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members

# NPA NEWS

The magazine of the Northern Potters Association



January - February 2012

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



**In this issue:**

Grayson Perry's trip to Newcastle, Sherwood Forest Wood Firing, Manor Oaks Kiln

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## Editor's Comment

It's always difficult to gear up to producing new work after the long Christmas break, and I'm sure I'm not the only one who's managed to put off venturing into the studio so far, even though I've got to get work ready for exhibitions opening in February and March. There's still one tree that has a few decorations left on it (it's only 5 January - I haven't invoked any bad luck yet!), and it's easy to find other tasks that seem more important, or at least can be carried out in a warm room.

Since the last issue, we've had the Transformations in Clay exhibition at Sheffield Cathedral (see Brian Holland's report on page 12) and Northern Potters at Gallery Oldham (see Lesley Nason's report on page 6). Both exhibitions were well received, and both venues provided wonderful backdrops to the ceramic work. Gallery Oldham must be one of the best possible locations (apart from the current roadworks!) for a ceramics exhibition, with good light, plenty of space, ample plinths, moveable screens to create internal divisions and keen staff who are interested to learn more about the work and pass on the information to visitors. Having waited almost 3 years for this initial exhibition to take place, I'm sure we'll aim to return there more quickly in future.

Sheffield Cathedral was a different kind of venue, setting a calm, contemplative mood. The long history of the building is reflected in the variety of architectural styles, and this gave an opportunity to display the site specific ceramics in the areas which best suited them. The overall effect, of walking round and 'encountering' different pieces, added an extra dimension to the work not provided in a pristine gallery space.

2012 sees NPA participating in a number of themed exhibitions, as well as the non-themed one at Rufford. Starting on 10 March, there's 'Clay, Ceramics and the Natural World' at Joe Cornish Galleries, then 'Garden Party' at Gallery 23, opening on 28 March, then on 1 June, 'All Creatures Great and Small' at Water Street Gallery. Details of all of these are on pages 6 and 7. It would be useful to know whether members want themed exhibitions, or prefer something more general? Or perhaps you'd like a specific theme that suits your work? Do let us know what you think.

Karin Hessenberg's letter about the recent 'Ceramics: A Fragile History' tv series raises some interesting points, and provides an insight into some aspects which were not covered. With limited time, and a need to keep the audience involved, it must be hard to decide what to include and what to omit, but Karin's view that so many important figures didn't get a mention is very valid.

If you haven't been included in an NPA selected exhibition, or had your own stand at any Potfest event, why not submit a piece of work to this year's Potfest in the Pens (3 - 5 August) and you could have your stand fee at next year's event paid by NPA - see page 8 for more details. That's a prize worth approximately £200 to one lucky member - do have a go! We hope this will encourage some of the less experienced members to get involved, at minimal cost (you may have to take your work to another member living near you).

There is information about how to get involved with wood firing at Thoresby (with smoke) and kiln building at Manor Oaks (smokeless!), and there's a glowing recommendation for Annie Peaker's courses, so opportunities to enhance your skills in different areas. Don't forget to let me know about courses you offer, exhibitions and fairs you're participating in, so that we can post details on the website, and list them in the diary.

Right, can't put it off any longer - I am just going to the studio and may be some time.

Barbara Wood

**Cover :**  
Michelle Freemantle - Youmeco green  
café cups

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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 29 February 2012**

Please send between 300 and 1000 words, and send them as an **email attachment**, or on a cd, or in longhand. Email attachments are easiest for me to include, but I will re-type if absolutely necessary! High resolution (big jpeg files) digital images are preferred, as these give the best quality for printing, but I can scan photos. Low resolution (small files) digital images are the worst - they may be fine for websites, but don't have enough detail for a printed magazine. Send your text as a .doc file (or equivalent) - if it's a jpeg, or a pdf, it's not easy for me to edit it as necessary. Please send images as separate attachments, not embedded in the text, and preferably not zipped, on SkyDrive or anything similar that involves an extra process to make them accessible!

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 (e.g. all images provided by York Museums Trust include something like 'courtesy of Robin Welch / York Museums Trust').

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.

## IT STARTED WITH A QUILT

Solo show by NPA member **Trudy Weir**  
at Leeds College of Art, Blenheim Walk, Leeds,  
LS2 9AQ

The exhibition runs from 24 February to 22 March

Stoneware quilt with agate ware internal lamination,  
29cm x 20cm, unglazed



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## corrections

In the previous issue, 2 of the images illustrating the Urban Traces exhibition at Gallery Oldham (page 18) were wrongly attributed. Image 2 is of work by Ken Eastman, not John Higgins, and image 7 is work by Emilie Taylor, not Rachel Grimshaw. Apologies for any confusion caused, and thank you to Brigitte Soltau for pointing it out.

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## New Books - Roger Bell

500 Raku	Hemachandra & Romberg	16.99
The Art of Woodfire	Owen Rye	\$110 Aus
Ceramics For Beginners: Animals & Figures	Susan Halls	\$24.95
Ceramics: Tools & Techniques For The Contemporary Maker	Taylor & Small	30.00
A Passion For Meissen	Ulrich Pietsch	55.00
The Pot Book	Edmund de Waal	29.00
Searching For Beauty	Richard Jacobs	25.00
Michael Simon: Evolution		\$38.95
In The Language Of Silence: The Art Of Toshiko Takaezu	Ed Peter Held	\$40
Yunomi		\$65

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## Book Review - Roger Bell

### LUSTRE

Publ: A & C Black

Greg Daly

£15.99

This book was a revelation to me. I was aware of some of the historical lustreware from Spain, William de Morgan, Pilkington and the like; also contemporary work of Alan Caiger-Smith, Sutton Taylor and others. But there are many and more varied past and current practitioners than I knew of and more making methods than the two I knew. This is another volume in the Ceramics Handbook series. As the bibliography shows there have been many books written on makers but very few technical books with more than brief 'how to' sections.

