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members

NPA NEWS

The magazine of the Northern Potters Association

January - February 2010

www.northern-potters.co.uk



In this issue:

Observations from a potter on the edge, Potter's Paradise, Wood Firing at Barn Pottery, Moving a BIG POT, New Ceramics Galleries at the V&A

Members' Gallery

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

John Kershaw
Wood fired vessel
See article page 10



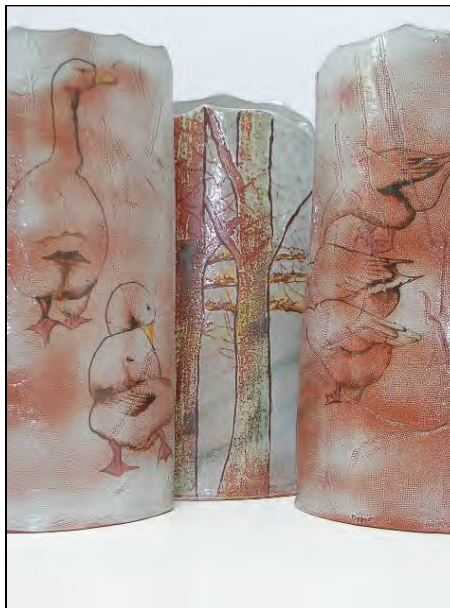
Eric Moss - **Small blue squid**,
raku



Steve Booton - raku, wood,
wire, 18cm x 18cm

Cover :
John Kershaw - **Distorted
Vase** - stoneware, electric kiln

Caroline Lee
Pair of Sandals -
10cm h, Stoneware
with oxide



Finola Delamere
Standing Stones

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Chat from the Chair

Ian Marsh



May I take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New Year. As usual I have started off the year with good intentions (I gave up making resolutions several years ago!), but what with the season's celebrations and the heavy snowfall, I have yet to get around to any serious potting and NPA work.

Walking the moors in the deep, sparkly snow, with the amazing light reflections has made me think about what inspires me to make pots and ceramic wall pieces. I am looking forward to getting back into the studio and concentrating on developing my ceramics. All too often I seem to be pulled away from making by checking for e-mails, phone messages, the lure of the internet, being encouraged to join facebook, twitter, etc. I have resisted joining these social networks, as I am not sure it makes economic sense to try and sell my work through this medium. If I am spending time on the computer, then I would need to factor this into my production costs and it is taking me away from making. If I was to make one resolution it would be to only use technology at the point of need.

Those of you who are in the CPA may have noticed that myself and David Wright have joined the Associates Committee. Hopefully we will try and reflect the NPA views and opinions.

I look forward to meeting and chatting to you at NPA and ceramic events this coming year.

---- JANUARY SALE AT POTCLAYS ----

Saturday 30 January 2010, 9.00am until 3.00pm

Just some of our Sale Day offers...

15% off Shimpo Whisper Wheels, L&L Kilns, 20% off Tools. Clay (up to 500kg), Botz, Spectrum, 25% off Amaco Velvet Underglazes
40% off Mayco

Potclays Ltd. Brickkiln Lane Etruria Stoke-on-Trent ST4 7BP Tel:
01782 219816 Fax: 01782 286506 Email: sales@potclays.co.uk
Web: www.potclays.co.uk and www.potclays-ceramic-cafe.co.uk

Deadline For Next Issue

All material for the **next issue** to be with Barbara Wood
by 21st February 2010

Text and images can be e-mailed to npanews@btinternet.com, sent by CD or by long hand with photographs to Old Mills, Seaton Ross, YORK, YO42 4NH. Images should be high resolution digital where possible - 180mm x 130mm at 300dpi preferred, and please send some good colour images of your work for the members' gallery.

Editor's Comment

A bumper issue this time - thank you for all of the fascinating articles. I hope it will provide some sustaining reading matter for these cold dark days.

You may notice a couple of new items, which I hope will become regular features. The 'Top Tip' section is a chance to share a snippet of technical information that you've heard about, or discovered for yourself - you may just want to ask whether other members have tried it out. Do send suggestions in - they don't have to be long, they don't even have to be true, but you never know when you're going to hear something that will enhance your work, or perhaps help explain something you've seen or done.

With 'First or Worst' we're asking you to spill the beans on your earliest ceramic efforts and/or the piece you're least proud of. If you have pictures, I'm sure they'll help make your case.

Right, with all this interesting material there's no more room for me, so I wish you a successful new potting season, and hope the snow's gone before this hits your doormat.

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Exhibitions and Events - Matt Tyas

'The Rufford Double' 2010

I would like to begin with a thank you to all members who applied for the Rufford Double: there was a total of 57 applicants, 36 of these making the shortlist for the NPA exhibition and a further 6 being forwarded to the Rufford Team for further selection in relation to Earth & Fire. I have informed all applicants of the outcome via e-mail, although I still believe a decision is due from the Earth & Fire Team. Exhibition participants have also been informed of requirements in relation to style and volume of work needed. There is still reasonable amount of paperwork to be completed in conjunction with Rufford and I will no doubt be in touch with members over the coming months in relation to this.

It was a pleasure to see such a diversity of work and members should be congratulated for their dedication and commitment to clay. I also thank you for being patient with me as I find my feet in this role.

Platform Gallery, Clitheroe 2010

This selected exhibition is now confirmed for 11th September to 30th October 2010. More details will follow later this year.

Finally

Thank you for reading this and, as always, please contact me with any questions, comments or suggestions.

York Open Air Art Exhibitions

Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th April 2010

Closing date for application 31st March

Saturday 21th and Sunday 22th August 2010

Closing date for application 31st May.

You may attend any or all of the four days.

A selling exhibition held in the main central square in York for Pottery and Fine Art. Potters are supplied with a 6ft table and 2 chairs, artists with screens. An open sided marquee is to be provided. The cost is £15 per day in April, which may rise depending on having a marquee again, in August.

