my van. When I got there, I was told his son Roly was in charge and was digging clay in the clay pits and that if I followed the little railway line I would find him at the end. Off I went on what I remember as a long walk and found Roly just finishing filling a large truck with clay.

We walked back to the pottery together where he winched the truck into the shed, then tipped it sideways onto the floor and proceeded to pug the clay with a Boulton No2 built around 1890 -1900. I was surprised at the coincidence as I had just bought the same pug from a scrap dealer and had just got it working. He invited me to stay and watch him throw some pots that he told me he would later cut in half and then add a back to make into wall pots. He suggested that I should buy a lot of wall pots as they sold very well.



I did not realise then how much this event would affect my future. I filled the van with pots including lots of wall pots and took them back to my shop. He was right in that the wall pots all sold really quickly. I called Roly up to place another order only to be told I would have to wait 6 to 8 weeks. So I decided to buy some terracotta clay and throw some wall pots myself on my wheel and fire them in a small electric kiln I had. Little did I realise that from that moment on for the next 15 years my future was to be mainly terracotta!

Since 1831 Littlethorpe Potteries has produced traditional wares from the famous Littlethorpe clay deposits, which date back to when the Vale of York was glaciated. George Curtis, who started working at Littlethorpe Potteries as a bench boy around 1912 and who subsequently married the then owner's daughter in 1932, managed the potteries before inheriting the works with his wife in 1939.

As plastic began to take the flowerpot market things became difficult for traditional terracotta flowerpot makers. George's many skills undoubtedly played a large part in enabling him to keep the pottery going through the hard times. He was regarded as the last of the big ware throwers but was equally adept at making large 60 lb garden planters and also vast numbers of small plant pots at a tremendous speed (ten 3" plant pots per minute!). George Curtis continued to run the works until handing over to his son Roly, in 1975.

I was allowed to look around the place and found it to be a museum of old equipment, some stored away in old buildings. In the loft of one of these buildings I came across Roly's son who was working on a vast model of a First World War trench scene. He had made the landscape from clay from the pottery and put in trenches, shell holes, wire, lead soldiers, old artillery guns the lot and around all of this was old machinery for making roof tiles.

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Since that visit most of Stoke on Trent has closed but I am pleased to say that the Littlethorpe pottery is still going strong. I hope it is still being run by the Curtis family. I can recommend a visit there and hope to go back soon myself.

I have included some photographs of my pottery at that time at the point where I was still making saltglaze but had just started making terracotta. At the end of 1984 I moved my pottery to Chatsworth where we became one of the largest suppliers of terracotta in the UK. Although most was machine made we still produced on average 3 to 5 tons of hand thrown ware a week. Now, in what I euphemistically call retirement, I make what I like. At the moment, because of the centenary of the First World War I have gone back to the Edwardian/ George V period making pancheons, demijohns, bread bins, etc. For some of these pieces I use 30lbs to 50lbs of clay and will be seventy at my next birthday. When I did the 50lb demijohn I went against doctor's advice - that is Doctor Alan Birchall! Well he has been retired for 12 years now and has become a potter himself! I was so pleased I could still do it as it has been 25 years since I threw that size of pot and on a wheel that I consider a toy, an Alsager. I have included a photo of a demijohn and pancheon which at the time of writing are awaiting bisque firing. I will post them in members' gallery in the next issue.



images:

- 1 Boulton No 2 Pug
- 2 Opening up
- 3 Flowerpot
- 4 Demijohn and pancheon

all photos ©Jim Simpson



## The Trip of a Lifetime, part 3 -Steve Booton

Returning to Tokyo from the tranquil surroundings of rural Sassayama was a little disconcerting. The pace of life in Tokyo is frenetic to say the least, and getting up a head of steam in order to deal with negotiating Tokyo's main railway station was difficult. How thousands of people pass through this massive transport hub and never collide with each other is impressive. How they are not rugby world champions amazes me, they sidestep each other with ease even from an early age.

I was to spend the last few days of my trip based with Steve and Jane Tootell in Tokyo and as they were both working I was to negotiate the Tokyo rail system alone. I planned to visit a Tomoo Hamada exhibition at the Mitsukoshi department store in the Nihonbashi district of Tokyo, 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. Armed with a map and the amazing help of the transportation staff I never once got lost, amazing in itself.

The Mitsukoshi, the number one department store in Japan, was first on my itinerary. It was founded in 1673 selling kimonos and ten years later in 1683, the store took a new approach to marketing.



Instead of selling by going door-to-door, they set up a store where buyers could purchase goods on the spot with cash. The Mitsukoshimae Station on the Tokyo Metro is named after the adjacent Mitsukoshi department store and this was my first stop. Mitsukoshi is the number one exhibition venue for ceramics and luckily my visit coincided with an amazing exhibition by Tomoo Hamada.

