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Front Cover:

Naked Raku Pots by Hugh Thomas,
overall winner of the NPA40 competition

Back Cover:

Woodrings by Steven Rice, second in the
NPA40 competition

Next issue

The copy date for the next issue of NPA News is
29 January 2018

Articles should be between 300 and 1000 words
saved as .doc or .txt files.

Images need to be high quality for printing, saved
as .jpg files.

Please do not embed images in documents; send
text and images as separate email attachments

Send them to npanews@btinternet.com

Email or phone the editor if you have any queries.

From the Chair

At the AGM I spoke of how well everything is working at regional level. The more members who make an active contribution, the easier and more enjoyable it is for everyone. So whether you are a new or long-standing member, please think about how you could contribute.



The NPA also relies on our small and dedicated committee. Our constitution states that as well as Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer there should be "no fewer than 8 and not more than 14 other general committee members". We are currently without a vice-chair, an exhibitions organiser, and soon the position of chair will be vacant too.

So, we need more people to help, both as general members to support the others and also to fill some of the main roles. Please consider helping NPA in any way you can so that we may continue successfully for another 40 years. Please contact me for a chat!

I will close simply by wishing everyone a joyful Christmas and a happy New Year.

Margaret Lawrenson

Advertising in NPA News

Per issue prices

Small ads (30 words max.) Free to members

Boxed adverts			
colour	1/2 pp £30	1/4 pp £18	1/8 pp £10
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Diary

Send details of your events to the npanews@btinternet.com

- 19 Nov to 10 Jan **Cumbrian Ceramics** Upfront Gallery, Nr Hutton in the Forest, Penrith including 21 NPA members
- 2 to 3 Dec **Lancashire Hot Potters** The Mix, Platform Gallery, Clitheroe. **Graham Hough**
- 9 to 10 Dec **Open Workshop** Dove Street Pottery, Shipley. **David Worsley**
- 19 to 23 Dec **Pat's Life Forms and Graham's Heads** The Mix, Platform Gallery, Clitheroe. **Graham Hough**
- to 7 January **Shades of Ceramics** Kunsthuis Gallery, Craick, York. **Several NPA members**
- 9 Feb to 28 Oct **Terracotta Warriors** World Museum, Liverpool www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk
- 19 to 20 March **Restating Clay Conference** Yorkshire Museum and Kings Manor York



Clarts NPA-NE exhibition at Newcastle Arts Centre



Clarts – NPA North East at Newcastle Arts Centre

Marking this year's 40th anniversary, the North East NPA region presented the work of 17 potters at Newcastle Arts Centre for two weeks in October. The exhibition was curated by Maggie Thomson, aided by Co-ordinator Stephan Aal, and Diane Nicholson and Marvin Kitshaw of Muddy Fingers.

Lorraine Clay, Carolyn Corfield, Susan Crame, Pat Dalton, Dee Dickson, Sue Dunne, Dick Graves, Laura Hancock, Melanie Hopwood, Karen Lewton, Anne Macdonald, Carolyn Marr, Elizabeth Maynard, Muddy Fingers Pottery, George Ormerod, Sara Jane Palmer, June Roddam...from the Tyne to the Tees and places in between, varied work exploring the widest range of techniques was assembled in the gallery of this thriving arts complex.

A gallery steward's view

Sitting in a gallery, minding the exhibits, can be quite a slow business, so it was a nice surprise to find this wasn't the case when looking after the pots for a morning at "Clarts". It was particularly good to be visited by many who were not potters, with no experience of ceramics. They had a lot of questions, about techniques and processes, and it was a real pleasure to see their interest and astonishment at the range of different results on show, all starting from the same point with a lump of clay or "clart"! The visitors were especially interested in the unexpected – What does horsehair have to do with this pot? Where does beeswax come into it? Hikidashi – what's that? Is that actually melted glass in the bottom of that dish? Why does the surface of that pot look like cinder toffee? Why does this vase smell of burning? – and many people who disclaimed "I don't know anything about ceramics, but ..." showed a really welcome appreciation of the work, knowledge and artistry that went into the making of each piece.

A lot of the work in this show reflected inspiration from the natural world – leaves, rock pools, wild flowers – and many visitors found these pieces particularly sympathetic; others simply marvelled at the technical expertise involved in thrown or sculpted displays. Absolutely no suggestion here that "My six-year-old could do that"!

We were all moved by the comments in our visitors' book. These extracts, give an impression of why this show felt so positive.

'A treasure trove of inspiration, talent and creativity – loved it!'

'Excellent artwork, so cleverly done, lots of creativity around.'

'So many techniques, and all very lovely.'

'As an architecture student exploring pottery this exhibition was inspiring. Beautiful work!'

'BRILLIANT HANDCRAFTSMANSHIP'

'Wonderful exhibition! A delight to see such a variety of work.'



Elizabeth Maynard



Melanie Hopwood



Sue Dunne



Anne Macdonald

Mette Mayer Gregersen demonstration

If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there



On Sunday 17th September we arrived at the Art House in Sheffield bright and early to set up for a talk and demonstration by the Danish artist Mette Maya Gregersen. Armed with a projector, laptop, ancient screen, a bucket of paperclay, clay, plaster and an array of bamboo blinds and mats we began preparations. Sarah Vanic met us there and was the perfect host, the room was set for a shared lunch and the kettle was put on.

A presentation of Maya's journey with clay began. When she was 16 she was taught to throw by a potter who lived nearby, then on to France to make a living selling pots and building a place to live. After much travelling she began a BA in Ceramics at Camberwell which gave her the freedom to experiment and push her boundaries. After some time in Bergen, Norway she was inspired by the sea and became interested in the waves, they

were constantly moving and in transition, rather like herself who had not yet discovered what it was she was looking for. There were further residencies in York and a Psychotherapy course at Sheffield University and then eventually back to Denmark.

