

NPA News



Northern Potters Association
www.northern-potters.co.uk

June to July 2019
£2, free to members



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Front Cover

Alan Ball, flattened pot 19cm high, naked raku fired

Back Cover

Ann Davis, dishes

Next issue

The copy date for the next issue of NPA News is **22 July**

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

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

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

Send them to npanews@northern-potters.co.uk
Email or phone the editor if you have any queries.

From the Chair

So at last the committee had their meeting in Sheffield of the 3rd of April with me in the chair. Most were there, with the unusual experience of having the Treasurer on a Skype link from Grassington. Its a first for me, having a conversation with a laptop! The NPA moves into the digital age!



In April I visited the Halima Cassell's exhibition in the Manchester City Art Gallery. The introductory film gave an insight into her work and philosophy and demonstrated that the whole of her production is by hand-carving. The exhibition also had examples in wood, stone and even glass. The symmetry of the work and how it has been produced in the round, detailed inside and outside, even through some pieces, is quite extraordinary. The exhibition continues until Jan 2020 and is well worth a visit. The large bowls retail at about £5k but the tile castings at £480 in Jesmonite are within the range of the collector. I was even tempted!

We had two NPA exhibition previews in April. The Heat exhibition preview was a great success and the sales have been encouraging. The exhibition runs until the end of May and all the work is for sale on the gallery website. The Sheffield Vessel Exhibition at the Cupola Gallery runs from the 27th April until 1st June with 30 NPA potters taking part. Many thanks to all those members who helped organize both these exhibitions. I know from experience that it can be a thankless task.

All the very best to all the members who are exhibiting, visiting or volunteering at Earth & Fire between the 21-23 June. I will be making the effort to visit, and hopefully spending some time on the stand as a volunteer.

We welcome Helen Pickard as the new N/E Regional Coordinator and wish her all the best in her new role. I am sure she will get the support she needs to make the region a great success.

John Cook

Your Committee

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Diary

1/2 & 8/9 June	Send details of your events to the npanews@northern-potters.co.uk
7 to 9 June	North Yorkshire Open Studios www.nyos.org.uk
15 to 23 June	Potfest Perth Scone Palace, Perth, Scotland
19 to 21 July	EVAN open studios incl. Old Barn Studios, Ireby, Cumbria Ruth Charlton
21 to 23 June	Celebrating Ceramics Waterperry House, Oxford
30 June	Earth and Fire Welbeck, Nottinghamshire
2 to 21 July	Crafted by Hand Masham, Wensleydale
5 to 7 July 2019	Concepts in Clay Lytham Heritage Centre NPA West
7 to 13 July	International Ceramics Festival Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Mid Wales
7 Jul to 28 Aug	Holmfirth Art Week Holmfirth Civic Hall HD9 3AS Sue Jenkins
12 to 14 July	Green Doors Farfield Mill, Sedbergh Roger Bell et al
26 to 28 July	Great Northern Contemporary Craft Fair Sheffield
2 to 4 August	Potfest in the Park Hutton in the Forest, near Penrith, Cumbria
10 to 11 August	Potfest in the Pens Penrith, Cumbria
16 to 18 August	Art in the Pens Skipton
25 August	Art in Clay Hatfield Hertfordshire
31 Aug to 7 Sept	Ceramics in Southwell Nottinghamshire
7 to 8 Sept	Cumbria Sculptors Keswick Moot Hall, Cumbria Roger Bell et al
21 and 22 Sept	Wardlow Mires Pottery & Food Festival Derbyshire SK17 8RW
28 Sep to 10 Nov	Sheffield Ceramics Festival
3 to 26 October	British Ceramics Biennial 2019 Stoke on Trent
5 October, 1–3pm	Yorkshire Grit Mill Bridge Gallery, Skipton Emmeline Butler
5 and 6 October	NPA Annual General Meeting St Olave's Church Hall, York
11 to 13 October	York Ceramics Fair The Hospitium, York
	Great Northern Contemporary Craft Fair Manchester



Who is the best home potter you know?

The Great Pottery Throw Down is looking for home potters aged 18+ years to take part in Series 3!

For more information or an application form go to applyforpotterythrowdown.co.uk

Applications close on Sunday 23rd June 2019

Committee News

Highlights of the April Committee Meeting

John Cook welcomed everybody to the meeting for the first time as chair, with one member joining in via Skype.

Exhibitions John has been liaising with the Water Street Gallery, Todmorden in setting up the HEAT exhibition. Dianne Cross has written a piece on the HEAT exhibition for Claycraft and advertised this and other events on the website events and Facebook pages.

Ken Taylor is organising the NPA stand and its manning at Earth and Fire; we are discussing options for a stand at Potfest in the Pens. As 60+ members have stalls at the Pens it would be disappointing not to do anything, however the participatory element requires a lot of input and this often falls on those who are already busy.