As I was looking around the exhibits Tomoo himself came in and I was able to have a nice chat with him about his work and kilns. He was very generous with his time and suggested that as it was near lunch time I should go one floor up to an exhibition of all things made in Kyoto and sample some of the delicious foods prepared freshly in front of you. I sampled all of the food available; it would be rude not to! In the afternoon, I took in all of the remaining floors. The closest place I have visited in the UK is Harrods.





The following day took me to the Nezu museum. The museum houses the private collection of Nezu Kaichirō (1860–1940). The museum opened to the public in 1940 and, after a large-scale renovation and renewal from 2006 onwards, it re-opened in autumn 2009 with a completely new museum building by the Japanese architect Kengo Kuma.



Included in the collection is a pair of Edo period folding screens of Irises by Ogata Kōrin. It also includes other paintings of renown, calligraphy, sculpture, ceramics, textiles and archaeological materials, as well as objects in lacquer, metal, and wood.

There are also Chinese bronzes of the Shang and Zhou dynasties. I was again lucky to be in Tokyo when the Museum was putting on an exhibition of 70 of the most famous Ido bowls including the priceless Kizaemon bowl. Before looking at the bowls, I spent two hours walking around the museums gardens which contain 5 Tea houses rebuilt amongst the beautiful trees and plants.

The bowls themselves were all housed in glass cases, past which a steady flow of almost reverential viewers slowly moved. In the afternoon I travelled to the Mingei

museum which is a folk craft museum set up by Soetsu Yanagi known as first advocate of the Mingei Movement. It was 1925 when Yanagi, together with potters Kanjiro Kawai and Shoji Hamada, coined the term 'Mingei' literally meaning 'folk crafts' or 'common crafts' and the museum houses an amazing collection of artefacts.



The last morning was difficult for me. I had come to the end of the most amazing trip I had ever undertaken and I was at a loss for what to do for my final few hours in Tokyo. I decided upon a change of pace and travelled to Electric Town, a district of Tokyo where all things electrical can be seen and purchased. It is also home to the Manga and Anime culture followed by millions of Japanese youth.

It really was a culture shock after the refined atmospheres of the Nezu and Mingei museums, but a fitting end to round off the "Trip of a Lifetime". I have already started saving for my next trip to the most amazing country I have ever visited. Time to sell a few pots.



- 1 Mitukoshi store (exterior)
- 2 Mitukoshi store (interior)
- 3 Entrance to the Nezu Museum
- 4 Tea house in the Nezu Museum gardens
- 5 Entrance to the Mizsei Museum
- 6 Electric Town

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



Nothing new to report

### East

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



During March /April NPA East members were actively exhibiting in York Theatre Royal, Open Studios, Thirsk and Harrogate British Trade Craft Fair. As usual there was an excellent standard of display at the Harrogate event and there appeared to be more ceramic exhibitors than in the past. If anyone wishes to share feedback please contact me at [lesleyannegreene@gmail.com](mailto:lesleyannegreene@gmail.com) I will be happy to pass it on for you. Anyone interested in arranging / hosting a local potters get together please do get in touch if you would like me to forward info /requests to other members in your area. Wishing everyone a good spring/summer season - keep your info coming.

### South East

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



Hope everyone made the most of the Easter holidays. Many of the SE group are involved with various Open Studio events, Sheffield 3rd 4th and 5th May, and 10th and 11th May, Nottinghamshire throughout May to early June, and Derbyshire Open Arts 23rd 24th 25th May. A lot to participate in or to go and see! Plus all the other usual summer events to prepare for so no meeting in the next couple of months but the next meeting will be at Brian Holland's studio and will include a raku day, details to be announced in next report.

### South West

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



Our next Exhibition is at the Old Parsonage, Didsbury, South Manchester, M20 2RQ. Saturday 24th to Monday 26th May 2014. Opening times 10.00am to 5.30pm each day.

[www.didsburyparsonagetrust.org.uk](http://www.didsburyparsonagetrust.org.uk) 0161 445 7661

### 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



Thanks to Bob & Denise Park and Bob & Audrey March for hosting our last two socials. These events have been a good opportunity for us to share information and chat and it is great way to meet other potters in a relaxed environment.

Tullie House Museum are hosting an exhibition of Richard Slee's work called 'Work and Play' from 14 June to 14 September. Member Christine Hurford will be giving a talk on 25th June entitled 'Funny, quirky Slee'.

## West

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



### Meeting 18<sup>th</sup> March, 7.15 pm at 'Ale Emporium' formerly 'Bitter Suite' Pub, Preston.

There were over 30 members that attended the meeting, many thanks to some of our members that travel a considerable way to support the association. We encourage members from other regions to visit our meetings and welcomed some from the South West region in March.