For one extra table add £10 per day (maximum two tables per potter). This year 10% of any sales will be donated to a charity chosen by the Art Festival Committee which will be announced at a later date.

These exhibitions are open to all members of the York Art Society and Northern Potters Association.

Potters are welcome to demonstrate - hand-build or bring a wheel, but please contact me first so suitable arrangements can be made. Applications forms are available from the end of January for the April weekend.

Forms for the August weekend will be available in April. For either set of forms send an A5 S.A.E. at the appropriate time. Alternatively, those attending the April event can pick up their August forms then.

Please remember to tick the appropriate box if you require two tables.

For application forms please send A5 S.A.E.s (but not cheques) to:-

Andrea Cundell
4 Cranbrook Road
Acomb,
York.
YO26 5JA
07746 288809



Welcome To New Members

| Name | Location | E mail |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Ruth Bowman | Burton in Lonsdale | ruthmbowman@hotmail.com |
| Sally Danys | Ryton | sallydanys@yahoo.co.uk |
| James Faulkner | North Hykeham | tigerfish01@hotmail.com |
| Tracy Holmes | York | holmes_ts@hotmail.com |
| Joan Hoverstadt | Withington | |
| Victoria Leeks | Houghton-le-Spring | clinton.leeks@btinternet.com |
| Maggie Thomson | Newcastle - on - Tyne | maggie@ewehurst.freeseve.co.uk |

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

Observations from a potter on the edge - Steve Booton

Let me take a moment to explain the title of this piece. It can have a number of different meanings. I live on the edge of Sheffield which is very much on the edge of Yorkshire. Also, being a recent returnee to ceramics I feel very much like I am on the edge of the world of pots looking in. This I feel can offer a positive perspective from which to discuss my recent observations and experiences of the world of ceramics. With this in mind I would like to offer up a couple of things I have noticed over the past few weeks and months.

I don't know how many of you have viewed Youtube recently, maybe I am preaching to the converted here (I am on the edge remember), if I am please go along with me for the benefits of the ones not familiar with this global phenomenon. I recently read that in the US alone 10.5 BILLION, yes billion, views of uploaded videos were made in the month of October alone and with this in mind wouldn't it be a good way for us potters to reach a wider, global, audience for our work, with all the potential sales a wider audience can generate.

With all the best intentions and as hard as we can work, we can only reach a relatively small number of people through exhibitions and sales. Not that, for one moment am I suggesting that these are not useful, as they create the essential revenue that all potters need to survive. However, I feel it is important that we should embrace as many ways of reaching the largest number of people as possible. With this in mind I have recently started posting videos of my work on Youtube.

Initially I did it in the form of a slideshow of my work and then posted some live action videos of me throwing pots, and latterly a couple of videos of kiln openings and firings discussing the successes and just as importantly failures I have made.

Up to the time of writing this piece I have had over 1600 viewings of my videos with 33 subscribers to my channel from all around the world and all this for a virtually unknown potter. Simon Leach, on the other hand, has had over a million hits to his videos with 2740 subscribers all of whom are notified each time he uploads a video, providing a very large captive audience.

There is also an additional financial benefit for someone posting videos as there is a way of using your video uploads to raise revenue. This is done through AdSense a way in which Google attaches relevant related advertising to a banner on your video which earns you money each time some one clicks on it. If you want to advertise an upcoming event or offer courses etc. all you have to do is incorporate the details in the information banner attached to your video and you can reach an incredible number of potential customers or students for free!

If you have a website it is easy to attach your URL to your Youtube channel so that they navigate to it easily and can buy online etc. All of this is FREE and only takes a few minutes to set up; surely this is an opportunity too good to be

missed! You can also link your Youtube account to Facebook but that's a subject for another day. Check out my videos at [stevebootonceramics](#) on Youtube. If I can do it anyone can.

A post script regarding selling.

I recently took part in a craft sale in Sheffield and produced an information sheet for some yunomi drinking cups that I make and the philosophy behind how and why they are used. They all sold out by mid afternoon on the first day and although they were very nice pieces I am convinced the information sheet did the selling.

It seems that if you give a little history and/or thought processes behind they're manufacture, it gives the buyer a connection to that piece and makes it personal to them, making them more likely to buy. Just a thought!!

See page 2 for an image of Steve's new work

Wanted:

secondhand kiln bricks

any amount or condition considered.

Contact: Claude Frere-Smith 01287 626675
> m:0790047775 claudefrere@yahoo.co.uk

Top Tip

'Loo roll raku'

I just heard a tip for getting black black in your raku, which suggested using toilet paper. I can't say I spotted a difference between this and the Yellow Pages sheets I use (in raku that is, not on the toilet!) but I did notice that the toilet paper, having no printing ink on it, is 'gentler' on the unglazed part of the pot it touches and less likely to leave a scarring contact mark.

I have a 5' square raised bed of shavings and soil. Onto this I put a handful of pet shop wood shavings and on top, a couple of sheets from the yellow pages folded to A5. I use florists buckets as my smoking chamber - 1 per pot - and, whilst the kiln is heating the pots I stand the buckets right-side-up on top of the shavings/yellow pages pad (to stop the breeze blowing it away) and have a handful of shavings in the bucket.

When it's time to get the pots out, I put the bucket to one side, tong the pot onto the paper and cover with the bucket. Seems to work passably. I just modified this method replacing the yellow pages with a pad of loo roll. To be honest I didn't see much difference, though it may be an idea to fill the florists bucket with loo roll and plonk on the hot pot.

Some folk say to use damp paper/shavings to increase smoke too. There doesn't seem to be a definitive method yet.

Eric Moss

NPA Membership

Subscription Rates:

Individual £22 (if paid by standing order)
£25 (if paid by cheque or Postal Order)

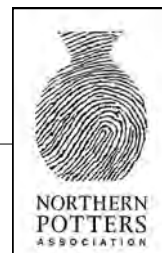
Joint membership
(2 members at one address) £34 (has to be paid by standing order)
FULL TIME Student/unwaged £10 (has to be paid by cheque or PO)
(please send evidence of eligibility e.g. photocopy of SU card, UB40 etc.)