Insurance John is exploring options for the NPA's public liability insurance, due for renewal in November. We are concerned that our current policy may not be fit for purpose but it is proving difficult to find an appropriate policy.

Newsletter The copy deadline for the NPA News has moved forwards to give an earlier delivery date. Joan would like wider input to the newsletter and has asked each regional coordinator to consider featuring their regional activities in one issue per year. It was agreed that all but the last three copies of NPA News should be loaded onto the web archive, giving a 6-month lag. Joan and Emmeline have added digital versions of NPA News from September 2009 onwards.

Finance Emmeline is finalising the NPA accounts for 2018/19, to be published in the Aug/Sept NPA news. It was agreed that mileage rates should be 45p per mile, in line with government guidelines. Only one region has as so far made a proposal for the use of £200 from the 2018 surplus. Other regions are encouraged to do likewise.

Membership Ann Davis has taken over as Membership Secretary. Ann will not be chasing those who pay by cheque if they do not respond to emails, this method of payment uses a disproportionately large amount of time and needs to be phased out wherever possible.

John is following up proposals from Kay Butterworth for simple software to help with membership management, including the needs of regional reps and the NPA News mailing list.

The 2019 AGM is to be held in York this year, at St Olaf's Church Hall, which has been booked for Saturday 5 October from 1–3pm. The CoCA lecture is being held on 24th November, which is too late in the year for the AGM. Ideas for an alternative venue will be considered for 2021. The 2020 AGM will be held at Potfest in the Pens.

The next committee meeting will be held at the Persistence Works, Sheffield on 27 June.

Your NPA needs you!



Towards the end of last year we were considering dissolving the NPA because we could not get enough members to volunteer for the NPA committee, despite having over 600 members!

We still need more members to volunteer for the committee if we are to ensure that we have a secure future as a successful organisation.

For more information, contact John Cook on mr.jccookie@googlemail.com

Heat – NPA exhibition



HEAT was a collaboration between the NPA and Water Street Gallery in the Pennine town of Todmorden, celebrating the various ways heat is used to by ceramicists to bring their individual ideas to fruition.

The gallery is in the centre of Todmorden and is celebrating its 10th anniversary. It's a bright and welcoming space with fabulous lighting and all the work looked really good. The display system used floating shelves attached to the walls and consequently each piece of work could be seen without it fighting others nearby. White plinths also showed off work well. Particularly effective was the siting of small pieces grouped together on long narrow shelves in the downstairs gallery. Glass cabinets displayed smaller work perfectly.

There were very large pieces – 'archaic pop creatures' sat majestically on high floating shelves and sculptural work kept company with both wood-fired and glazed earthenware pots.

I visited with an NPA friend and she remarked that it was the best ceramics exhibition she had seen for a while. A number of exhibitors had sold work by then, some several pieces.

Overall, HEAT was a very good looking exhibition and illustrated the many talents of NPA members. This was thanks to the creative display skills and hard work of the gallery owner Rosemary Holcroft

Dianne Cross



Vessel exhibition – a visitor's viewpoint



I made my way on a rainy Friday at the end of April to the opening of the VESSEL exhibition curated by Karen Sherwood and Graham Shapley of Cupola, a well established and respected Gallery in Sheffield.

Middlewood is a street full of Sheffield cred Pedestrians cradling their fragrant warm bundles of nutrition peered intently and curiously at Sarah Villeneu's intriguing eviscerated sculpture in the window, a compelling promise of more within.

The NPA ceramics are displayed in two spaces. The first, by the reception, gave a glimpse into the diversity of the collection. Each object seemed to describe an unfolding story, a cohesive conversation about what a Vessel can be, what it can mean, what it might describe. Each added to the sense of diversity of modern clay art.

I loved the militancy of some pieces, the elegance, the quirkiness, the seriousness of others. There were forms securely standing their ground, while others seemed to want to take flight and soar. There were infinitely precise, formal lines and there were vague, meditative curves. There were jagged accusations and wild flights of fancy. There were allusions to tradition standing up to modern, assertive, pared down minimalism. There were luscious glazes, mixed media, stable functional pieces and fables, dreams, protest, and beauty.

Upstairs, Brian Holland's imposing vessel greets the visitor head on, its passenger, harbinger of dreams and nightmares, of times past and future, presiding over the room of ceramic delights.

There is much in the exhibition that I admire and even envy and some I would like to understand better, to revisit and discern. But I would not come away from Vessel without a word about the small crowd of screaming, enchained crowned heads in the corner of the Long Gallery. Black, sharp, unapproachable but seductive, they stay in the mind and challenge the senses.

This is the thing with ceramics. Do you remain with the beautiful teapot, that piece that touches you intimately, the one you want to hold and possess, or do you fall in love with the bleak vision, the controversial question, the piece you want to make part of your life because it endlessly gives you pause for thought? I need to have it all!