There is an excellent first chapter on the history of lustreware which sets the scene very well. In the introduction Daly assures the reader that 'lustres in all forms are easily achievable' though the many variables make for varied final effects. He keeps things simple by using only two common frits as bases for glazes while acknowledging that others can be equally effective. He also points out that some materials, often included in glaze recipes, are difficult to obtain, but assures us that they are not necessary to achieve most effects. But does he justify these claims?

Four methods of producing lustre finishes are described:

Pigment – otherwise known as Persian, Arabian, smoked or transmutation

Lustre Glaze – or in-glaze or flash

Resin – resinate or commercial

Fuming.

Pigment lustre is the oldest technique and involves applying an iron bearing clay with copper or iron added to a glaze fired, usually earthenware pot, then firing to 630 C with several reducing cycles. With lustre glazing the metal compounds are included in the original mix and reduction brings them to the surface as temperature drops to the same temperature or in a subsequent re-firing. Resin lustre is similar to pigment lustre but metal salts are mixed with pine resin. An oxidation firing to 700 to 800 C gives the reduction required as the resin is burnt off. Fuming is achieved either by spraying metal chlorides or nitrates onto the pot at 200 C and re-firing to 550 C or introducing them to the kiln at around 650 C.

Daly provides much more detail on each of these methods with recipes and test tiles to show results. It is obvious that the simplest is Resin with commercial lustres available, mixing your own fairly straightforward and a wide range of finished effects available. Pigment and lustre glazing are somewhat more complicated and fuming looks reserved for the real specialist. So overall he justifies his claim of 'easily achievable'.

One point emphasised throughout is that with all methods safety precautions are vital. Bronchial passages, lungs and eyes are very vulnerable to chlorine fumes from all methods. Many of the materials can also transmit poisons through the skin.

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## Exhibitions and Events

### Northern Potters at Gallery Oldham 19<sup>th</sup> Nov 2011 – 8<sup>th</sup> Jan 2012

If you didn't get the chance to visit this exhibition then hopefully you can see from the photographs just what a stunning gallery this is and how wonderful our members' work looked displayed here.

Once again there was an eclectic mix of styles ranging from domestic to decorative and miniscule to massive. The Gallery has fantastic natural light, far reaching views over the city and plenty of space to display the work.



I collaborated closely with the gallery's senior curator Dinah Winch to put this exhibition together and was lucky to have the help of John Cook, Rene Cryer, Su Hudson and Elizabeth Price on the two installation days. A glass case of pots from Gallery Oldham's archive, selected by Michael Wild, Helen Walsh and Barbara Wood, was displayed along side NPA work.

The opening day arrived and sunlight flooded the gallery. The use of colour on selected walls and plinths added drama and clarity to the overall look of the exhibition. The opening was very well attended and everyone enjoyed the demonstrations and talks by Jim Robison, Pollie Uttley, Anna Whitehouse, Paul Muchan. Barbara Wood gave a 'tour' of the exhibition during December.

Sales have been steady and to date are around £2500. Gallery Oldham are very pleased with the level of sales, and would like to host more commercial/selling exhibitions in the future. The exhibition closes on 8<sup>th</sup> Jan - there will be a final update in the next magazine.

LN



### Clay, Ceramics, and the Natural World

Joe Cornish Galleries, Northallerton  
10 March - 28 April

The selection for this themed exhibition took place in November, and work from 16 members will be included. An invitation will be included in the next issue, but make a note in your diary that the private view will take place on Saturday, 10 March, from 2pm to 4pm.

BW

## Exhibition Opportunities – Call for entries

NPA exhibition – 1<sup>st</sup> June – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012

Water Street Gallery – Todmorden

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

This will be the venue for the next NPA selected exhibition. The gallery is well established and specialises in contemporary fine art and crafts. The space available can accommodate the work of 10 - 12 potters.

The exhibition will be entitled “**All Creatures Great and Small**”

Applications are welcomed from anyone producing work inspired by the animal world. This could be sculptural animal forms, naturalistic, abstracted or stylised. Or pots, vessels or decorative objects whose decoration is inspired by the animal kingdom, from an elephant to the feathers of a bird to a fish to an insect!

**Please note, we are not looking for human, plant or mythical creature inspired work for this exhibition.**

To apply, email for an application form – [lesley.nason@bopenworld.com](mailto:lesley.nason@bopenworld.com), or call 01283 736017

**Deadline for applications: 29 February 2012**

LN



Following the success of last year's 'Tea Party', Gallery 23, Arteria, in Lancaster have invited the NPA to have another exhibition there in 2012.

Organised by NPA-W, ‘**Garden Party**’ is open to all NPA members. Artists are invited to create their own innovative take on both functional and decorative ceramic pieces based on the English Country Garden / English Countryside themes.

**You are asked to submit a maximum of 6 items which need to be robust, as visitors will be encouraged to handle the pieces.**



Jane Richardson, owner and Managing Director of Gallery 23, states “Last year we ran a highly successful collaboration based around the ‘Tea Party’ theme, and much interest was shown due to the inspiring submissions from the NPA members. We look forward to presenting the new creations from the artists in March 2012.”

- Exhibition runs from 28 March to 14 July 2012
- Delivery dates - Tuesday 20, Wednesday 21 and Thursday 22 March, between 9.30am and 6pm
- Collection dates - Sunday 15 July, 12noon to 4pm, or Monday 16 July, 9.30am to 11.30am.
- Gallery commission is 50% of the selling price (double the wholesale price).