You can download a copy of the membership form from our website - northern-potters.co.uk.

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

Contact the membership secretary:

Margaret Lawrenson
'Seven Firs', Kemp Rd,
Swanland,
E.Yorks HU14 3LZ
Tel: 01482 634784



Diary

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| 20 January | Closing date for ' Out of the Earth ' exhibition - NENPA - contact kris@krislambert.net |
| 30 January | Potclays January sale - 9am - 3pm |
| 15 February | NPA - West meeting, Bitter Suite pub, Preston, 7.15pm |
| Until 11 April | 2C Mixing Media - work by Carol Metcalfe and Carolyn Corfield, Darlington Railway Museum, DL3 6ST. 11am - 3.30pm, Fri - Sun, head-of-steam.co.uk |
| 12 March | Eddie Curtis giving NPA talk at UCLAN, Preston |
| 30 March - 9 May | NPA selected exhibition at Rufford Craft Gallery |
| 31 March | Closing date for York Open Air Art Exhibition applications for April event |
| 24 - 25 April | York Open Air Art Exhibition |
| 30 April | Geoffrey Swindell giving NPA talk at UCLAN, Preston |
| 29 - 31 May | Potfest Scotland, Agricultural Centre, Stirling - potfest.co.uk |
| 25 - 27 June | Earth & Fire, Rufford Coutry Park |
| 30 July - 1 August | Potfest in the Park, Hutton-in-the-Forest, nr Penrith - potfest.co.uk |
| 6 - 8 August | Potfest in the Pens, Penrith - potfest.co.uk |

Please let me know of future events that may be of interest to other members

NPA Basics

Website

The NPA website (www.northern-potters.co.uk) was recently re-designed to give us a more contemporary profile online, to show examples of members' work, to publicise NPA events, and generally let people know that we exist. Each member can have a page showing images of their work, a short statement, contact details (email, phone only - not addresses), and a link to their own website.

The site includes contact details for committee members, and a membership form which can be downloaded to enable new members to join. Regional groups can publicise their events in the 'news' section, so members should check the website regularly to see what's going on.

We do not include online payment of membership, or any facility to sell work online as this would involve a great deal of work from committee members, particularly the treasurer.

When a new member joins, they are asked to supply up to 4 high resolution images of their work, together with a statement of up to 120 words, email/phone contact, and their website. Members may update the images and statement once a year, and their contact details whenever necessary. The website is currently maintained by Ian Marsh, so all changes should be sent to him (contact details on page 3). An exercise is taking place to make sure consistent information is shown for all members who want to be included, so if your details are out of date, or not there at all, please let Ian know as soon as you can.

Potter's Paradise - Sylvia Holmes

An acquaintance first told me about West Dean College a few years ago. Since that happy day (thanks, Pat!), I've been on three short courses there and hope to go again this year. In case some NPA members haven't heard of it, here's a brief review.



West Dean College is run by a charitable trust, the Edward James Foundation. Unfortunately, it's a long way away, near Chichester in West Sussex, and it's not cheap. But it's heaven on earth for anyone interested in the arts. As well as various full-time post-graduate courses, they run over 700 short courses a year, covering many specialist areas of ceramics, photography, painting, sculpture, bookbinding, music, metalwork, textiles, woodwork etc. The courses are taught by professional practitioners, many well-known in their field, and are graded as beginner/intermediate/advanced or suitable for all. Students on the intermediate/advanced course I recently attended included full-time professionals and ceramics teachers as well as enthusiastic amateurs.

There are two prospectuses published each year. In the current one, there are seventeen short courses in ceramics listed between January and May 2010. For example, these include a course on simple cast and decorated forms (intermediate), one on paper-clay sculpture (suitable for all) and one on throwing double walled vessels (intermediate/advanced). The ceramics studio is well designed and equipped for all possible areas of study, and the standard of teaching, in my experience, is second to none.

Courses run concurrently with those in other artistic spheres. Last time I was there, there were courses in photography, painting, life-drawing, mosaics, wood-carving, enamelling, and willow sculpture running at the same time as the ceramics course I attended. The courses vary in length, mostly somewhere between two days and a week. The college offers residential accommodation either in the splendidly gothic stately home or in one of the outlying buildings on the estate. The setting is magnificent. The food is superb. The company is brilliant – imagine spending a week in a place where the arts are taken seriously by everyone you meet.

So, if you feel your work is in need of a technical or artistic boost, you want to explore a new avenue in ceramics, or you just want a holiday doing what you love best, have a look at West Dean's website <http://www.westdean.org.uk/>
Or phone for their brochure on 0844 4994408



Just in case you were wondering, I have no financial or other affiliation with West Dean College – I just think it's a wonderful place. See you there one day perhaps!

Woodfiring at Barn Pottery - John Kershaw

Nic Collins and Sabine Nemet 14th August - 21st August 2009

A week's course, firing Nic's Groundhog kiln, Sabine's Olsen Soda fired kiln and a small experimental oil and charcoal fired kiln.

I had been to Nic's kiln building course in the previous year, 2008, building and firing a catenary arch kiln. This year, Nic had invited people who had been on that course and therefore had a little experience in wood firing, to a week's course firing his groundhog kiln and Sabine's Olsen soda kiln.

Since leaving College, except for some raku, I have always used electric kilns, firing in an oxidised atmosphere, and I like the cool light quality that this gives me.

But like most of us, I have always been curious about other techniques and firing methods. Wood firing I had not noticed very much for a long time, considering it as very much at the other end of the spectrum from my own work.

It was through interest in Nic's work that I was drawn in. I like his pots; I like the boldness of making and particularly like the qualities that the firing brings out. His kiln is packed anagama style, very close packing, often putting pots on top of each other separated with wadding or shells, so that the flames from the wood travel tightly through the pots, and the firing is long, taking three to five days, to give the maximum effect of the ash on the pots.