In Denmark she set up a studio in her home so that she could make work whenever she felt like it. The waves are still very much part of her current practice and she began her demonstration by imagining she was in her studio. She explained how she always has several pieces on the go at the same time and works from one to the other. There are no drawings, notes or plans. She works intuitively without an idea of the final outcome. Maya also explained she didn't have music playing while she worked as she didn't want this to influence how she made the pieces.



Whilst plaster is drying on a curved bamboo mat, she twists and curves a bamboo blind and holds this with string, distorting it into a boat like form. This is then covered in up to twenty layers of paperclay before being put in a gas kiln, the bamboo blind burning away but leaving the linear impressions on the work. The plaster moulds could be used in various ways, to press clay in the whole mould and then removed to make a wave or smaller bits of clay pressed in and used to construct a piece made up of multiple waves.

The waves are one aspect of her work, the other is the cocoons. These vessel like forms encase space and are made by rolling out slabs of clay on to the bamboo mats. The clay is then torn into strips which are then used to create a cocoon. As she made one of these she used a mould to hold the base then built carefully and slowly. It became apparent during the demonstration that while moulds were used to support her work and make the textured strips, the shapes were fluid and seemed open to change at any point. Choosing which piece and where to place it was a trial and error process. She explained she just knows when it is right. The direction of the linear impressions can affect the way a piece looks.

Throughout our day with Maya she was both willing to share many techniques and processes and welcome any ideas the audience had! It was a very informal, relaxed day and I think we all left truly inspired.

Kathy Watson and Bev Seth



Sheffield Ceramics Fair September 2017

Brian Holland



After two successful years we went ahead with the third Sheffield Ceramics Festival, held in and with the kind assistance of the volunteers at The Walled Garden of Meersbrook Park, Sheffield. This is a delightful setting, a perfect site to display ceramics in a stunning garden environment.

As before, we had a first come first served policy for applications, taking our model from Geoff Cox's well-established Potfest event. However we were initially overwhelmed by applications in the first post and we were only able to accommodate them by finding extra spaces which did result in a little overcrowding in one area. The second post was also as busy and we had to leave out people we would have wished to include. So it is obvious that we will have to modify our applications system next time.

More than two thirds of the exhibitors were members of the NPA. We wish to give prominence to Sheffield and environs and as most local ceramicists join the NPA this is likely to prevail. However it is not an NPA show and so we will always include a proportion of potters/sculptors from other areas for added interest.

A wide range of work was represented and the standard of presentation was high. There was a well-attended demonstration programme in the education room which has become a popular feature.

The new graduates on Yorkshire Art Space's starter studio now regularly occupy the formal rose

garden where they have the opportunity to display and sell their work so giving them the opportunity to develop their presentation skills. They are also expected to give a demonstration of their working practice so that they can engage with an audience.

Whilst it is an ideal site to display work, access to the site is not easy and so I wish to take this opportunity to thank exhibitors for their co-operation which enabled unloading and set-up to run smoothly. We have had a few useful suggestions on ways we could further improve this and intend to apply some of them next year.

Visitor numbers were slightly down on the Saturday. Though the weather held it looked and felt like it was going to pour it down any minute, but numbers were back up on Sunday which proved to be a busy day for many. Some people had record sales figures, some did not do as well but this is always going to be the case.

The Japanese garden provides an excellent site for those who wish to show case larger pieces and we were glad to see more people taking advantage of this.

As always the show runs smoothly due in large part to the volunteers at the walled garden who do an excellent job in preparing the site, controlling the gate and providing refreshments throughout the show.

We have begun planning next years' event and will post application dates early in the new year.





The starter studio section



Ken Taylor demonstrating



Mary Else

Kathryn Watson



Box sculpture Brian Holland; Jugs Ken Taylor



Alan Ball remembers the NPA in 1977

1977 was a life-changing year for me. I had been appointed resident potter at the new Biddick Farm Arts Centre in Washington. The Arts Centre was the brainchild of the Washington (new town) Development Corporation which had acquired the derelict farm then redesigned and renovated it. This was a boost to the cultural activities for the growing population of the new town.

From being an art teacher at a local comprehensive school, I now had a studio-cum-pottery shop where I made and sold pottery for a living. I also taught pottery to adults at evening class and weekend and summer courses.

My appointment in 1977 also coincided with the formation of the Northern Potters Association. I can vaguely remember going to the inaugural meeting at the Bowes Museum, chaired by Geoff Watson. Peter Davies and Laurie Short were also there. I can remember meeting potters from all over the north who I never knew existed. I was sitting beside a potter from Northumberland called Alistair Hardy, who made wonderful wood-fired domestic ware.

I showed pots in the first NPA exhibitions in 1978, one at the Shipley Art Gallery in Gateshead and one at The Sheffield City Museum. These were the beginning of the members' annual exhibitions.

The first NPA potters camp was held at Peter Dick's Coxwold Pottery in North Yorkshire. Some of the potters demonstrating their craft were David Lloyd Jones, Peter Dick and Jane Hamlyn.

It was at the Halifax Piece Hall we saw raku potter Dave Roberts firing his well known big raku pots. Looking through the old exhibition catalogues and membership directories brings back lots of happy memories of potter friends and their families.



Photos from the 1978 Shipley Exhibition Catalogue, which was all in black and white.

The makers were Elisabeth Bailey, Alan Ball, Maggie Berkowitz, Elizabeth Maynard and Jim Robison.

All are NPA members forty years later.

***Which of them made which piece?
Answers p30***



Northern Potters Association Exhibition


Tyne and Wear County Council Museums
Exhibition supported by Northern Arts

August 19th — October 1st, 1978

The first exhibition of work by members of the Northern Potters Association selected by Victor Margrie, Bob Rogers and Derek Emms.