It is a tribute to the meticulous curating and a reflection of the talent of NPA members that I carried away from that exhibition a sense of having been allowed into a secret. Many more talented and industrious artists would have had their voice heard and their vision appreciated, had we been able to double the space. But what was there came together for me and warranted attention and appreciation.

Olinda Everett

The Potteries are Alive – Graham Hough

Recently I visited The Potteries and was delighted to see it is still a major producer of ceramics with Burleigh, Dudson, Emma Bridgewater, Spode, Moorcroft, Steelite and others busy producing domestic, commercial and decorative ceramics.

I started my tour at The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery in Stoke which has a huge comprehensive collection of ceramics starting with early pots, to examples of all the ceramics manufacturers and through to contemporary makers. The collection is so big that I needed a break in the Gallery café before looking at more pots. Incidentally there is also a fine collection of paintings, including a few Lowry's, but mainly by local painters.

Middleport Pottery offer a factory tour which is recommended. Here you will see the production of mainly Burleigh Pottery, although I was surprised to note that they also made Poole Pottery, all made in Stoke. The tour took us through the whole process from the delivery of clay, processing slip and clay slugs for the production floors, mould making, slip-casting, flatware, firing, transfer decoration, firing and remedial work, all with the opportunity to chat with the workers. We were lucky to see the loading and firing up one of the huge gas kilns. There is also a 'Heritage Tour' showing the old bottle kiln, mould store and the small private businesses that rent space.

Probably better known to NPA members is that Middleport is the home of the Clay College. There is a small gallery of students' work and the opportunity to peer through the window at the potters at work.

Day two was a visit to Potclays to buy a few essentials and then on to Gladstone Pottery Museum which is the only complete Victorian pottery factory from the days when coal-burning bottle kilns fired fine bone china. I wandered around the recommended route talking to the demonstrators of throwing, slip casting and flower making. I also had a long chat with a flower painter as she showed how to decorate bone china flowers, including colour mixing and applying the colour, all illustrating the many years of skill she has acquired.



'The World of Wedgwood' is in a large estate currently parkland and housing out in the countryside. An impressive collection of modern buildings in landscaped grounds house the Flagship Store, Factory Outlet and Tea Conservatory. I was shocked to see that Royal Doulton was made in China, Designer Ware made in Indonesia and Waterford Crystal made in Slovenia. However, the excellent Wedgwood Museum is well worth the visit. Whether you are a fan of Wedgwood or not it is the sheer skill demonstrated by these early potters and decorators that impresses. Original models by Flaxman and Hawksworth for the sprigs are mind-boggling in their detail and finesse. How anyone can model such fine work is almost beyond belief. The exhibits are in chronological order up to the less impressive contemporary pottery.

Day three started with a visit to 'LoveClay', Valentine Clays' impressive new headquarters. There is a small gallery of excellent contemporary works and an upper mezzanine gallery, then showing work by NPA members. There is also a useful library of ceramics books.



Wedgwood dish

'Emma Bridgewater' is in a large collection of industrial buildings and a bonus is that as you walk by you can watch, through the windows of a long building, workers slip casting. The café offers some excellent cake and gave me a chance to read up about Emma Bridgewater. There are a factory and souvenir shops, but the main function is the production of pottery made in Stoke.

'Dudson Museum' is housed in an adapted bottle kiln set in a cluster of new buildings. Dudson's is still owned by the Dudson family and has survived due to the enterprise of an ancestor who realised that producing domestic pots would lead to ruin and decided to concentrate on commercial ceramics for the hospitality, military, railways and other trades, and are still a major producer of this type of pottery in Stoke. The museum is well laid out and described by the knowledgeable guide/receptionist. I was told that although Dudson's was not a well-known name most of us will have eaten off their products.

'Moorhouse Pottery' has a museum and showroom of their iconic ceramics. Until I visited the museum I had not been a fan of their designs but seeing the work of their innovative designers and skilled workers I have come to admire many of their products. Again the skill of the tube liners and painters is astonishing. Nearby is the Moorcroft Collector's Shop.

'Spode' is part of the Portmeirion Brand and many of their products, including Royal Worcester, are made in Stoke. I visited the Spode Heritage Centre which has a large collection of engraved copper plates for the printing of the iconic transfer designs. Currently under reorganisation, the



Wedgwood models and moulds

museum is housed in a series of old buildings that lead into a factory shop selling both their own products and Dudson Pottery. There is a fine boardroom with further examples of Spode Pottery. The Factory Canteen is highly recommended for their Staffordshire Oatcakes.

Many of these businesses offer workshops for the public to work with clay. I was told that the showing of the Great British Pottery Throwdown has galvanized people's interest in pottery and these workshops are full of new manipulators of clay.

Incidentally I understand that since the BBC axed the Great Pottery Throwdown the format has been taken up by a Danish company, TV2, and a new series will be shown this year but I don't know on which channel.