Deliver to the gallery - 23 Brock Street, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 1UR  
[www.arteriashop.co.uk](http://www.arteriashop.co.uk)

Although the date / times aren't confirmed yet, NPA-W are thinking of having the Garden Party private view on Saturday 31 March, from 10am to 1pm. Look for more details in the next issue.

LC

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## Grayson Perry's visit to Newcastle - Steph Jamieson

Grayson Perry was invited to talk at Newcastle University on the 15th of November in association with the Baltic Turner Prize Exhibition. Entitled "Grayson Perry, the Bohemian Diaspora; my relationship to the art world" the talk attracted a large audience which filled the Curtis Auditorium and overflowed into a separate room with a video link. Grayson Perry, a potter, won the Turner Prize in 2003 for his beautiful pots whose challenging themes comment on deep flaws within society.

Anticipation was high as to whether Perry would appear as his masculine self or as the feminine Claire. We were not disappointed when Claire arrived dressed in frilly blouse, tights and a red tunic with Alan Measles embroidered in gold. Grayson Perry as a working class transvestite potter is not the usual type of winner of the Turner Prize and in fact pottery is still not regarded as art by some critics.

His talk explored his relationship with the art establishment and showed an understanding and distant affection of that world with its tribal values and interests. Perry talked briefly about his experiences at art school in the 1980's and expressed a somewhat jaundiced view of the present day production line of students who qualify from art school and likened them to a "diaspora, where they are spat out into the cruel world" As an accepted member of the inner circle he continues to expose in his pottery some of the pretensions of the tribe, in particular the fashion conscious aspirations of the art market. Perry regards himself as a craftsman who creates his pots by hand and criticises contemporary artists whose reputation is based on their ideas but manufactured by others. Winning the Turner Prize thrust Grayson Perry into the mainstream art world and as a transvestite potter generated huge media interest, which is of course the reason for the Turner Prize; a publicity event attached to art.

Altogether this was an excellent talk from a down to earth working artist. I can't wait to visit the British Museum in January to see his exhibition "Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman".

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## Potfest in the Pens - Opportunity for a new exhibitor

**Have you taken part as an exhibitor at any Potfest event?**

**Has your work been included in an NPA selected\* exhibition?**

**If the answer to both these questions is 'no', here's your chance to have a stand at next year's (2013) Potfest in the Pens, with your stand fee paid by NPA (currently £200).**

We would like to encourage members to show their work and get some useful feedback from the public, and so invite you to submit a piece of your recent ceramic work to be displayed on the NPA stand at Potfest in the Pens this year (3 - 5 August). We will ask the public to vote for the work they would most like to see more of, and the artist with the most votes will have their stand fee paid by NPA for next year. On the final afternoon of the event, the work will be offered for sale, if the artist wishes, so you may even get a cheque back - that's the best kind of feedback!

If you are interested, please email [barbara.wood99@btinternet.com](mailto:barbara.wood99@btinternet.com). In due course we will let you know how to get your work to the event (we hope that exhibiting members will be willing to bring an extra piece or two, and will put you in touch with someone who lives near you).

\*regional group exhibitions and NPA unselected, such as the NPA30 events in 2008 are not classed as 'selected'.

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## Diary

31 January 2012	<b>Deadline</b> for applications for NENPA exhibition 'Out of the Earth III'
11 February - 10 June	<b>Gordon Baldwin: Objects for a Landscape</b> ceramics exhibition, York Art Gallery - <a href="http://yorkartgallery.org.uk">yorkartgallery.org.uk</a>
24 February - 22 March	<b>It started with a quilt</b> - Trudy Weir solo exhibition, Leeds College of Art
29 February	<b>Deadline</b> for applications for NPA exhibition 'All Creatures Great and Small', Water Street Gallery
6 March	NPA-W meeting at Bitter Suite pub, Preston
10 March - 28 April	<b>Clay, Ceramics and the Natural World</b> - NPA exhibition at Joe Cornish Galleries, Northallerton
28 March - 14 July	<b>Garden Party</b> , NPA-W exhibition, Gallery 23, Arteria, Lancaster
11 April	<b>Deadline</b> for Zelli Award for Porcelain Sculpture 2012 - <a href="http://zelli.co.uk">zelli.co.uk</a>
15 April - 21 May	<b>Out of the Earth III</b> - NENPA exhibition at Crook Hall Gardens, Durham
1 - 3 June	Potfest Scotland, Scone Palace, Perth - <a href="http://potfest.co.uk">potfest.co.uk</a>
1 June - 1 July	<b>All Creatures Great and Small</b> - NPA exhibition, Water Street Gallery, Todmorden
22 - 24 June	Earth & Fire, Rufford Abbey Country Park, Notts.
6 - 8 July	Art in Clay, Hatfield House
27 - 29 July	Potfest in the Park, Hutton in the Forest, nr Penrith - <a href="http://potfest.co.uk">potfest.co.uk</a>
3 - 5 August	Potfest in the Pens, Penrith - <a href="http://potfest.co.uk">potfest.co.uk</a>
16 September - 21 October	<b>NPA exhibition</b> at Rufford Craft Gallery

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

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## Letter to the Editor - Karin Hessenberg

Dear Editor,

Like very many of your readers I watched and enjoyed the recent BBC TV series *Ceramics: A Fragile History*. All three programmes in the series were absorbing and full of fascinating details.