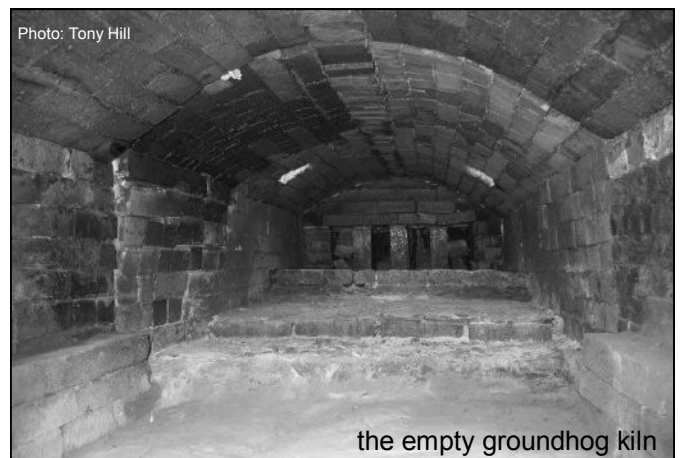
Firing with an electric kiln, I think I always felt not quite a real potter. I had never built kilns before going to Nic's, except for raku firing, and have never been in a position to use other methods of firing because my workshop and showroom are in an urban environment. I am also not that practical a person and have shied away from kiln building, so last year's course with Nic had been a good experience for me.

I arrived Friday evening after a long drive from Cumbria down to Nic's pottery on the edge of Dartmoor. There were five of us on the course, all camping in Nic's field, with a big old Army tent to socialize and eat in. After a meal in the pub with Nic, he talked us through the week's course.



On Saturday we got on with glazing the pots we had brought for the firing. Most of us had brought glazes to use, with Nic supplying two of the glazes he uses. He once fires, raw glazing, if he uses any glaze, encouraging us to leave some work unglazed for the kiln to do its work. I had learnt from the previous year that a lot of the work on the pot is in the firing and that it helps if the pots are simple shapes, they do not need to be complicated; the organic nature of the firing, the suffering the pots go through in the firing bring out the beauty in the work.

I had brought a mixture of stoneware and porcelain, glazing about half the pots and put half of each to the two main kilns.



The packing of the kilns started late morning, I was on the groundhog with Andy, a long low kiln, dusty, dirty, cramping work, me passing pots to Andy, he placing them on wads, or shells, anagama style, me passing shelves, cleaning shelves.

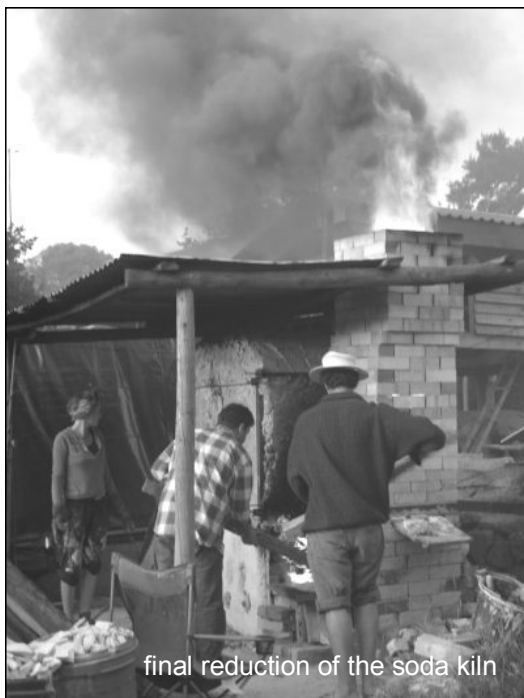
Then into the tent for Sabine's excellent lunch and then back to packing, Andy passing, me packing.

It took two days to pack the ground hog and Sabine's Olsen soda fired kiln. The firing started Monday afternoon. Nic got his wood fired, open air, hot tub stoked up - a plunge into that eased tired cramped bodies.

The Olsen kiln then took about thirty hours to fire. I had a couple of four hour shifts stoking and tending, the first from 2.00am. till 6.00am. Slight anxiety, but lovely solitude in an early summer morning, the regular stoking of the roaring kiln every five minutes or so, anxiety as to whether the kiln temperature was rising, whether the firing chambers were getting choked.

Tuesday then was a welcome, leisurely day - cricket in the nearby nets in the afternoon, Uly, one of Nic's German helpers managing to bowl me out, in spite of him not ever having encountered cricket before.

Then a late afternoon shift on the Olsen with Tony, with Sabine overseeing the insertion of soda into the kiln, partly as a solution sprayed into the spy holes and partly as paper soaked in the solution thrown into the firing chamber. The firing then finished off with heavy reduction.



final reduction of the soda kiln



the opening of the kilns

After a trip over to see Chuck Swartz's pottery on the Wednesday, on Thursday the experimental kiln was built and fired, a long low kiln about 10 cubic foot, fired first with an oil burner, then with charcoal thrown straight into the kiln and fired over about five hours.

I had done my morning shift earlier that day on the groundhog, feeding the dragon into the daylight and then had my last shift early evening.

Later in the day Doug Fitch who is a friend of Nic's and who had trained with him at Derby gave a throwing and decorating demonstration of one of his large harvest festival pitchers. There was an interesting connection in the influences of old English pottery on both of them.

Friday saw Nic complete the firing of the groundhog and the opening of the experimental kiln, the use of charcoal replicating the effects of the wood firing.

Then we all went our ways to meet again in two weeks time for Nic's annual party on the Saturday. Nic had held the kiln building and firing course the previous week so on the Sunday there was the opening of the three kilns, a passing out from hand to hand of the riches of the kilns, particular interest in the pots from the stoke holes where they endured the greatest stress from flame and ember, but each pot showing the variations of the fire and ash.