On my final morning at breakfast at the Clayhanger B&B I met and chatted to the owner of Moorcroft. After he left another guest told me she had been a painter at Moorcroft as well working in other potteries. She had trained at Wedgwood and at first had been trained to paint the thin line down each side of a tea cup handle on the same cup for four weeks. She demonstrated she could still get her hand in the correct position. We talked about the highly skilled but physically repetitive hard work in the factories and the permanent injuries workers still suffer from. Even when the chair and workbench are ergonomically designed a decorator still has to hold a pot in many positions to paint it causing permanent shoulder and back injury.

This illuminating talk rounded off an educational and enjoyable trip around these thriving, working Potteries

Did you dig it? – Kate Stride



On a beautifully sunny day in Sept 2018 I went for a walk to the local reservoir. The water level was low and whilst walking around the waters edge, I came across a large patch of clay and thought to myself, “I’m coming back with a bucket and hand trowel.”

The very next day I skidded about on the clay, dug in various places, got covered in it and collected two manageable bucket loads. It was great and felt sort of primitive and wholesome. I took the buckets to the studio in Barnsley I share with Steve Ellis. When the clay was dry I picked out a few unwanted organic bits and pieces, of which there were very few, and ground down the clay.

Once it was in power form, I added bentonite, which gives the clay plasticity, and slowly added water until it was workable without getting stuck to my hands. After giving the clay an initial wedging, to get rid of air pockets, I bagged it for a few days before wedging it again and making my first pieces.

At the lower firing temperature earthenware 1060C, it produced a sandy colour and at the higher temperature stoneware 1250C, it produced a lovely deep red colour. The clay was very smooth and I’m now in the process of making some that is coarse and textured by adding grog, in the form of small pieces of crushed, fired clay.

Having got over the initial, at times over-excitement, I’ll continue to experiment but with a more methodical approach. With the last of the clay which is dry but needs processing, I will weigh the powered clay and the bentonite, measure the amount of water added, weigh the wet clay and make notes including the shrinkage rates. When the water level drops again I’ll definitely be collecting some more, the whole process is Fantastic.



Finished piece from the dug clay, fired to 1060C

Photos Kate Stride
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Facebook: kate Stride Artist

Article edited by John Cook

From Micro to Macro – The life, inspirations and work of potter John Rivers – by Amanda Graham

Recently I had the pleasure of visiting potter John Rivers, of Riddings Pottery in Derbyshire, and his partner Pat Smith, a talented textile artist. John had invited me to visit the pottery to enable me to write this article, describing his personal history as a potter and his many sources of inspiration. It's a beautiful day when I arrive and am given a tour. Their home, has many rooms brightly lit by daylight through the large windows. In the 40 years that they have lived in the house, Pat and John have retained its original character but decorated to provide comfortable accommodation for visitors attending John's pottery workshops. The many rooms and outside apartments offer potential for artists' studios and more.

John's tour of his outdoor spaces includes his clay production system. I find this fascinating as a scientist and potter, only ever having reached inside a bag to obtain my clay, following a trip to Stoke. John's stoneware is derived from beneath the deep hard coal seam that extends from Yorkshire, through Derbyshire and into Nottinghamshire, laid down in the mid-Triassic era and pre-dating the arrival of the dinosaurs.

Open-cast mining of the coalfield nearby to Riddings was developed after the closure of the pits and has enabled John to obtain the raw materials for his clay. John produces this through several processes that include soaking, pulverising, sieving and drying. The end result is a buff stoneware clay that John uses to create his stunning pieces, decorated using his own glazes and fired in reducing or oxidising conditions.

Although working as a teacher of English literature in schools and adult education, combined with an enduring appreciation of poetry for over 60 years, John has a keen interest in science that informs and inspires his work. Kiln engineering is an added dimension to his skills, evident by the large gas kiln (photo 2) that John built and showed me in one of his stone buildings, which also houses a pug mill, a second (electric) kiln and a gallery space upstairs (photo 3). The gas kiln is currently decommissioned and John explains that, although originally connected to the mains gas supply, this is now illegal but could be remedied by changing the supply to bottled gas. I am amazed by this kiln, built by John using bricks reclaimed from a closed Derbyshire pottery. Reading the cones sounds particularly perilous and, together with the necessity to control the flame path across the pot when being fired, these features of gas firing are testament to John's skill and experience as a potter.

That such stunning pieces of work emerge from this fine balance of temperature and positioning of ware in the kiln clearly reflects John's understanding of the science of the glazes he uses and their effects on his clay. The end result can truly be described as a perfect marriage between art and science. We return to scientific



concepts when discussing John's work over lunch, which is a delicious soup made by Pat and served in one of John's beautiful cobalt blue glazed bowls (photo 4). John uses the textural effect gained by 'chattering' turning tools against clay that is very leather hard, shown in the photograph of two porcelain bowls.