However, I was left with a lingering sense of unease, bordering on disappointment, with some of the content of the third part of the series, which dealt with the development of studio pottery in Britain. The period between the late 19th century and the Second World War was well covered, describing the rise of Bernard Leach and his followers such as Michael Cardew. The programme claimed that Bernard Leach single-handedly developed studio pottery, but what was not properly explained was how Bernard Leach became so influential. How did so many studio potters come to set up in the post-war period, especially during the 1960s and early 1970s? They could not possibly all have emerged from apprenticeships at a few pioneering potteries such as Leach's or Cardew's. There had to have been other, substantial means of spreading Leach's ideals and popularising studio pottery.

While there was much interesting sociological analysis of the post-war period, the key role of educational institutions, new private galleries and the founding of craft organisations was not mentioned in the programme.

Henry Rothschild was one of the first to open a gallery. In 1945 he opened Primavera Gallery and for several decades, he, both as a collector and gallery owner, was amongst the most influential promoters of studio ceramics both within and beyond the Leach tradition.

There was also the foundation of the Craft Potters Association in 1958, which actively promoted its members' work and popularised the Leach style of pottery through its London shop. Then the Crafts Advisory Committee (now the Crafts Council) was set up in 1971 and was extremely active in promoting both Leach style studio pottery and art ceramics.

Many art schools developed high quality craft and design courses and one of the most influential was the Harrow School of Art Studio Pottery course, headed by Mick Casson, which trained many of today's successful studio potters. It was very surprising that the BBC presenters made no reference at all to their own TV series, *The Craft of the Potter*, presented by Mick Casson and first shown in 1976. Mick Casson played a key role in the promotion of studio pottery.

Bernard Leach was undoubtedly a dominating influence, but there were stirrings against this before the turbulent year of 1968. As well as Lucie Rie and Hans Coper, other art potters such as Ruth Duckworth, Gordon Baldwin and Eileen Nisbet were prising open the door to fresh thinking. Colin Pearson, a Leach-style domestic ware thrower from Aylesford Pottery, astounded the ceramics world when he launched his highly original winged forms at the British Craft Centre in 1971.

The mid 1960s to late 1970s were an optimistic and lively period, a fermentation vat for new approaches to ceramics and other crafts. A fresh wind was blowing from across the Atlantic ocean, bringing with it techniques such as American raku and the work of potters such as Peter Voulkos, Robert Arneson and Judy Chicago.



Pot, Robin Welch, 1995  
© Robin Welch/York Museums Trust



Jug, Mick Casson, 1975  
© The Estate of Mick Casson /York Museums Trust

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The new ceramics which emerged from the Royal College of Art in 1973 were well described in the programme, but there was little illustration of the other many and varied talents that emerged during the 1970s and the following two decades. Nor was there any indication that the Leach ideals continued to survive alongside all these changes. Studio potters still thriving in the 21st century include the likes of Svend Bayer, Mike Dodd and David and Margaret Frith, to name but a few.

Of course, in a one-hour programme it is not possible to cover everything and it is important to keep a narrative flow. However, an over simplified narrative can run dangerously close to re-writing history. The story is far more complex and interesting than that presented in this programme, which relied heavily on the personal views of one or two main presenters. It conveyed the impression that there was a progression from Bernard Leach via Lucie Rie and Hans Coper, Alison Britton et al, to culminate with the work of Edmund de Waal and Grayson Perry in the 21st century. This is a rather improbable leap over a gap of almost 30 years.

The last quarter of the 20th century was a hugely experimental period, which produced many inspirational potters such as Alan Caiger-Smith, Gillian Lowndes, Robin Welch, Ian Godfrey as well as Colin Pearson, Mick Casson and others. Smoke firing appeared on the scene and potters like Gabriele Koch and Magdalene Odundo acquired international reputations. Potters experimented with terra sigillata and salt-glaze. Monica Young made enormous monumental coil-built vessels for gardens, while others ventured into the realms of figurative work (Rosa Nguyen, Phil Eglin) or political statement pots (Stephen Dixon). It was a time of great branching out in many directions that fuelled the development of ceramics in the 21st century.

Thus, an otherwise excellent series ended up presenting a limited view of late twentieth century British studio ceramics. Television is still the most powerful medium today and these programmes will certainly be used to teach students. This simplified story is highly likely to become the only story, consigning many illustrious and important potters to oblivion and depriving young people of a significant part of their cultural history.

There could, and probably should, be an opportunity here for a fourth TV programme which completes the picture of late 20th century British ceramics.

Yours sincerely,

Karin Hessenberg



Mug, Alan Caiger-Smith, 1970  
© Alan Caiger-Smith/York Museums Trust



Lidded Pot, Ian Godfrey, 1973  
© The Estate of Ian Godfrey /  
York Museums Trust



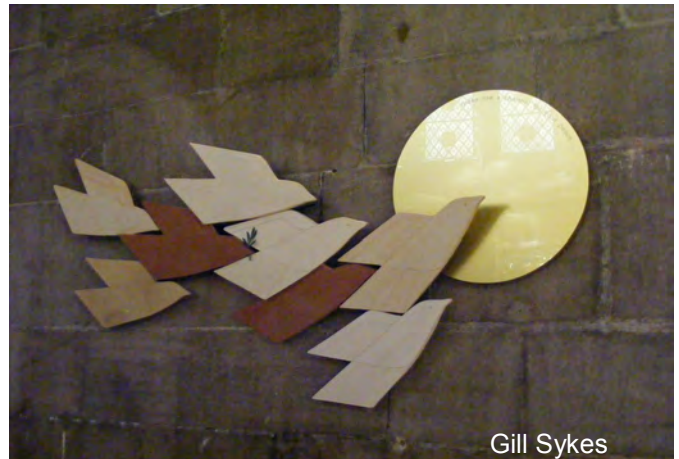
Jar, Colin Pearson, 1980-4  
© The Estate of Colin Pearson/York  
Museums Trust

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## Transformations in Clay - Brian Holland

Sheffield Cathedral had been very generous in its support of the Open Up Sheffield open studio programme so when, after a meeting there, I was introduced to the Dean, the very reverend Peter Bradley, I felt confident about asking if the Cathedral would host a site-specific ceramic show. The Dean responded enthusiastically - it was just up to me to start the ball rolling.