ShIPLEY Art Gallery,
Prince Consort Road,
Gateshead,
Tyne and Wear.
Telephone: Gateshead (0632) 771495

Opening Times:
Monday — Saturday 10-6
Sunday 2-5

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How it was then – extracts from the 1978 Sheffield Museum Catalogue

“If you wish to buy a piece of work, please write to the potter enclosing a cheque or postal order for the correct amount.”

When collecting your purchases, “please bring a receipt or note of authorisation with you”.

“We regret that the Museum cannot undertake to package the articles...”

Prices ranged from £0.50 to £25, for example

Alan Ball	Pot with lid	£8.00
James Robison	Pot	£1.95
	Sculptural form	£17.00

NPA Potters' Camps

Jim Robison shares his memories



I was in attendance and demonstrated at the first three Potter's camps at Coxwold (May 1979), Piece Hall (May 1981), and Carlisle College (July 1983). They were great fun and light hearted affairs.

Peter and Jill Dick simply opened up their studio at Coxwold Pottery and we spilled out into the open cow sheds across the drive. The attempted salt kiln slumped at the top end, resulting in a complete fusion of everything.

David Lloyd Jones and I did a joint demo at Piece Hall at one point, with thrown elements by him being assembled by myself into wood formers for a tall slab like structure.

I remember having a microphone held up to the piece while a music box was played at the end. (One of those little hurdy-gurdy items.) We were serious but played too.

Derek Clarkson was great at that event too, throwing porcelain bottles. One funny sequence happened when he was centering the clay. With the usual phallic shape on the rise there was a sudden power failure. In the hushed silence that followed, Derek said, 'how often that has happened to me'! And the crowd collapsed in laughter.

As Head of Ceramics at Bretton, I persuaded the principal to back NPA events there, using the college theatre. We were even allowed to camp in the college grounds, use the loos in the evenings and the canteen provided pre-booked meals.

The sculpture park was in its infancy, and the grounds were fantastic. The college library was used for lectures, and the music room was arranged with a members' exhibitions for the weekend.

I remember that there was even some help on the admin side, with department secretaries assisting with registration and such like. Those were days before education became such a money aware business and every one was a bit more flexible as to what went on in college time.

Several of us on the committee had small children who made friends, ganged together and roamed the place, with wonderful memories and friends still.

I think three camps were held there. There were some difficulties with the college of course (canteen mugs accidentally forgotten, with raku glaze left in them for a start) and eventually, I began to feel the heat and stress from it all. I felt, and still feel, that these events promoted the institution and their educational programmes, and it was not just for the Potters Association and the individuals involved. Ceramics students attended the event as helpers and everyone gained from the experience.

That is why I am still active with the Aberystwyth Festival. Education is part of what it is all about, spreading the word, as well as promotion of individual participants.



Can you name the eight demonstrators shown?
Answers on page 30.



Photos: Mike Shrimpton

NPA40 On-line competition winners

Overall and Novice Decorative Winner - Hugh Thomas

Judy and I took up pottery in late 2014 and have found it to be a most absorbing hobby in our retirement. I enjoy throwing whilst Judy also does hand-building and research into glazes.

The naked raku pots were a project and challenge that we set ourselves this summer. We had several firings of our wood burning kiln and were encouraged by an NPA raku session hosted by Solway Ceramics Centre.

I threw these pots using Valentines Ashraf Hanna clay. After masking the patterns, I applied the home-made slip and glazes. The pots were fired to 950 C, removed from the kiln and then smoked as they cooled.



Set of three Naked Raku Pots
Stoneware, home-made glazes, wood-fired kiln, 12, 11 & 10 cm

Our Sponsors



Novice Functional Winner – Mary Brandon

I loved doing pottery at school, then never touched clay for over 40 years. In February 2017 I took a two day throwing course at Potclays in Stoke on Trent and have been completely obsessed with pottery ever since. I bought a second hand kiln and wheel in July this year and set up a small studio in the house.

Still being very new to ceramics, I want to do everything! I haven't found my style yet. I've only made earthenware up to now but look forward to trying stoneware and porcelain soon. I've particularly enjoyed firing glass into dishes and also using oxides on bisque fired pots and leaving them without glaze.

The pot I entered into the competition is a coil pot with a white tin glaze on the top two or three inches. It then has oxides painted onto the glazed and unglazed parts of the pot and smudged together. Most of the pot is not glazed.

Joining NPA has been brilliant. Everyone has been so friendly and willing to share tips, both in person and online. Thanks to all who voted for my pot.



Bottle vase
Earthenware coil pot. 21 cm tall

Novice Sculptural Winner – Steven Rice

Previously a member of London Potters, Steve now lives in New Brighton on the Wirral.

His piece "Woodrings" is part of a series of works exploring this theme. Others can be seen on this website at www.steverice.me.uk

"Having completed my BA (Hons) degree in 3D Design I moved into education, teaching the use of art as therapeutic medium in psychiatry. My particular interest is ceramics though I also have worked in other media such as batik, glass and painting."



Woodrings, 54cm high

Amateur Functional Winner – Martine Becquet

Bowl, white stoneware with scraffito in green slip

Working at my pottery wheel is always a pleasurable experience: creating a beautiful shape out of a lump of clay never ceases to fascinate and satisfy me. I apply coloured slip on the leather hard ware and scratch out a different design, depending on the shape and size of the piece I have thrown.

I prefer making functional ware as I believe that a ceramic object does not only need to be pleasing to the eye, but needs to be felt, held and used.

I am originally from the Flanders, but was shown how to throw pots by a Dutch potter when I lived in Friesland. Since then I have worked with clay, on and off over the years, in different places and whenever possible.