It was a most open hearted and generous course (with wonderful lunches from Sabine and team), good companionship and great memories.

See front cover for an image of John's 'usual' electric fired work, and page 2 for a wood fired piece.

New Books - Roger Bell

| | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------|------|
| 500 Tiles | | 16.99 | GMC |
| The Bible of Sculpting Techniques | Claire Brown | 12.99 | BI |
| Chinese Ceramics (Percival David Collection) | Krahl & Harrison-Hall | 12.99 | BM |
| Clay: A Studio Handbook | Vince Pitelki | 44.95 | ACS |
| Clay Projects For Children | Monika Krumbach | 14.99 | BI |
| Colouring Clay | Jo Connell | 14.99 | BI |
| Confrontational Ceramics | Judith Schwartz | 30.00 | BI |
| Contemporary Ceramics | Emmanuel Cooper | 24.95 | TH |
| Creative Metal Clay Jewellery | CeCe Wire | 9.99 | GMC |
| Dry Glazes | Jeremy Jernegan | 15.99 | BI |
| Italian Renaissance Ceramics (BM Catalogue) | Thornton & Wilson | 175.00 | BM |
| Gabriele Koch | Tony Birks | 19.95 | Sten |
| Low-firing and Burnishing | Sumi von Dassow | 15.99 | BI |
| Metal Clay | Jackie Truty | 18.99 | DC |
| Modelling Heads & Faces In Clay | Berit Hildre | 14.99 | BI |
| Penland Book of Ceramics | | 11.99 | GMC |
| The Potter's Bible | Ed Marilyn Scott | 12.99 | BI |
| The Potteries | David Sekers | 5.99 | Sh |
| Precious Metal Clay Techniques | Tim McCreight | 19.99 | BI |
| The Remarkable Potters Of Seagrove | Charlotte Brown | | GMC |
| Lucie Rie | Tony Birks | 25.00 | Sten |
| Sculpture As Experience | Judith Peck | 18.99 | DC |
| Slipware In The Potteries Museum Collection | Potteries Museum | 30.00 | BI |
| Smoke Firing | Jane Perryman | 30.00 | BI |
| Wall Pieces | Dominique B Segurado | 15.99 | BI |

Book Review - Roger Bell

| | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| LUCIE RIE | 25.00 |
| GABRIELE KOCH | 19.95 |
| Tony Birks | Stenlake Publishing |

Stenlake have taken over the catalogue of Marston House, publishers of ceramic monographs. These two books are significantly updated and extended versions of books from that catalogue.

The biography of Lucie Rie was first published in 1984 by the same author priced at £18.99. It has the same format as the original but the text has been revised and extended and includes an interesting selection of photographs of people and places relating to Rie's earlier years in Austria, development as an artist, marriage and eventual move to London as the persecution of the Jews developed. There is a substantial body of photographs of work, mainly in colour but including some black and white where the whereabouts of the work is now unknown. The competitive work is from Ceramic Review, written by Emmanuel Cooper. A good enough work but Birks volume is worth the extra £6.00.

The work on Gabriele Koch replaces a well produced but very much smaller book. The original was written by Koch herself with an introduction by Sir David Attenborough (which is retained). The text is only 20 odd pages but the excellent pictures of work speak for themselves. Again it is well worth the £7.00 additional cost.

Mobile Phone Point of Sale (MobilePOS) system

Background

For a few years, the NPA has had a system of accepting credit and debit card payments via a mobile phone. This was initially purchased for selling events where several members are attending, such as Northern Fire (our exhibitions at the.gallery@oxo), ClayArt, Earth & Fire, and Potfest, and was based on one mobile phone, plus paper vouchers, which could be borrowed by a group of members.

A facility to use additional phones became available, enabling members to download a software application to their own mobile phones, and process payments wherever they were. The NPA has a 'merchant account', to which the payments are credited, and our treasurer, Liz Collinson, then issues cheques to the individual members who have made sales.

We have been reviewing this facility in committee, and now have a better understanding of what's involved, and would like to make it available to more members.

How it works

The member must have a mobile phone which is 'Java enabled' (most modern phones are). The JavaPOS application is downloaded to your phone, and you can then start using it.

To process a payment, you just follow a series of prompts on the screen, entering the card number, expiry date, issue number (if applicable), security code, a reference number, and the amount. This information is sent to the bank for approval, and an authorisation code is sent back to the phone.

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When Liz checks the merchant account, she can then issue cheques for the payments, less our admin fee, to the individual members.

Costs

The application software licence costs £15 a year for each phone it is downloaded to. To simplify the processing, we are charging a set fee of £5 per month for the facility, plus 5% of the sales value. The monthly fee can be paid quarterly (e.g. you may only sell work during the summer period, and so pay £15 licence fee, plus £15 for June – August), or yearly, at a discounted rate of £15 licence fee plus £50 (this reflects the reduced admin involved). Payments will only be made to current NPA members, who have paid the relevant fees.

This facility is intended to help members who make occasional sales, rather than full time professional potters, or gallery owners. If the admin became too onerous, we would have to consider withdrawing the facility altogether. If you would like to take advantage of this facility, please check that your phone is Java enabled, and then contact Liz Collinson (ceramic@lizc.info) for full details.

Advertising in NPA News

Cost of advert for one issue:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Diary listings: | free |
| Small ads: | up to 30 words free to members |
| Boxed Adverts: | whole page £25 half page £15 quarter page £10 eighth page £7.50 |
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All adverts have to be paid for, prior to publication.

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

Barbara Wood
Old Mills, Seaton Ross,
York, YO42 4NH
e: npanews@btinternet.com

Moving a BIG pot - Helen Walsh

In 2008, York Museums Trust acquired *Hua De Tu An, Flower Pictures II*, a large work made by Felicity Aylieff (born 1954). Aylieff is one of the UK's leading ceramists, producing work that crosses the boundaries between craft and sculpture. She is a key figure in research and exploration of ceramics, experimenting with materials, techniques and scale. In 2006-7, Aylieff worked on her research project "Out of China", which challenged the boundaries between ceramics and sculpture. She produced work on a large scale not normally associated with porcelain, whilst working as resident artist at Mr Yu's Big Ware Factory and the Pottery Workshop in Jingdezhen, China.