A meeting of the South East group generated sufficient interest with one member, John Rivers, being particularly keen to incorporate a potters fair within the project. We both sought proposals from prospective exhibitors, then armed with these we met the Dean. The Dean was again enthusiastic about our proposals, including John's to organise the fair within the overall project, and brought in the Cathedral's events manager, Carl Hutton, to deal with the nitty gritty of the proposals, timing, sites, fixtures and fittings etc. Carl and all the staff at the Cathedral, especially Gillian Cooper, were invaluable in helping us to get the project off the ground.



The site-specific aspect of the event was to occupy the whole of November, the fair the middle two weeks of November. A reception with the Dean was to be on the evening of Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November

Shirley Sheppard came on board and generously offered to take responsibility for the publicity material, Steve Booton's daughter Janna set up [www.transformationsinclay.com](http://www.transformationsinclay.com) We had a marketing machine!



### Participants:

Ann Bates, Steve Booton, Linda Bulleyment, Carolyn Corfield, Moira Ferguson, Karin Hessenberg, Brian Holland, Moz Khokar, Jan Lewis-Eccleston, Darrell Milnes, John Rivers, Shirley Sheppard, Gill Sykes, Ken Taylor, Pollie and Garry Uttley, Louise Waller

John now set himself the task of organising demonstrations and workshops to coincide with the potters fair. These included several throwing demonstrations - John, Ken, Steve - a talk by Pollie and Garry, Tea bowl making with Gillian Sykes, Brian Holland and a Japanese guest, Mika, and a tea ceremony given by Ayako and friend.

Moira Ferguson

The Cathedral has an extensive arts programme with concerts and recitals and other exhibitions. John and I attended a choral concert which had almost sold out. During the interval, several hundred people looked at our work.

There is such a variety of interior space within this cathedral, some of the chapels date from the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, whilst others are 20<sup>th</sup> Century with plenty of details from dates in between. There are big open public spaces and quiet contemplative spaces.



Darrell Milnes

The reception was well attended, over 300 people, and the Dean gave a welcoming speech. During the course of the show several thousand people had the opportunity to see our work. John's fair achieved £1600 in sales, which for a non-selling venue is not bad.



Brian Holland



And to top it all we had a tea ceremony!



Steve Booton

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## Members' Gallery

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





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1. Alex Shimwell -  **Bottle**, wood fired in the fast fire kiln at Thoresby
2. Carolyn Corfield
3. Linda Bullement
4. Steve Booton -  **Bottle**, photographed in the Japanese Garden at Newstead Abbey, wood fired at Thoresby
5. Kat Dale -  **Snake Goddess**
6. Karin Hessenberg
7. Ken Taylor - display in Sheffield Cathedral as part of Transformation in Clay
8. June Ridgeway -  **Vessel**, saggar fired
9. John Slade - smoke fired form

2, 3, 6 and 7 are from the display in Sheffield Cathedral as part of Transformations in Clay - see page 12 for a report

## Sherwood Forest Wood Firing Society - Alex Shimwell

When the former Rufford wood firing society was looking for a site to re-establish itself, the Administrators at Thoresby Park offered a welcoming hand.

The old, large M.O.D wood store on the estate proved to be an ideal site, and the estate kindly fitted a brand new roof.

A perimeter fence was built by the members who then, in order to get up and running as soon as possible, built a fast fire kiln based upon Joe Finch's design.



The kiln site is looking great. We have fired this down-draft kiln for a year now and have been getting good results, at times approaching the results one would expect from an anagama.

Over the coming year we are hoping to begin work on an anagama style of kiln. This will give us greater capacity firings with greater ash deposits.

Working closely with Thoresby Park, we are hoping to arrange public exhibitions of members' work, demonstrations and workshops and have public kiln opening days where work fresh from the kiln can be viewed. Members will also be able to fire the kiln at other times using wood bought from the society and by making a small donation towards the running costs of the kiln, in accordance with the stipulations laid down by the society. Members could use this facility to experiment with an alternative firing process, for instance wood fired

earthenware, or simply to catch up with work needed for an exhibition.

The society is moving in an exciting direction with a co-op style manifesto and real efforts being made to aid its members in promotion of their work.



For more information on the society please contact Brian Holland:

e: [brianhollandceramics@yahoo.com](mailto:brianhollandceramics@yahoo.com)  
m: 07812 928 174  
t: 01909 724781



## Welcome To New Members

Daniel Bridge	Burnley	Lancashire
John Slade	Altrincham	Cheshire
Emma Williams	Gedling	Nottingham
Marije Nickllin	Otley	West Yorkshire

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

---

## Annie Peaker courses - Petra Lloyd

Ever since O Level Pottery, I have had an urge to 'play with clay'. After completing a degree in scientific illustration and working as a graphic designer in the newspaper industry for more than 15 years, I completed a National Certificate of Further Education pottery course. I knew after that that ceramics was all I wanted to do. However, I felt I needed to know more and enrolled on a local weekly course. Some of my fellow potters had enthused about residential ceramics workshops and this led me to Annie Peaker's figurative ceramics courses.