I am currently living in the Lake District where I spend many happy hours in my basement workshop in between doing various outdoor activities in this wonderful part of the world.



Amateur Decorative Winner – Micaela Schoop

This little pinch pot is part of a new body of work which I am developing as part of my Masters degree in ceramics at UCLan in Preston. My main focus is on surface pattern design and how I can combine and adapt world patterns to decorate my hand built ceramics. I am working on a series of small pinch pots and on larger biomorphic figures.

The pattern on this stoneware pinch pot is inspired by Pueblo pottery from New Mexico. It was made from black clay with a loose application of white slip. I then responded to the fields of black and white by adding contrasting underglaze details and finishing off with a clear glaze and gold lustre.

Patterns to me are a visual language that cross cultural boundaries and, even if their symbolism isn't always understood, create visual links and combine with the sensual qualities that a well shaped piece of pottery can give. I am hoping that through the application of texture, colour, and high gloss areas against unglazed clay, I can exploit the qualities of patterns that enhance both the visual and the tactile pleasures of pottery.

I am excited to see where my MA will take me.



Black and White Pinch Pot
Stoneware pinch pot from black clay with white slip, underglazes and gold lustre, ca 6.5 cm tall.

Amateur Sculptural Winner – Richard Hedges

White Ram, earthenware, oxides and underglaze
23cm x 17cm

I specialise in animal sculptures, pet commissions, and run the occasional workshop too. I work throughout the week as a coordinator for a charity, but try to designate as much time as I can into my art!

I am based in Thackley near Bradford where my work has been constantly evolving through studio time, workshops and classes alongside many influential artists. I currently spend hours perfecting my technique and producing what I love...animals!

My sculptures are made with the use of slabs that are folded and packed with paper, coils and pinch pots. Most of which are earthenware, occasionally stoneware and I have recently come across the delights of raku!

White Ram is a piece I made following a cold windswept weekend in the Dales. I used black oxides and coloured underglazes to emphasis the textures in his fleece.



Professional Functional Winner – Steve Booton

Shino tea set, stoneware clay wheel-thrown,
reduction fired shino glaze and added wood ash

I have always been drawn to Japanese ceramics in particular tea ceremony vessels. Their simplicity of form combined with simple shino and ash glazes are my present focus and theme of work.

In the autumn of 2013 I undertook a long awaited trip to Japan. I stayed in Mashiko for the annual pottery festival which gathers four hundred local potters to exhibit and sell their work. This total immersion in Japanese pottery culture was a profound moment in my career.

With this in mind I am presently exploring gas/wood firing with simple shino glazes on uncomplicated direct forms so that my aesthetic approach to working with clay feels natural and unforced.

I am passionate about allowing the nature of the clay to develop honest pots with what I like to call beautiful imperfections.



Professional Decorative Winner – Amberleigh McNaught

Amberlea is a Ceramics graduate of Cardiff School of Art & Design. She has continued her training internationally with skilled artisans, studying traditional art forms from master craftsmen in India and North Africa. Through her combined training she has honed her techniques to find a communicative visual language that transcends cultural and historical barriers of identity and origin.

She has now established her studio in Sheffield, and it is here, where her world begins to take shape. Her most recent body of work consists of large deeply carved stoneware vessels. Following a residency in Morocco, these pieces translate carved plaster surfaces into sharp geometric ceramic forms. Flowing freely between the two mediums, she finds ways to incorporate the art of Moroccan architectural plaster carvings, Stucco, into tactile thrown vessels.

“I am fascinated by ancient walls and floors, crumbling Madrassas and Mosques. Every day I feel I am on a journey to carve my own Alhambra.”

This year she has spent a further 2 months training with her Master Craftsman Abderrazak Bahij in Morocco continuing her studies in plaster carving at the Artisanal Centre in Fes.



Amphora, high fired black stoneware

Professional Sculptural Winner – Elizabeth Smith

Winter Starlings, Copper-glazed raku birds, naked raku plinths, max height 300mm

My work comes from my fascination with and joy in the natural world. I am particularly fond of creatures that are overlooked or regarded as pests: crows, starlings, wood pigeons. I think starlings are among the most beautiful birds that we have. But these quick, intelligent and intensely sociable birds are now on the Red List of endangered species.

I use Earthstone clays, adding a tiny amount of paper pulp, which is necessary because I put a lot of pressure on the clay – I want it to develop its own history, out of which will come a bird or animal. I build by distressing the clay and then pushing it out from the inside: I find that this results in a surface that is partly about the clay and partly about the creature I'm making.



The raku firing adds another layer of history. Raku firing the birds is always nerve-racking and I'm surprised by how well they stand up to it. Often, I just use oxides or saggar fire because I love the metallic blacks you get from carbon reduction. But with the starlings I wanted to see if copper/iron oxide glazes would glitter like their plumage on a winter morning.

Behind the scenes at the competition

Late in 2016, we had the idea of holding an online competition as a way of involving as many members as possible in an event to celebrate the NPA's 40th anniversary.

The geographical size of the NPA limits the reach of physical events, so we thought that we could try to use technology to allow members to take part in an event where distance would be no barrier.

We worked out a detailed proposal which was adopted with enthusiasm by the committee. We decided to make a Wordpress website, find a suitable competition plug-in and host it on our server, so it did not need NPA funding.

Jack, who enjoys such things, researched on-line competitions to find one that would meet our needs, then built the website and got it all to work.

Joan, who worries about practicalities, made a detailed timetable of tasks.

Dianne Cross and John Cook organised prizes.

The committee agonised over the categories to be used and the rules of the competition.

By April 2017, the website and competition software were ready and sponsors had come forward with prizes. The competition was announced in the April/May NPA News.

We ran a trial competition with all committee members taking part. This was extremely useful as it led to many improvements in the user interface and guidance, and also forewarned us of the level of support that might be needed.