Previously, in the gallery, John had shown me a large plate (approximately 18 inches in diameter (photo 5, right) entitled 'White Noise' in which the rings of chattered texture imply the array of electromagnetic waves that, I surmise, would include 'Hawking' black body radiation and terahertz radiation, particles of cosmic dust and photons that bombard Earth from deep space, but which we cannot see without specialised equipment. A thin red band represents radiation which we, as humans, can perceive- infra red as heat or visible light from the Sun, perhaps. John's inspiration from the science of the cosmos has been supported by imagery taken from space – specifically a photograph of the earth taken from the surface of the moon on the first moon landing. The piece entitled 'Earth-rise' (photo 5, left) poignantly conveys the fragility of our planet.

'From Micro to Macro' could possibly be used to describe the breadth of John's inspiration behind his surface decoration. He shows me a plate in which deep reds gained by reduction have been achieved by controlling the gas flow to produce an image redolent of a butterfly wing, seen under a microscope (photo 6, left). A glazed image of a crab against a deep blue background produces such a striking 3D effect, I almost felt that if I touched the crab it might run away!

Later we move into the garden to photograph selected items of John's work, laid against a stunning backdrop comprising Pat's hand-stitched quilt (photo 8). Pat explains that a main pleasure in her textile work is the design process and it's clear that both she and John produce work that is highly conceived and made with fine attention to detail, with skill that has been developed and refined throughout their lives.

I leave with the very generous gift of a wide bowl that sits on the table in front of me as I write. I can't help but reflect upon the sheer energy involved in making and glazing such large pieces, from what originated as mud laid down millions of years ago, and now locked into this bowl. It says something to me about the cyclical nature of life and our existence as humans in such a short part of Earth's history, yet we continue to damage it so disproportionately.

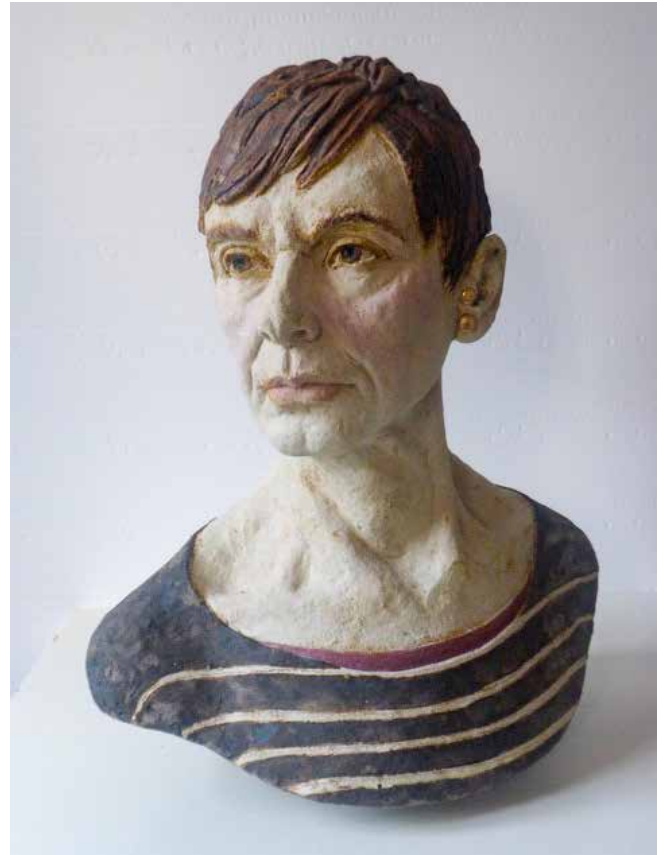


Members' Gallery

All NPA members can send images of their work to the editor for inclusion in the gallery.



Charles Brown, Wassail pot, slipware, honey glazed fired to 1100C in a gas kiln



Karin Hessenberg, sculpture of David
Selected for the Society of Portrait Sculptors Exhibition at the Galleria Pall Mall, London from 3 to 8 June 2019



Helen Pickard



Viv Rumbold



Shaun Clark, Octopus bowl



Jackie Knight, Raku bottle, 10 inches



Karen Martlew, two views of a sculpture inspired by her sister and dog Alfie
Earthstone clay, stoneware fired and finished with underglaze colours.

Eclectica-global inspirations



Manchester Art Gallery is hosting the biggest exhibition so far of Halima Cassell's inspiring work, which I recommend to anyone with an interest in ceramics or sculpture.

Halima grew up in Manchester and gained an MA at UCLAN. She lives and works in the north west.

Occupying the gallery's Foyer and two rooms, the exhibition includes work from the 1990s onwards. I recommend starting in the two exhibition rooms to become acquainted with the work, its range and development, before visiting the installation in the foyer and finally watching the short film in which Halima talks about her work, methods and influences. This way you know your reaction to the artworks themselves before you hear the how and why of it and get over-awed.