Birds and animals inspire me, and I wanted to learn techniques that would help me in their depiction. After reading about Annie on her website and marvelling at her hand-built animals and figures, I joined a 2-day residential course in 2010.

Annie Peaker runs 2-day and 5-day residential courses from her studio, Kirk Neuk, which is nestled in the heart of the Eden Valley, Cumbria. For moral support, I attended with a friend, Kathy, and our twin room was extremely comfortable, especially after a welcoming mug of tea and homemade cake.

The real work took place in Annie's studio. She caters for any creative ability and gives step-by-step demonstrations and one-to-one tuition. After more tea and cake, we potted until lunch, which was prepared by Annie's husband, Andy.

After a delicious meal, we carried on, completing a dog and bird figure on the first day, ready to be taken home and fired. The studio is open until late if your enthusiasm allows. Instead, myself and Kathy went to the local pub for more good food, music and conversation.

The following day was spent making a cat, learning how to support animals on four legs, and studying different stances. Four-legged models are provided by Annie's two dogs and a large, fluffy, ginger mog.

The 2-day course is intense and I came away having learned many techniques that I have been able to apply to my own work, including creating texture and using slips and stains. Annie's approach is extremely supportive and encouraging, ensuring that students come away satisfied with their work and confident that they can employ the newly learned techniques at home.

Kathy and I enjoyed the course so much we went again last year and have just booked dates with Annie in 2012. Expert tuition, good food and conversation make for a wonderfully enjoyable weekend which I would thoroughly recommend.

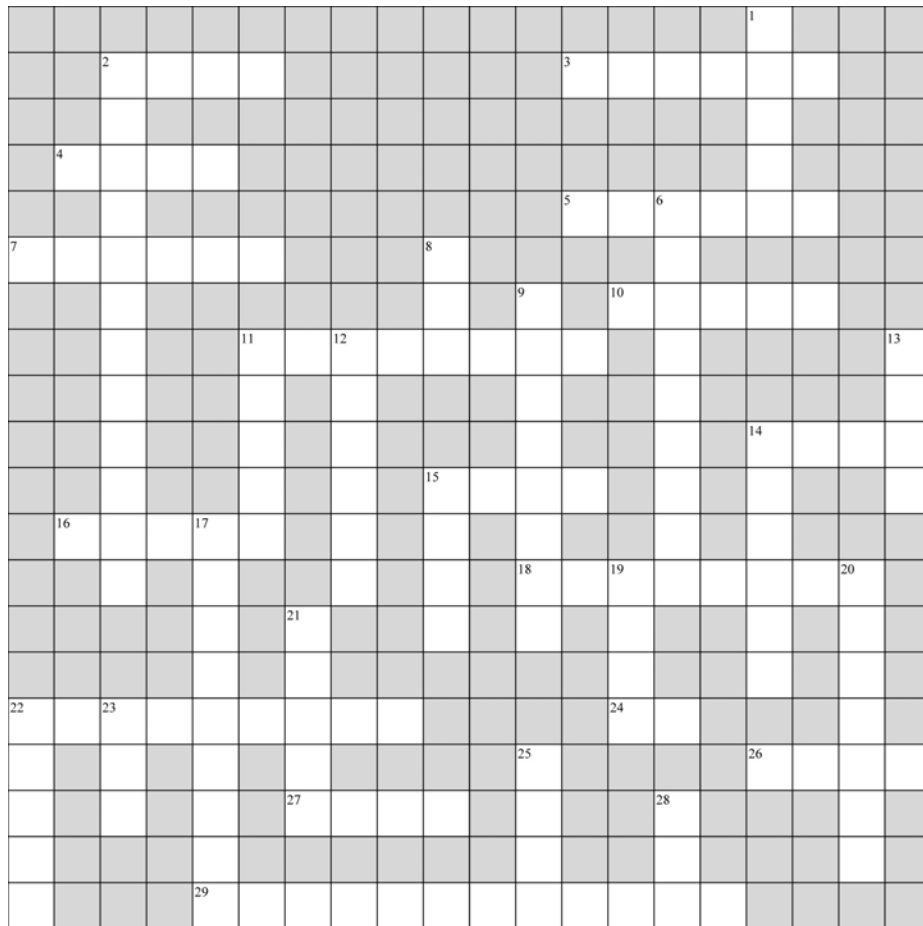


*Information about (NPA member) Annie's courses can be found at [www.anniepeaker.co.uk](http://www.anniepeaker.co.uk) and [info@anniepeaker.co.uk](mailto:info@anniepeaker.co.uk)*

One of Petra's bird sculptures

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## Crossword - Sylvia Holmes



EclipseCrossword.com

### Across

---

2. You might find this in the bathroom.
3. Refractory container
4. Trial
5. Hold off
7. Addition to improve mood
10. Coarse refractory body
11. Mineral grinder
14. Enjoyable firing
15. Used to measure more than just temperature
16. Striking form of silica
18. Mixed up in own right
22. Light interference
24. How much heavier than water?
26. Tidy up
27. Thin and flat form
29. One of the primary phases/types of silica

## Down

1. Boards for pots
2. Kiln probe
6. Scratching the surface
8. Edge round
9. Timeline is all muddled up for this oxide
11. Caused by trapped gas
12. Pure metal jacket
13. Flow that promotes fusion
14. Titanium dioxide and iron oxide
15. What it's all about
17. Age of earliest known pottery
19. Animal parts used for tools
20. Hard rock...
21. Creamy pastes
22. Iron yellow
23. Best to remove this before starting
25. Fizzy drink?
28. Between body and glaze

There are no prizes - but it might keep you entertained for a while. Please let Sylvia know if you want her to compile another one - or send in your own clay-related puzzles.