Jack put in long hours making the website work better on tablets and mobile phones.

We announced further details in the June/July and Aug/Sep editions of NPA News.

With help from Elizabeth Smith we sent out the log-on details to all members in late September and added new members as they joined.

Then we held our breath to see if anyone would enter and crossed our fingers that the competition software would prove robust.

Some statistics

233 photos were entered and 1265 votes cast

		Functional	Decorative	Sculptural
Novice	Entries	11	9	8
	Votes	123	124	119
Amateur	Entries	24	26	24
	Votes	151	124	137
Professional	Entries	40	54	37
	Votes	159	171	157

Competition website

	October	November
Visitors	1,112	1,168
Sessions	1,557	1,726
Pages visited	20,896	21,741

How did it go?

The system worked, with only one minor panic.

We had a good number of entries.

We have seen a lot of very nice pots.

The standard of images has been high.

Novices were shy about their pots but enough braved it to make a contest.

Technophobes struggled on and at least some of them overcame difficulties.

Many people agonised over whether they were amateur or professional.

Distinctions between functional, decorative and sculptural are hard to draw.

Emails go into junk, get lost or just vanish.

Enough votes were cast to make for close contests with several winners decided on the last day.

Joan answered over 200 emails about the competition, mostly asking for passwords. She has no plans to work on a help desk.

How it was then

Geoff Kenward looks back at pottery in the 1970s

Reprinted by kind permission of Geoff Kenward and London Potters

I had little idea of health and safety when I learnt to pot. We had no idea of Personal Protective Equipment. I learnt quickly in my first teaching post that dust was a big issue. Legislation and the HSE began to impose a tighter regime and knowledge filtered down. Later we learnt that kilns near students were not allowed, that plenum systems were necessitated and kiln extraction was the law. I have seen many instances of studio windows which became etched with the fumes of firing, those fumes were inhaled by the potters! We learnt the word silicosis, most took note. A whole industry called “elf ‘n safe tea” grew and grew, along with qualifications in it.

Children were taught pottery and it was on the syllabus for most schools. Every comprehensive built in the late 50’s onward had a pottery studio. Qualifications in pottery were introduced: GCSE, GCE, Dip AD and later BA. There was a variety of industry qualifications and apprenticeships.

You were never far away from a college offering a higher education course or FE colleges offering part time and evening courses. Their cost was not seen as detrimental to the security and viability of those courses, so they boomed along with the other art and design disciplines.

It was very possible to obtain a post as a studio assistant and many did pre or post college. Potters could support themselves by part-time teaching; evening classes boomed. This system gave rise to a big interest in the craft and also allowed Britain to lead the way in innovation and creativity.

The main issue for anyone seriously involved is the ever changing composition of our glaze ingredients. Take feldspar potash. When I began you used soda spar, potspar or FFF (“Finnish floated fine”). Nowadays it is much more common to use FFF because it is uniform from batch to batch, due to the vast quantities of it in Finland. Potash feldspar always gave the best olive green celadon, hard to match with other materials.

All the merchants sold ready-mixed glazes and the range gradually developed in colour, temperature and surface quality. Digital scales and computer programmes to adjust glaze ingredients are a

boon. Whilst we still need to understand the molecular formulae and how glazes work, we no longer have to go from formula to recipe and vice versa on paper, meaning less time and fewer mistakes. There are so many recipes and books on glazes now that we are spoilt for choice. Add the internet and you can find what you want without the effort and time in testing over and over again.

The introduction of cadmium and selenium enabled reds, oranges and yellows to be readily obtained in low temperatures. Previously these colours were difficult and hazardous to obtain. More recently the technology enabling encapsulated colours has allowed those colours at stoneware temperatures.

On-glaze enamels were supplied as powder and were mixed with fat oil, then thinned with turpentine or oil of spike (lavender) – the smell is something you will never forget. Now enamels are ready mixed, introduced in this country by Harrison and Mayer in the 70’s. Degussa made a good range of competitively priced on-glaze enamels ready mixed in tubes. The palettes were limited to a dozen colours; now there is an enormous range.

Kiln technology is the next biggest change. Fibre, blanket, board, rope etc. have revolutionised the ability to maintain the insulation. The vermiculite lining between the secondary bricks and the metal case was replaced by fibre in the form of paper or fibre sheet. Like vermiculite this does tend to settle over time so the case may be hotter nearer the top.

Early kilns used asbestos; in my first kiln the top was insulated with it and I can recall vacuuming the studio dust from the top! We were unaware of the dangers of asbestos. As a kid we threw asbestos cement sheets, gleaned from demolished prefabs on bonfires. These often made quite a bang in the heat and I suspect liberated the asbestos dust into the air.

Then there was the advance in thermal brick manufacture with the availability of light weight highly thermally efficient American bricks. We had to become much more careful about how we treated our kilns since the bricks are so fragile. We also were able to fire more rapidly and so had to adjust our glazes and maybe our clay bodies.



Kilns are now much lighter, so they are more easily installed and moved for maintenance. The fact that fibre has been shown to be carcinogenic is of considerable concern since it is very difficult not to touch it during loading and every touch means small quantities become airborne.

Potters made their own kiln elements in Kanthal wire until the 80's and many knew the thickness and number of coils required and the current that would be drawn. I do not know a single maker who does this now. Portable kilns and paper kilns were never considered. If you used gas then the gas board would be involved, town gas mind you, not natural gas and certainly not bottled.

Then the accuracy, reliability and longevity, of pyrometric equipment has improved considerably and it is cheaper, more robust and easier to use. I have recently seen indicating equipment made by Elliot in the 60's still in use in an apple store to check gas quality. IPCO indicators in kilns were very delicate and required regular maintenance; a call out to an engineer was expensive. Kilns had to be watched. They would cut off or soak but we did not have controllers for a ramp, time, end point and timed soak now common.