There is a wide selection of Halima's ceramics, including thrown and carved pieces from her time in Japan, as well as sculptures in marble, bronze, stone and wood. The ceramics are both technically interesting and aesthetically pleasing. Every piece is hand-carved and her ability to conceive and execute such exacting and complex 3D designs is very impressive, not to say mind-boggling!

In the foyer there is a new installation of carved bowls made with clays from different countries and reflecting a positive aspect of each. Called Virtues of Unity it will, when complete, represent every nation on earth.

Most interesting to me is the development of her designs, which are now more free and less constrained by symmetry, so have become more organic and sensuous.

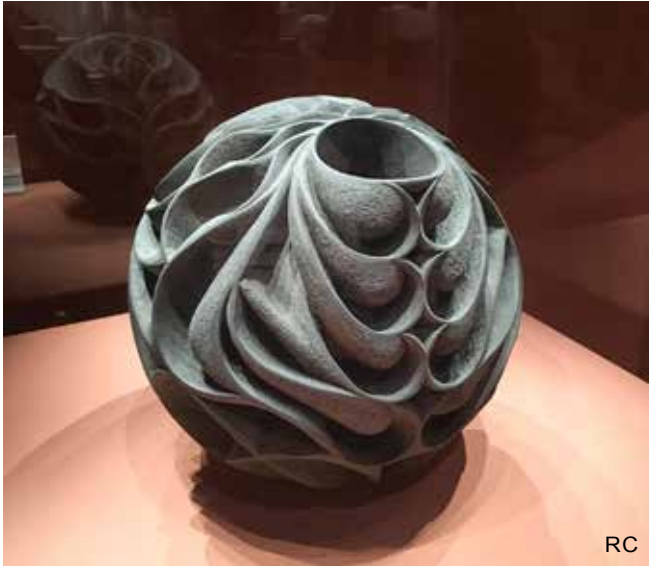


To quote Manchester Art Gallery, "Cassell is gifted with an exceptional ability to visualise complex patterns and mentally project them on to 3-D objects. Her work is diverse in inspiration and form, but her personal style is instantly recognisable due to her bold, energetic designs, crisp carving and intuitive understanding of how to integrate pattern, form, material and scale."

The exhibition continues until 5 January 2020. Don't miss it.

Text Joan Hardie

Photos: Jonathan Keenan (JK); Ruth Charlton (RC)



RC



RC



JK



RC



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Books – Roger Bell

Review

250 Tips, Techniques and Trade Secrets for Potters by Jacquie Atkin

It has been a long time since my review has covered basic pottery techniques. This a book for someone in the early days of their experience with clay. The author is a professional ceramicist who also teaches pottery. Interestingly Jacquie is included in the current exhibition at Red Barn Gallery, Melkintorpe near Penrith till June 30th.

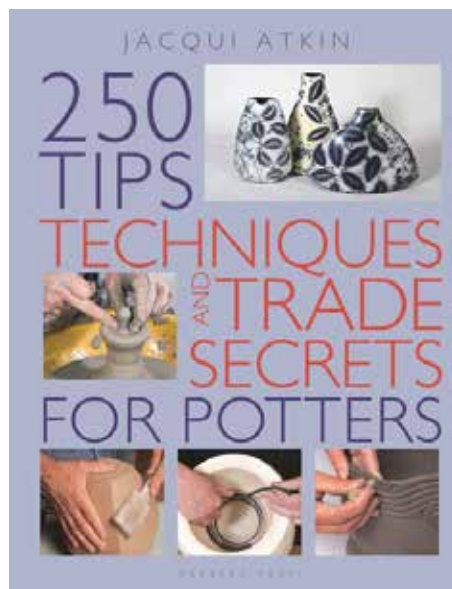
The format is logical and straightforward. First the basic 'stuff' you need: clay, tools, kiln and perhaps a wheel. Then what to make – generating ideas and developing forms. Finally how will you make your pieces. How to slab, pinch, coil, throw and mould.

Each section contains a mix of text, diagrams and photos to keep each item or activity clear. The basics are always clearly explained first, and variations and problem solving are incorporated as sections with a coloured background or surround, so you naturally start at the 'beginning' before considering the complexities.

After this is a 'Decorative Wares Directory' giving simple diagrams of shapes for bowls, vases etc. which should inspire to extend one's making beyond a few basic forms.

Overall an enormous amount is covered in just 150 or so pages. I could not identify any important omissions. More importantly the progression is logical and the detail clear. As good as any basic book on the market.