Hua De Tu An, Flower Pictures II was thrown on a wheel by two highly skilled potters, each providing stability and support for the other. It was made in seven sections and then joined together before being fired. Aylieff has decorated the pot with underglaze blue transfers and hand painting. This piece is considered one of the finest of her China series.

We acquired the piece in 2008 with the generous support of The Art Fund and the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund. When it arrived at York Art Gallery in 2008, it found a temporary home on the ground floor as part of the *Round the World in 80 Pots* exhibition, but our ultimate ambition was to have it as a stunning statement piece in our new gallery space to celebrate our pottery collections.

Measuring 210cm high with a diameter of 60cm, it weighs in at a staggering 39 stone. This clearly puts restrictions on how and where we can display the pot, particularly in a listed historical building. We spent many months prior to acquiring the piece establishing where in the gallery it could go – for our purposes, we wanted to be sure that we had some flexibility so that we weren't constricted to displaying it in one spot and never moving it at all. We worked with a structural engineer to work out the floor loading capabilities around the gallery and used his calculations to build the plinth for the pot to sit on.

Moving the pot upstairs was quite literally a huge challenge. The travelling case it had arrived in was so flimsy it disintegrated on arrival and a team of eight gallery staff (including guides, gardeners, technicians, curators and a director) dragged the pot on its side on a rug and manhandled it upright. When the time came

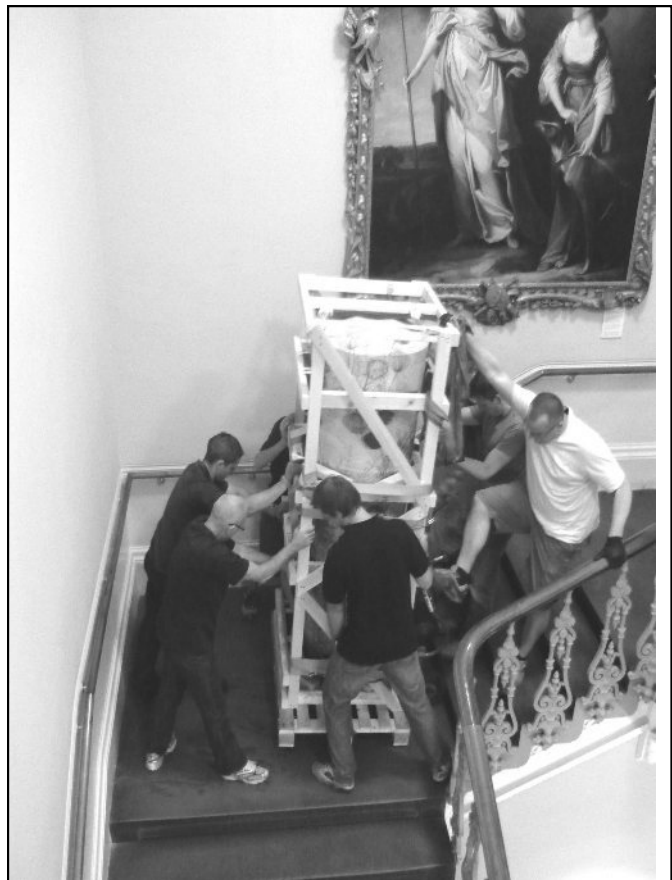
to move the pot to the new *Gallery of Pots*, which involved going up two flights of stairs, we decided to bring in professional help in the form of Arterium, an art handling company based at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

Preparation for the move included measuring doorways and the most direct route to the new location, counting and measuring stairs and landings, establishing the strength of floors. There were also the health and safety requirements to satisfy as, whilst the object is important, the safety of those working on the move was paramount.

The day before the big move, Arterium came in and built a carrying crate for the pot. This consisted of a frame that fitted the pot snugly and provided support at its most vulnerable points, where the thrown sections were joined together. The frame was padded with a non-toxic foam where it touched the pot to conserve the surface decoration. The base of the carrying frame was a pallet to enable easy movement with a pallet truck.



Arterium returned early the following day and the aim was to complete the move upstairs before opening the gallery to the public at 10am. The pot was moved through to the main gallery and transferred onto a mechanical stair walker. This clever piece of equipment was able to take the weight of the pot and the strain of lifting or *walking* it up the stairs. With six staff steady-ing the pot in its frame, it was tilted at an angle and the nerve-racking ascent began.



After a quick rest halfway up, round the turn in the stairs and up the second flight.





Another rest at the top of the stairs and a big sigh of relief.

The pot was then taken into the newly refurbished *Gallery of Pots* where a space had been prepared and the plinth positioned. The carrying crate was dismantled and then the pot twisted and manoeuvred into position.



Its new position in the modern and light space of *Gallery of Pots*, against the strong blue wall, allows it to be seen at its best and the exhibition is laid out so that visitors have a line of sight to it on entering the gallery.



Hua De Tu An, Flower Pictures II is now affectionately known at York Museums Trust as Big Pot and is also becoming a favourite with our visitors. We have begun a *Top of the Pots* scheme where visitors can vote for their favourite pot on display and Big Pot was voted top of the pots over Christmas!

Helen Walsh is Assistant Curator of Decorative Art, York Museums Trust.

All photo's ©Felicity Aylieff / York Museums Trust

See back page for another image of the pot. A picture of the *Gallery of Pots*, with *Big Pot* in place, was in the previous issue.