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## Manor Oaks Kiln - Penny Withers and Sarah Villeneau

The 18<sup>th</sup> Century remains of Manor Farm form the last part of the historic Sheffield Manor Lodge site to be restored. An important part of the redevelopment will be the construction of the first urban smokeless wood-fired kiln intended for community use. This kiln will be at the heart of the new Ceramics Centre at Manor Lodge, which consists of a ceramics trail celebrating the historical and archeological heritage of the site, the development of a ceramic ware production line based on 18<sup>th</sup>C Manor Ware produced on site by local potter John Fox, as well as contemporary studios for ceramicists managed by Yorkshire Artspace together with their programme of start-up and residency schemes.



Sheffield Manor Lodge is managed by the social enterprise, Green Estate, and in keeping with their ethos of environmental sustainability, community involvement and education are offering the opportunity to participate in the building of this unique, smokeless, kiln as designed by internationally acclaimed Japanese master of smokeless wood-fired kiln building: Masakazu Kusakabe.

The kiln building will be led by established Yorkshire Artspace artists **Penny Withers** and **Sarah Villeneau**, both previous Chairs of the Rufford Wood-firing Society and highly experienced workshop leaders and wood-firers. Sarah recently participated in a smokeless kiln-building Masterclass with Masakazu Kusakabe in Hungary, and brings first-hand experience to this venture.

Penny and Sarah aim to run the kiln building as a course, giving participants the opportunity to learn, through application, the basics of kiln design and construction, as well as the specific plan for the Manor Oaks kiln. They will learn the theory and practice of firing, and specific glazes for wood-firing. Penny and Sarah will give demonstrations on throwing and hand-building in the pottery workshop and individual tuition as necessary. The approach is one of practical hands-on application of skills.

## Advertising in NPA News

### Cost of advert for one issue:

Diary listings:	free
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Free camping, barbecue facilities, washrooms and toilets are all available on site.

Experience in kiln building is not required but a keen interest in ceramics and wood-firing is. Participants will have the opportunity to test fire the kiln, and there are facilities on site for making and glazing.

For more details, or to express an interest in the course, contact Sarah Villeneau - [sarah@villeneau.co.uk](mailto:sarah@villeneau.co.uk), or Penny Withers - [penn@talktalk.net](mailto:penn@talktalk.net)

Manor Oaks is situated 10 minutes from Sheffield train station by car, 20 – 30 minutes by foot or is accessible by bus.



*Images from Sarah's trip to Hungary*

## NPA Website - Barbara Wood

The 'new' website is now up and running successfully, though we only have details for about a quarter of our members. Please send you details in, if you haven't already.

You should send your name, contact details (email, phone, web) to John Cook at [websitenpa@gmail.com](mailto:websitenpa@gmail.com) together with up to 4 images of recent work, and an artist's statement of up to 100 words.

The website is a useful resource, provided and maintained within your membership fee, so do make use of it. You can send details of fairs and exhibitions that you're participating in for inclusion on the events page by sending them to [npanews@btinternet.com](mailto:npanews@btinternet.com). If you have a poster or flier for the event, that can also be included, and if the timing is right it will also be included on the newsletter diary page.

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

### NPA Membership

Subscription Rates:

**Individual**

£22 (if paid by standing order)  
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£30 (for overseas members)

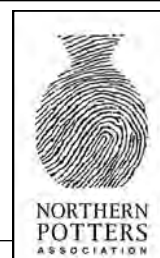
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(please send evidence of eligibility e.g. photocopy of SU card, UB40 etc.)

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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## Membership Payments - another reminder

As we mentioned previously, NPA has changed its bank account from Yorkshire Bank plc to The Co-operative Bank.

If you pay your membership fees by Standing Order, please contact your bank to change the receiving NPA bank details. **Please retain the same date your payment is made and make sure you cancel your existing standing order, e.g. if your payment is due in February, ask for the new mandate to start in February.**

From existing bank : Yorkshire Bank plc, Sort code: 05 07 17  
Account number: 35683010

To new bank : The Co-operative Bank Sort code: 08 92 99  
For the account of: Northern Potters Association  
Account number: 65488052



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*Many members will be able to make this switch by using either telephone or internet banking.  
If you have any queries on this, please contact Alan Birchall, Treasurer  
e-mail: [doc.albirchall@ntlworld.com](mailto:doc.albirchall@ntlworld.com)*

**Thank you to those who have already made the change.**

## Regional News

Contact your regional coordinator with ideas for events, exhibition visits, ceramic related items for sale / wanted etc. Most of our members can be contacted by email, so you can get your message out to a wide audience.

### 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



"OUT OF THE EARTH III" 15th April - 21st May 2012.

Members still have time to apply for this exhibition at Crook Hall Gardens in Durham City. The closing date for applications is 31st January. For forms and details, please contact Victoria Leeks at [toria.leeks@hotmail.com](mailto:toria.leeks@hotmail.com)

A large number of our members joined the Friends of the Shipley Art Gallery for the first Henry Rothschild Memorial lecture given by Gabrielle Koch. It was a very interesting and successful evening. We are hoping to arrange a "behind-the-scenes" visit to the Shipley to see the ceramics collection, in the Spring.

Fifteen members enjoyed a pre-Christmas buffet lunch in Durham in December.

### East

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



Members in the NPA East region have been very busy in the run up to Christmas opening their homes, studios, and work spaces to the public. Thank you to those members who have kept me informed of their activities and opportunities for others.

The recent issue of Craft and Design magazine includes an article on National Ceramics Week 2011 which is a timely reminder that advance planning is imperative.