Published by Herbert Press (Bloomsbury) at £18.00



New Books

Iznik & Iznik
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Secrets Under Glaze
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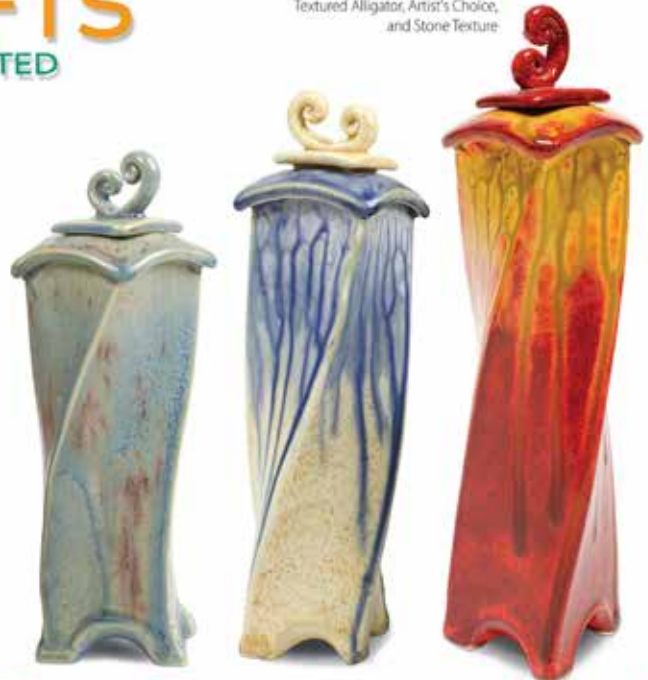
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Welcome to new members

A warm welcome is extended to all our new members.

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

Christina Allen	Sheffield
Anne James	Hexham
Richard Rhodes	York
Lyngard Simpson	Stoke on Trent
Andy Van Vliet	Sheffield
Annie Wattam	Rotherham



Visit northern-potters.co.uk for membership forms and subscription rates

Ann Davis

Membership Secretary

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Ann Davis – the new NPA membership secretary

I consider myself a newcomer to the potting world. A few years ago I retired from nursing and embarked on an MA in Ceramics at UCLan Preston, which I completed in 2017. For many years I had dabbled with pottery, attending evening classes, collecting pots from my travels, going to exhibitions and generally trying to be creative – I was lucky that I could do this whilst having a successful nursing career. I'd always wanted to focus and be good at one thing – the MA certainly enabled me to do this.

My main inspiration comes from my passion for fabrics, their texture and flow, and I try to emulate this in my pieces in both form and surface texture with my use of glazes. I have developed my own stoneware glazes through lots of testing of recipes and adjusting oxides. I hand-build using stoneware and porcelain clays.

I work from home and also shared some studio space in Manchester until I moved house a few weeks ago so now need to rethink how I organise my making. It's just over one year since completing the MA and I have exhibited at a few shows, which was very encouraging. Being a less experienced potter I offered to become the membership secretary to the NPA – and hopefully my organised nature will be put to good use without needing a wealth of potting knowledge.



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Regional News

The NPA's regional groups were set up to help members communicate with others local to them and to arrange events in their area.

Any member can ask to be included in any regional mailing list. You must have given your consent to receive NPA emails.

Several members took part in the first **Fired Up Furness** exhibition in Ulverston over the early May bank holiday weekend. The Ulverston Potters Collective hired a pop-up shop during the town's Printfest to show the work of eleven ceramic artists from South Cumbria. They are already planning another event next year.

John Kershaw northernpottersnw@gmail.com

Facebook: NPAnorthwest



NW

Several of our members were included in the **UCLAY** exhibition at PR1 Gallery, UCLAN, Preston. It was organized by MA Ceramic students and showed work of both past and present students. Our bi-annual exhibition **Concepts in Clay** at Lytham Heritage Centre will run from 2nd – 21st July, the Preview Night will be on Friday 5th July.

Our NPA West meeting is due to be held Monday evening 1st July 7.15 – 7.30pm at 'Speakeasy' (formerly Mad Hatters and Ale Emporium). Apparently it is the same day as UFO day so we are using it as our theme for our Ceramic piece show and tell.

Members are encouraged to seek new venues for our region. If you have contacts that may be interested in NPA West please email Geoff or come along to our next meeting.

Future exhibitions that have been booked so far:

PR1 Gallery 16th December 2019 to 19th January 2020

PR1 Gallery 2nd November to 18th November 2020

Garstang Art Centre **Ceramic Wall Art** 17th October to 14th November 2020.

Geoff Wilcock ghwilcock@uclan.ac.uk 01772 862852

Facebook: NPAwest



W

Pots at the Parsonage will kick off this year with a preview on Friday 24th May followed by a three day exhibition of work by our members. It's a gorgeous venue, held at The Old Parsonage, Didsbury, and set in the most beautiful gardens. There are nine of us exhibiting this year. As we host the event throughout the bank holiday we would love to see you for a chat and maybe you could enjoy the grounds for a stroll and a picnic too. I would personally like to thank the team that has helped to put this exhibition together. I couldn't have done it without you.