Enquiries have been made for the suggested trip to the International Ceramic Studios, Keszket, Hungary, we are waiting for the response for date availability and costs.

Our themed ceramic pieces 'Grand National' caused a mixed response of humorous, controversial and thoughtful. There were more submissions than usual.

### Exhibitions and Events in the region with members taking part.

'Burnley Arts Centre', Artisan Market - Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April and the second Sunday of every month thereafter, stalls are £10 for a table. This is a new venture and they are looking for high quality artists/makers and local food producers for a monthly market. Information and applications from [market@burnleyyouththeatre.org](mailto:market@burnleyyouththeatre.org)

'Ceramics at the Mill', Higherford Mill, Barrowford, Lancs. 9th, 10 & 11 May, There are still a few places left for this event, contact Julie Miles, email; [info@juliemiles.co.uk](mailto:info@juliemiles.co.uk) as soon as possible.

'PR1 Gallery', UCLAN, Preston, Lancs. 15 September – 3 October. N.P.A. West Exhibition. All members welcome, contact Geoff Wilcock email: [ghwilcock@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:ghwilcock@uclan.ac.uk)

'Garstang Arts Centre', Garstang, Preston. 15<sup>th</sup> November – 13<sup>th</sup> December, N.P.A. West Exhibition. All members welcome. This exhibition is for ceramic wall pieces only, contact Geoff Wilcock email: [ghwilcock@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:ghwilcock@uclan.ac.uk)

### Next meeting

This is our annual visit to the degree show at UCLAN, members work is included in M.A. Ceramics and B.A. Contemporary Crafts, we will meet in the foyer at Victoria building. Dates to be notified in advance by e-mail 'June' is the title of our 'themed piece' for the next meeting.

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

Helen Birnbaum	Skelmersdale	Lancs
David Finnegan	Southport	Merseyside
Timmie Fryer	Thurlstone, Sheffield	S.Yorkshire
Angie Hardwick	Handsworth, Sheffield	S.Yorkshire
Claire Lee	Wakefield	W.Yorkshire
Hilary Morris	Birkenhead	Merseyside
Kate Stride	Dunford Bridge, Sheffield	S.Yorkshire
Lauraine Sweeney	Newsome, Huddersfield	W.Yorkshire

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

## Pollie and Garry Uttley Ceramics

We both had the fortunate advantage of taking early retirement from teaching at the age of 50, far too young to fully retire, so it was an ideal time to begin to develop our own ideas having spent years providing ideas for children.

Although we had trained as painters, teaching art takes you into all manner of directions, Garry developing ceramics and Pollie into printmaking and ceramics, in addition to our normal drawing and painting specialisms.

Immediately following Pollie's retirement we made a decision to go to India for a short break. The colour and pattern to be found in every aspect of daily Indian life, the textiles, the markets, the temples and even the decorated elephants proved just too much to resist and after our third visit, and our first to Rajasthan in February 1997, we realised that we had found our inspiration for developing ideas and our work. August 1997 found us at 'Potfest in the Pens' facing our first ceramics market and being encouraged by the comments from visitors and our sales.

Year after year we have returned to India, travelling overnight by train, rucksacks on our backs, and loving it all, whether travelling across the arid Thar desert, visiting the impressive forts and palaces of Rajasthan, or seeing the amazing temples of South India alongside the lush rice fields and palm trees. In addition to travelling for pleasure we have run workshops in Ahmedabad in Gujarat, and in Delhi, have been 'Artists in Residence' for one month, thus having the privilege of being more than merely 'tourists'.

In our many and varied visits we have experienced many levels, from travelling overnight on a train luggage rack to staying in royal palaces with the Maharajas family....and everything in between!

In January 2014 we returned home from our 15<sup>th</sup> visit after travelling for a month amongst the tribal people in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in the very heart of India. There were very few other tourists but oh so much to inspire us.

This visit has formed the starting point for a new range of work, some returning to our training as painters and some based on the tribal decoration known as 'Warli'. All of this can be seen, along with our more established work at our exhibition 'Indian Inspirations' at the Rufford Craft Centre Gallery from Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June to Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2014, the opening weekend to coincide with the 'Earth and Fire' International ceramics market at Rufford.

Our year will then finally be rounded off by being invited to exhibit at an International ceramics exhibition from 24 to 30 November at the Habitat Centre in Delhi .



- 1 Large terra cotta panel 'tribal textile'
- 2 'Warli' wall panel, 40cm x 40cm

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**Isabel K-J Denyer - Beaker,**  
7.5cm x 7.5cm. Similar ones  
will be on show at Earth &  
Fire, Rufford, stand 39