The East region covers a very large area which poses problems of inclusion for everyone to meet up at one time. Anyone wishing to offer / suggest a venue for meeting in their locality please get in touch and I will be happy to coordinate this. Some members may already meet up with potting friends on a regular basis and perhaps you may wish to extend an invitation to other new or existing members close by?

At the time of writing this report Christmas is only a few days away so I would like to close by wishing everyone happy potting and best wishes for the coming year. Looking forward to hearing from you in 2012.

### South East

Co-ordinator: Brian Holland  
Email: [brian.holland100@virgin.net](mailto:brian.holland100@virgin.net)  
Tel: 01909 724781



The SE group ended the year with two highly successful exhibitions. OUT OF THE FIRE at Thoresby, where we had 1600 visitors in the first weekend alone, and TRANSFORMATIONS IN CLAY where we combined a site specific show with a potters' fair to much acclaim.

We need to get our heads together in the new year and start planning events for 2012 but watch this space and in the meantime have a great new year.

---

**Roger Bell**, coordinator for the North West region, has finally decided he would like to step down, and has invited other members to volunteer to take on the role. Roger was the first regional coordinator, and indeed the originator of the idea of having regional groups, back in 2004. I hope you will all join me in thanking him for all of the work he has done in this capacity, and that someone will step forward to take over from him .

#### South West

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



A few of us met at Sue Hudson's on Friday the 11th November and had a very enjoyable afternoon with some very nice cakes laid on!!!

The next get together will be at the Firs Pottery Nantwich sometime in March or April. We would welcome suggestions for an exhibition venue for 2012 and also ideas and dates for further meetings.

#### West

Co-ordinator: Dave Harper / Geoff Wilcock  
E-mail: [dpharper@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:dpharper@uclan.ac.uk) / [ghwilcock@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:ghwilcock@uclan.ac.uk)  
Tel: 01782 617801 or Tel: 01204 674901



Meeting: Tuesday 29th December 2011 at 'Bitter Suite', Preston, 7.15 pm

There are opportunities in 2012 for all members to be involved with exhibiting their work. Three venues have been confirmed with dates to be finalised, Arteria Gallery, Lancaster, a new gallery in Preston, which is yet to be named and PR1 Gallery, UCLAN, Preston.

Two of the exhibitions are in Spring, members are encouraged to exhibit in both or be selective, one will be themed. The third exhibition is toward the end of the year details of all will be forwarded.

Lytham Heritage have confirmed an exhibition for 2013.

It was suggested that members may initiate future exhibitions by contacting galleries and other possible venues in order to increase options for the future.

Members showed their vessels based on the theme 'St. Andrew's Day'.

Next meeting: Tuesday 6th March 2012

'Bitter Suite', Preston at 7.15 pm, the theme for a vessel is 'Spring'.

#### North West

Co-ordinator: Roger Bell, Gale Mount, 11High Gale, Ambleside, Cumbria, LA22 0BG  
Tel: 015394 32730 E-mail: [bell.roger@btinternet.com](mailto:bell.roger@btinternet.com)



Regrettably nobody has offered to take over as NW coordinator. I will continue to circulate missives from the committee and other regions until a new coordinator comes forward.

A photography session is proposed as our regional event. Date, location and teacher have yet to be determined. Suggestions welcomed. Names of those interested from the NW are noted. If anybody from other regions is interested please let me know.

## First or Worst - Stephen Breuer

### My first mug

It is also my worst, by a very comfortable margin.

I have been collecting mugs for about 48 years. It started modestly when we bought a set of 4, all different, all hand-made, for drinking tea or coffee, sometimes with friends. Later we bought another one or two, some got broken so they needed to be replaced, bought some more, and gradually they became a collection. Over the years we have accumulated a large number, no two are identical, and we have a display rack that can hold 108 of them comfortably (see image), but no more. This is great for self-discipline, because we set up the rule that if a new mug appears, one of those currently on display has to go into a box in the cellar. This means that when I am contemplating adding a new one to the collection I have to consider whether I like it more than one of those already there.



When in my late 50s I decided to take up pottery and attended an evening class, it was inevitable that the first time I had the choice of what to make, it would be a mug. It was a large class and one harassed teacher, so those of us who were less insistent in demanding the teacher's attention were left largely to our own devices (excuses, excuses!) The result can be seen at the top of the page. It was fired-glazed-fired and I took it home proudly as my first! Viewing it in the cold light of the next day reality dawned, and I could see that the shape, the handle, the glazing and the decoration were all dire; about the only thing to be said in its favour was that it didn't leak and the handle is still attached after all this time.



Eventually my wife pressed it into service to hold small plant pots containing seedlings; keeping it in an obscure corner of the garden or greenhouse lessened the offence to the eye. By some miracle it has survived to the present day, outlasting the associated pride by about 16 years.

Since that time I have made hundreds of mugs as well as other pieces, and sold most of them, which testify to the subsequent improvement of my pottery skills. I still make functional ware in traditional shapes with just the occasional tweak, mainly for reasons of some functional improvement, and my main interest is in playing with glazes to achieve interesting, and sometimes surprising, results. Two more recent mugs can be seen below. Are there still disasters? Of course, but never as bad as that and they are not preserved for posterity. When the grandchildren



come, they are offered a strong plastic bag containing some pieces destined for destruction, a hammer, and they are happy. The recurring motto is: "Don't try this at home!"

The ratio of success to failure is encouragingly high these days, which keeps me going. That, and the fact that other people are willing to pay money for my pots.

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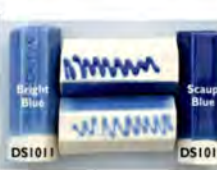


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