NPA Basics

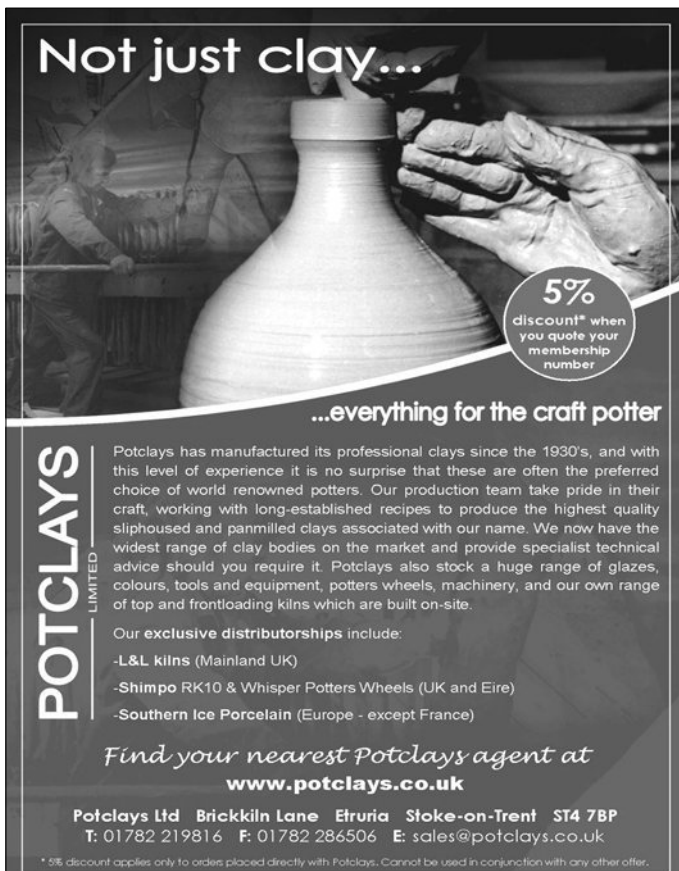
Committee

The NPA is run by a committee of volunteers who meet 5 or 6 times a year to discuss and plan activities for the membership, and carry out discussions by email between meetings. Members are elected at the Annual General Meeting for a three year term, sometimes to fulfil a particular role within the committee, and sometimes as a general committee member to participate in all discussions and decisions, and possibly take on a role for a specific project (such as organising a talk or demonstration). At the end of three years the member may stand down, or stand for re-election for another term. In between AGM's, the committee can co-opt additional members to join them.

We are paid a mileage rate for travelling on NPA business, and reasonable out of pocket expenses, but time must be given freely.

Our aim is to take the organisation forward for the benefit of the members, so feedback is always welcome, and suggestions for activities will always be considered (occasionally they prove not to be feasible due to the financial or time implications). Events will only continue if they are supported by the members.

Ideally, we need at least a dozen committee members to avoid placing too heavy a load on any one member, and we currently have only 9, so if you would consider joining us please contact any committee member.



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New Ceramics Galleries at the V&A - Margaret Lawrenson

Last November I was lucky enough to be able to spend a few days in London. The main draw was a visit to the exhibition 'Montezuma and the Aztecs' at the British Museum and, the next day, to see the 'Maharajah: The splendour of India's Royal Courts' at the V&A, both of which were excellent. Whilst at the V&A and refreshed by a light lunch we went up to the 6th floor to see the newly opened ceramics galleries. Wow! What a surprise! Gone is the dark, gloomy room with a muddle of brown dusty pots on brown dusty shelves.

Bright and extensive new galleries tell the story of world ceramics with 3,000 objects on display from the earliest Chinese pottery to contemporary ceramic art.

The central gallery with its beautifully restored domed ceiling has masterpieces dating from as far back as 2500 BC, exploring the links between the world's great ceramic traditions.

For the first time, the V&A has created a gallery exploring the production of ceramics. This incorporates a workshop area where materials and techniques can be demonstrated and visitors will be able to make, decorate and fire their own ceramics. There is also a part-reconstruction of the studio of Dame Lucie Rie, one of the greatest 20th century potters, with film footage showing the artist at work. Also, the gallery has a potter-in-residence, Stephen Dixon at present, and he has a fully operational workshop on view.

Of the further galleries, one is devoted to Architectural Ceramics, containing large scale objects such as a German 15th-century tiled heating stove and Baroque tile panels from Portugal. However, the two rooms displaying the 20th-century collections were, to my mind, even better and with so many and such a diversity of pots on show, anyone with an interest in ceramics (obviously all of our readers!) will have a marvellous time there. One room, showing ceramics made in a factory context, includes objects by designers such as Susie Cooper and Clarice Cliff as well as fine tableware by Wedgwood. The other larger 20th-century room has hand-made, unique works created in small studios by a multitude of well known artists. As well as the finished works some of the exhibits show the complete process by which the items are made, for example a wonderful Walter Keeler teapot.

A final gallery shows contemporary ceramics by artists including Anders Ruhwald and Martin Smith as well as a site specific installation by Edmund de Waal entitled *Signs and Wonders*.

The second phase of the redisplay will open later this year and will house the study collections, showing around 26,000 further objects and creating a leading resource for students and artists.

So for the first time in a century the V&A is wonderfully redisplaying its ceramics collection, one of the greatest and most comprehensive in the world. Do go and visit! And it's free!

Hands on Pottery

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with
Penny Withers

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6 - 7th March 2010



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Regional News

North East

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

The main NENPA activity is continuing with arrangements for the planned exhibition at Crook Hall, Durham City, from April 1st to 22nd. Applications are at present coming in (closing date 20th January).....all details are in the last NPA Newsletter.



East

Co-ordinator: Ann Decker
Email: ann.decker1@btinternet.com
Tel: 01904 788156

NPA members and guests - nineteen of us - made first-time contact or renewed friendships at a Seasonal lunch on 5 December at York Brewery. It was a wonderful opportunity to get to know what other potters are working on. Those attending were invited to give me their wish list of events they would like to see planned for 2010. Very few suggestions have been received, however a recent email request to the region for the same will hopefully yield responses.