Ceramists Ruth Duckworth and Peter Volkos were beginning to make their mark, while traditionalists like Mick Casson, David Eeles, Richard Batterham, Leach and Rie were much in vogue.

Selling work was not so much of an issue since there were local craft markets, craft fairs and a ready buying public who understood ceramics. The vogue for hand crafted objects was still on the up and folksy, often not well made items, could be sold. Perhaps the buying public is more sophisticated in its taste nowadays. Perhaps the likes of IKEA have tarnished the market with price and quality. Who knows, but undoubtedly the market has diminished.

There were many more materials and equipment suppliers. Well known names included Acme Marls, Harrison and Meyer, Wenger, Swift, Arterial Works, Britannia Potters Equipment, Ratcliffe, Cromartie, Mills & Hubble, Fulham Pottery. In my first studio we used one stoneware for throwing, another for hand building, grogged as needed, and an earthenware clay. We are now spoilt for choice in clays, types of porcelain, colours, tools and equipment from all over the world.

If you had a Ratcliffe Alsager wheel then the windings in the transformer that controlled the speed often burnt through, which either meant a visit from an engineer or sending off to the maker for a rewind. The bearings of the wheel wore out; nowadays they are more robust.

Mixers, pugmills, sieves and other equipment have become cheaper and are better designed, I suspect they will last longer. That said, my vibratory sieve, mixer and many other items from the 70's are still going strong. I learnt to throw on a treadle-type stand-up kick wheel. I later enjoyed the use of a Saviac wheel which was a brilliant design and preferable to the Leach wheel. My kick wheels were hard to sell and my leach wheel gradually rotted on the studio balcony at the college due to a lack of interest.

The de-skilling of potters is very apparent to me and this is the fault of education where important aspects are no longer on the syllabus. Graduates can qualify without making their own bodies, glazes or even doing their own firing. Casters use factory-blended slips that they do not fully understand how to make.

To my considerable dismay the notion of sharing ones experience and techniques, recipes etc. has, it seems, largely lost the drive that was part of the pottery scene when I was young. Potters were only too pleased to share their knowledge and that body of knowledge was ever-increasing and one felt part of a much bigger community of like minds.

Pots and Potters at Poppleton



Ceramic Sale in Upper Poppleton
Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 November, 10 am–4 pm



Don't miss this unique opportunity to buy some originally designed and handcrafted christmas presents! Twelve talented potters from the Northern Potters Association will have their work on sale.

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Twelve NPA members took part in a ceramics sale in Poppleton near York on 4 and 5 November.

All the stallholders felt that the event was worthwhile and with almost 300 visitors over the opening period we could build on this for next year.

At a meeting to discuss the Poppleton Fair it was agreed that the event had been a success and that we should book another fair for 2018.

The group thanked Jackie Maidment, who is a new NPA member, for her organisational skills and her design on the leaflet for circulation. We hope you will do it next year Jackie.

Well done to all who participated.

Ann Johnson

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work of art
...and everything in
between

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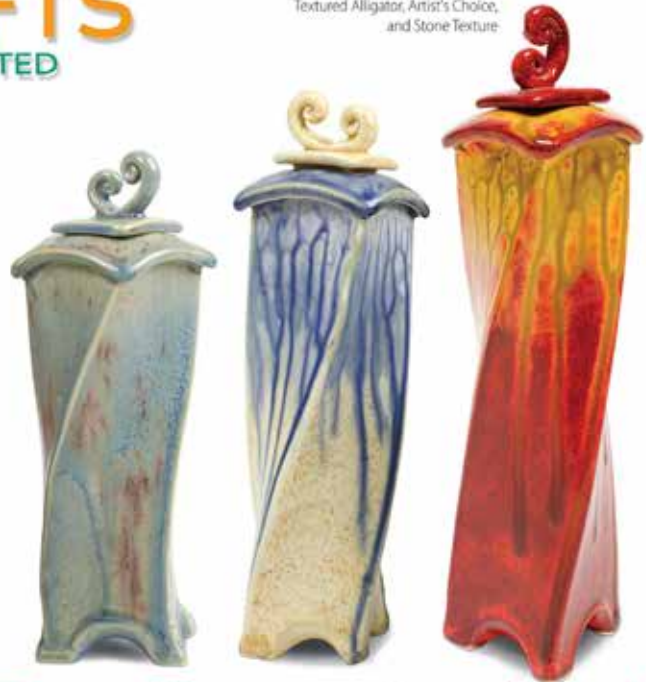
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Welcome to new members

A warm welcome is extended to all our new members.

We look forward to seeing you at events and images of your work in our gallery.

Claire Allam	Sheffield
Janet Barnes	Sheffield
Mark Cheshire	Alsager, Stoke on Trent
Shaun Clark	Retford, Doncaster
Ann Davis	Stockport
Tine Hagen Dalgaard	Wilmslow
Liz Jackson	Sheffield
Simon Maskell	Whitley Bay
Rhoda McGarr	Barnard Castle
Lizzy Moyce	Ilkely
Mary Pearce	Sheffield
Deborah Podmore	Warrington
Saskia Rose	Burnley
Beverley Sommerville	Helsby, Warrington
Sarah-Jane Templeman	Harrogate
Roo Veeren	Wakefield
Allison Wiffen	Gargrave, Bradford



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for membership forms
and subscription rates

To all NPA members

If you do not currently receive emails from the NPA, usually from your regional rep., and you wish to...

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Send email updates to the membership secretary and/or your regional rep.



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Gladstone G49 pugmill in excellent condition: £750 ono.