There is potential for exhibitions, another raku firing, and a pit firing during the year but the details are still to be confirmed.



South East

Co-ordinator: Brian Holland
Email: brian.holland100@virgin.net
Tel: 01909 724781

On the 31st December Penny Withers and I met up with Jerry Coleman, from Sadirac, at my studio to discuss the summer exchange with French Potters from Sadirac.

The theme of this year's ceramic festival in Sadirac is Woodfiring and kilns, therefore we have been invited to show wood-fired work only. We have been generously offered, free of charge, a stall in the potters market on the weekend of the 12th and 13th June, followed by an exhibition in the contemporary art space of the local museum for the following two months. There is room for approx 60 reasonable sized pieces. The festival has allocated about 1000 euros to purchase work from this exhibition. The ceramic festival starts the week before the potters market with a programme of experimental kiln building by well known French potters.

There will be a programme of activities throughout the festival.

As with all regional events this is open to any NPA member, in this case those who wood-fire, provided that they are willing to contribute towards costs (the festival can also make a donation under their cultural exchange policy).

We are holding an exhibition during the summer- hopefully at Thoresby- at which the French potters will be well represented. The Thoresby exhibition is NOT restricted to wood fired work only. Anyone participating in either the Thoresby or the French connection needs to let me have images, preferably in a downloadable format ASAP.

Also for members information, the former Rufford Woodfiring society is relocating to Thoresby and will have an exciting programme of kiln building ahead. Any NPA members who wish to join us are welcome - the current fee is £50 pa, though this may be reviewed to cover new costs.



South West

Co-ordinator: Jan Lewis-Eccleston
Email: jle.ceramics@yahoo.co.uk
Tel: 01625 263974

A warm welcome to our new coordinator for the South-West region!



West

Co-ordinator: Dave Harper
E-mail: dpharper@uclan.ac.uk
Tel: 01782 617801 or Tel: 01204 674901



Neil Brownsword lecture at U.C.LAN

Neil Brownsword gave two well received and informative talks at the University of Central Lancashire to students and N.P.A. members. This was the first Lecture organised by Liz Collinson at U.C.LAN. There are more talks planned and it is hoped that more N.P.A. members take advantage and participate in these events. Please check for details in future Newsletters. Many thanks for your hard work Liz.

Monday 14 December - Raku and BBQ

Eleven members and some invited guests joined together in an unusual seasonal event for December of a BBQ and Raku extravaganza.

Lorry and Malcolm Cudmore kindly provided their house and garden for the venue - much appreciated by all. An interesting variety of work was produced on a cold winter evening. Good food and alcohol kept us focused and warm between the firings.

Next Meeting

The N.P.A.(West) meeting will be held at the 'Bitter Suite' pub in Preston on Monday 15th February at 7.15 pm. The theme for a small vessel (no larger than a pint) is of course- 'Valentines Day'.



North West

Co-ordinator: Roger Bell, Gale Mount, 11High Gale, Ambleside, Cumbria, LA22 0BG
Tel: 015394 32730 E-mail: bell.rogier@btinternet.com



Regrettably neither of the planned workshops mentioned in the last newsletter has come to fruition.


I await suggestions and proposals for activities in 2010 from members.



Future Talks in 2010

| | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| March 12th | Eddie Curtis |
| April 30th | Geoffrey Swindell |
| May 14th | Jack Doherty |
| October 8th | Martin McWilliam |
| November 12th | Craig Mitchell |

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First or Worst

Please send in a few words about your first pot - do your parents still bring it out of the cupboard to embarrass you in front of visitors? - and/or your worst. Is there something you're not proud of that you're prepared to share with just your closest potting friends?

(or most disappointing)!

Julie Ward

The first pot that I remember making and that I still have (although he had a long holiday with my mum) was a thumb pot made into a face. I made it when I was about 11 when I was first introduced to pottery at school. I remember each pottery teacher very clearly and I was lucky that the school I moved to in Lichfield at 14 also had pottery facilities and I went on to take pottery at 'O' and 'A' level. I was the only girl taking pottery and I remember the group as fun and we were taught all sorts of ceramics techniques although I worked mostly on slab built work.



The worst pot is more difficult – how can I define my worst pot – poorly made, poorly decorated or a disaster in the firing (lots fall into each of these categories). Usually my worst pots do not make it to glaze firing or being photographed – off to look in my studio (shed) to see if I kept any disasters (perhaps they had started off with a good shape, or I ended up liking some aspect of the decoration?)



I still have this bowl which developed from small coiled bowls based around harbours and water and I thought it would be a good idea to do a larger bowl. The main part of the bowl was worked into a mould with spirals of clay smoothed on the inside and then extended over the rim with the buildings attached. The bowl bisque fired OK although I could see that there were weaknesses in the bowl but I went ahead and glazed the piece with glass (with powdered oxides for colour) in the bowl I thought it was going to all work out well. Unfortunately I am not very patient and when I cracked the kiln open after the stoneware firing I did not let it cool sufficiently before I fully opened the door and the side nearest the door cooled too quickly particularly the glass and clay cooling at different rates splitting the work along some of the weaknesses in the base. I managed to glue it together to take some images but this

image shows the extent of the damage. I learned many lessons from this piece and I always find there is so much more to learn and I am trying to become better at keeping a record of my work particularly things that work well (as planned or not!) to try and reduce the numbers of errors I make.

York Open Air Art Exhibitions

Paul Barrett and Joe Weller from City of York Council with Jan Oldfield (York Art Society) and Andrea Cundell (NPA) presenting cheques for £820.60 (10% of art sales) and £582.90 (10% of ceramics sales) to Janet Morley, Director of Fundraising for St Leonard's Hospice - see page 6 for details of this year's events.



Sandra Martin - Rock formation sculpture



Jan Lewis-Eccleston, Dry Dock



Felicity Aylieff pot after firing at Mr Yu's Big Ware Factory and the Pottery Workshop in Jingdezhen, China - see page 14