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Committee News

Nine committee members attended the October meeting. We welcomed Carl Gray and Mia Frampton to the committee. Nina Wright has resigned as she has moved to London.

Publicity has focussed on the online competition, with a small piece in Ceramic Review, a forthcoming piece in Clay Craft magazine and promotion to members through Facebook and email. We agreed to get a quote for a reprint of the Love Pots leaflet, which is very useful at fairs and other events and helps recruit new members.

Margaret has received an offer of an NPA selected exhibition next summer at a gallery in Burslem, Stoke on Trent, which she welcomed. They will come back for further discussions in 2018. We urgently need an exhibitions team to take this further. Other possible exhibition venues were mentioned and committee members offered to conduct initial investigations.

Following our birthday celebration at Potfest in the Pens, Geoff Cox sent positive feedback on NPA's participation and a proposal for 2018's involvement. We would like to be involved and further discussions will take place.

Joan Hardie suggested that it would be helpful to members if the NPA website had an archive of newsletters or selected articles. We also discussed when the AGM minutes should be published and if an early synopsis would be helpful.

John Robinson reported that the NPA finances are solid with £12,500 currently in the Co-op Bank. He has opened an NPA PayPal account and used it to make an overseas payment for an NPA-SE event.

Elizabeth reported 574 memberships including 17 joint, making 591 members. Membership secretary is a time-consuming job, largely because of members who pay by cheque not standing order. After some discussion, we agreed to discontinue the option of payment by cheque for new members.

We have a growing problem with a lack of members willing to be regional coordinators. We need new coordinators in NW, East and SW regions. The SE co-ordinators have suggested that we have an introduction pack for new regional coordinators. Mia Frampton volunteered to take on role of Regional Liaison.

AGM Highlights

Twenty two members attended the AGM in York, held before the CoCA lecture.

The Chair's report to March 2017 highlighted:

- Northern Colours exhibition at Gallery Oldham, curated by David Wright
- the NPA table at Earth and Fire, manned by a dozen or so volunteers
- the NPA table at Potfest in the Pens and the inaugural Potfest Olympics
- all six regions held successful events including exhibitions, demonstrations and raku firings
- improvements in the NPA website including new header images, and tabs for exhibitions and events, and courses and workshops
- the CoCA lecture by Christie Brown

The financial position remains healthy, with a bank balance of just under £12,000 at the end of March 2017. The financial statement was approved and Steve Wood FCMA reappointed as auditor.

Membership has increased this year by 62. About 75% of members pay by standing order, and the remainder by cheque. Cheques create much of the workload. Discussion favoured phasing these out.

Committee members elected were Sally Streuli (secretary), Elizabeth Smith (membership secretary), who joined the committee since the last AGM, and new committee members Kit Helmsley, Carl Gray, Mia Frampton and Colette Hennigan.

In any other business, three issues were aired.

First, the shortage of committee members, new regional reps and general volunteers, for example to support our presence at events. Most seriously, Margaret Lawrenson will step down as Chair within six months and we have no vice-chair.

Second, whether to put the AGM minutes in the newsletter after the AGM or before the next one. The view of the meeting was to publish a summary soon after the meeting, but to make the minutes available to members before the next AGM.

Thirdly, one member suggested that we save money by reducing the frequency of the newsletter to four per year rather than six, and another that we reduce printing costs by circulating it as a pdf. In the subsequent discussion, some members expressed the view that a published newsletter was an important aspect of Northern Potters.

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Regional News



South West

A quiet few months in the South West, a lot of our members are busy with Christmas Exhibitions and Shows. Still trying to fix a date and venue for our next meeting in the New Year, we will let you know where and when ASAP, so everyone can try to make the meeting.

We have had a good year, with successful exhibitions, the main one running for 6 weeks celebrating 40 years of NPA at Middleport Pottery Stoke, culminating in a party weekend when fun was had by all. Happy Christmas to you all and a Peaceful New Year.

Coordinator: Barbara Chadwick

Email: email@sw-npa.co.uk

Tel: 0161 980 2111



North East

The most important activity in a busy NE region has been our 'Clarts' exhibition of work (see pages 4–5) which attracted around five hundred visitors.

We ran a very successful photography workshop in early November and have had requests for another from those unable to attend. John Falkner gave valuable hints and tips, especially relevant to the developing world of Pinterest, Facebook and Instagram.

Several members are exhibiting at the 'Glazed Expression' exhibition at Seven Stories, in the Ouseburn valley. The exhibitors are mostly pupils of Christine Constant, a leading local Ceramic Artist and Teacher. Several members attended the annual Rothschild lecture at Shipley Art Gallery in Gateshead. An inspiring and moving talk by Julian Stair led us through some of his projects that reaffirmed his belief that pottery justifies its place as an art form and is not 'just a craft'

We are planning our open meeting for January 13th. We are hoping to use a venue in Teesside this time so that we make it easier for our more Southerly members.

We are also planning an 'Empty Bowls' event; a movement whose motto is "Ending hunger, one bowl at a time". We are planning to team up with local restaurants to serve donated food in bowls donated by local potters, with proceeds going to local food banks. More news as the idea develops.

Facebook: [@NorthEastNPA](https://www.facebook.com/NorthEastNPA)

Instagram: [Northeastnorthernpotters](https://www.instagram.com/Northeastnorthernpotters)

Twitter: [@ne_npa](https://twitter.com/ne_npa)

Coordinator: Stephan Aal

Email: NEPotters@gmail.com



South East

The exhibition at Chapel Walk Art Space to celebrate 40 years was a success, with over 400 visitors, 45 pots sold and takings of £1925. It was also invaluable for the opportunity to meet other NPA members and have time to sit and chat, which for a lot of us is what being a member of the NPA is about. Lots of people asked what we are doing next year, so we will be looking for ideas and volunteers soon.

We also had a meeting in the south of our region, which made it easier for people who live in that area to attend. We met at the Welbeck Estate, using the study rooms there and taking a guided tour of the site. It was a great venue and a pleasure to also see Linda's work and her lovely studio. We came away with ideas and action towards workshop events, and showing/selling opportunities for next year.

To balance all this work we have a Christmas social in the Rutland pub on 8th December. More details will be mailed out shortly. Finally our next meeting is in Sheffield on 28th January and we will be taking this opportunity to try and plan what we aim to do in the coming year. So please try to make it and talk about your ideas, alternatively email any ideas for discussion.

Have a great Christmas from Bev and Kathy.

Coordinators: Bev Seth and Kathy Watson

Email: senpacoordinator@gmail.com



North West

Thanks to Bob and Denise Park for hosting the November social. We agreed to wait till the New Year for the next one as everyone is likely to be very busy in December.

The opening of the second Cumbrian Ceramics exhibition was held at Upfront Gallery (19th Nov–10th Jan), organised by Bob Park. The preview was a fund-raising event in aid of Mary’s Meals with donated bowls filled with either soup or pudding, followed by a silent auction of donated pots/ceramics. This raised £850 on the night with the money from the auction pieces still to come. The work is representative of many of the professional potters in Cumbria today, including 21 members of the NPA and the work ranges from sculptural to domestic pottery.

Coordinator: Ruth Charlton

Email: ruthcharlton5@gmail.com

Tel: 016973 71690



West

Our last meeting coincided with a tour of the MA Ceramics Degree Show followed by a get together in the ceramic workshops. Congratulations to members with work on show.

Ruth Livesey coordinated the team effort at Potfest and everyone enjoyed the event. Members submitted work for the “Honeypot” competition at Stydd Gardens, Ribchester. Several members had stalls at the annual ‘Art in the Garden’. Liz Collinson hosted an event with members displaying work at the Walled Garden Studio Dolphinholme on the edge of the Forest of Bowland.

Graham Hough worked and exhibited his ‘Heads’ in The Platform Gallery, Clitheroe in November. A highlight was the evening ‘Artwalk Clitheroe’. The Platform, Knowle Top Studios, The Keep, Imagine, Stewards, The Old Bakehouse, and the Longitude Galleries were open from 6pm to 10pm offering mulled wine, mince pies and a wide range of art works. The next ‘Artwalk Clitheroe’ is on 25th March 2018, 11am–4pm.

An exhibition at ‘The Old Courts’ gallery, Wigan, is being discussed for a February date, Geoff will keep members informed. Our next meeting will be our annual Jacobs’ Join, held at the Ale Emporium from 7.15 pm on the 5th December. The theme of our ceramic piece will be ‘Birthdays’.

Coordinator: Dave Harper & Geoff Wilcock

Email: ghwilcock@uclan.ac.uk

Tel: 01772 862852



East

Following the NPA AGM in York, Kay Butterworth and I volunteered to take over the coordinator’s role. Both of us are relatively new members with very different interests but we have met several times and we feel that, with a bit of help from Barbara Wood and others, we would like to have a go. We have several ideas of our own and have been approached by other members asking for more social events, another ‘raku experience’ at Lotherton Hall, sharing of selling events and sharing of stall space. We are more than happy for any suggestions and would like to get round the region and meet as many people as possible. Please let us know your thoughts (email below).

We are getting some emails rejected – if you have not received one from us, please get in touch.

The ceramics sale in Poppleton in November included a great variety of high quality work, much admired by all who visited. See page 22 for photos.

If anyone is interested in making their own Linthorpe pot at the Dorman Museum Middlesborough, workshops are planned in the new year. Fiona Mazza and Gordon Broadhurst have developed moulds made from an original Linthorpe piece. The workshop would involve slip casting a pedot and then making your own sprigs to decorate your pot. The museum is a fascinating place to visit and the staff are really knowledgeable about Linthorpe history. The Museum staff are collecting expressions of interest. You can also email Fiona directly - themazzas64@hotmail.com

Coordinators: Lyn Clarke and Kay Butterworth

Email: enpa.coordinator@gmail.com

Twitter @NPA_E

The first NPA Committee Meeting

17 December 1977

Meeting held at Barnard Castle attended by

Geoff Watson - Chairman

Suzi Curtis - Secretary

George Patterson - Treasurer

Steven Course

Monica Young

Andrew Haig

Fred Brookes

Mike Saul

John Drinkwater

The following matters were discussed

Application for membership of Federation of British Craft Societies

The arrangement of a demonstration meeting for members at Teeside College of Art with guests David Heminsley and David Leach

The publication of a newsletter. Andrew Haig agreed to act as editor and that first publication should appear in Jan or February 78.

Venue for the inaugural exhibition

The possibility of other travelling exhibitions

The selection of pottery to be purchased with North Arts Grant of £600. It was decided to approach Northern Arts about the possibility of selecting these from the inaugural exhibition to simplify administration and costs.

It was decided to compile a list of possible exhibition venues and also one of galleries and shops retailing pots. These could be invited to inaugural exhibition.

Resolutions passed

To apply for membership of Federation of British Craft Societies

To confirm booking of Leeds City Art Gallery for 1979 summer exhibition

To investigate Derwent Gallery Keswick for 1978

These minutes were handwritten in the Minute Book; the first typed minutes were in October 1981.

Who made the pots			Name the demonstrators		
p10	top	Jim Robison	p 12	David Leach	Takeshi Yasuda
	bottom	Maggie Berkowitz	p 13	Dorothy Fiebleman	
p11	top	Elizabeth Maynard		John Leach	David Lloyd Jones
	middle	Alan Ball		John Maltby	Clive Bowen
	bottom	Elisabeth Bailey		Mike Dodd	

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