Our next meeting is to be held at **The Firs Pottery**, The Firs, Sheppenhall Lane, Nantwich CW5 8DE on Friday 7th June from 2pm. Joy Wild has very kindly offered to host us for the afternoon at her wonderful pottery. As well as having a short meeting for the SW-NPA Joy will also give us a talk about the pottery, how she set it up, and the work she makes. There will also be a chance to chat and catch up and be sociable with tea and cake, either in her lovely garden if the weather is nice or in her house if it isn't so clement, where we can see some of her collection of famous potter's pots.

I also hear that there is a good local pub within walking distance. Famous for curries, and open into the evening. If you can make the meeting then please let me know so that I can pass the numbers onto Joy. Thank you.

Juliet Myers email@sw-npa.co.uk

Facebook: NPAsouthwest



SW

After a quiet period for NE group, a meeting was held on 11 May to discuss ideas for group exhibitions, activities and collaborations, and share details on current or imminent events. In particular ideas for venues were shared and will be researched and reported back to the next meeting at 1pm on 20 July, at The Bridge, Darlington. Anyone from any region is welcome to attend, and we are suggesting that people bring in a piece of work, please.



NE

Events shared at and prior to the meeting include the **Empty Bowls** charity event at Tyne Bank Brewery on 20th June (tickets and info Facebook; emptybowlsnewcastleupontyne), and the initiative to expand the Bensham Community Pottery in Gateshead (www.Spacehive/BenshamPottery). Les Simpson is helping organise a week-long **exhibition of Arts at Middleton Hall** (w/c 24 June), including a pit firing and BYO barbecue.

Future events include a **raku day** at Newmarch Workshops in Middlesbrough, and visits to the ceramic collection at MIMA, dates to be announced.

Thank you to everyone for welcoming me to the role, I hope we can work well together!

Helen Pickard NEPotters@gmail.com Facebook: [@NorthEastNPA](https://www.facebook.com/NorthEastNPA) Twitter: [@ne_npa](https://twitter.com/ne_npa)

Since the last newsletter, members of NPA East have attended the raku event at Hive with rave reviews of the two days and how enjoyable it was. Hive are exhibiting in the Long Gallery at Ilkley Manor House for the Spring Bank Holiday 24 to 27 May. We hope NPA members support this event and hope to have reports about it.



E

The **selling event at Sherburn** went ahead in terrible weather. The craft organiser of the Sherburn Craft and Food Festival (to be held over the August Bank holiday weekend) was very impressed at the standard and would like to have a **Pottery Corner** in the main marquee. Anyone interested please contact her directly through the website <https://craftandfoodfestival.co.uk>. We have negotiated a small discount for NPA members over the three days.

The **York Spurriergate event** was poorly supported by NPA members but not by the general public. Kay mounted a display of pottery and techniques together with information about the NPA. It generated a lot of interest and engaged people in conversation. We met people from all over the world with work going back to New Zealand and France. St Michael's Trust who run the building need events like this to keep it open and they would also like to have us back.

Please join us at organised events and let us know what you are doing so we can encourage the group to support your events too – lovely friendships are made this way. Enjoy your summer and keep in touch.

Lyn Clarke & Kay Butterworth enpa.coordinator@gmail.com Facebook: [NPAEast](https://www.facebook.com/NPAEast) Twitter [@NPA_E](https://twitter.com/NPA_E)



SE

Vessel, the exhibition at Cupola Gallery in Sheffield is now all up and running until June 1st. Olinda Everett has written a report on page 7. The exhibition is beautifully curated and has such wide ranging work responding to the theme. On Saturday May 25th there will be a series of free talks from members Debbie Michaels, Helen Graham, Claire Allam, Frances Lee, Brian Holland.

Several members took part in **Open Up** at The Art House in Sheffield to further our collaboration. Footfall was very good on the Bank Holiday weekend and steady the following weekend. Sales were varied.

June 2nd sees Deborah Frith leading a **Slip Casting Workshop** at the Art House with Ken Taylor doing a repeat of the earlier **Glazing Workshop** (already full!) hopefully in July.

Our meeting set for May had to be rearranged for June – date and venue tbc by email.

Bev Seth & Kathy Watson senpacoordinator@gmail.com Facebook: [NPAsoutheast](https://www.facebook.com/NPAsoutheast)

The Back Page

Animal Heads



I was asked if I would be interested in running a workshop at my studio in York, by NPA East co-ordinator Lyn Clarke when I met her at a selling event at Lotherton Hall last year. I decided on a clay animal head workshop which was advertised in the NPA newsletter. It was soon booked up and the sessions were run over two consecutive afternoons in March.

I was thrilled by the vast array of talent and thought 'what can I teach them?' However it was most enjoyable and the ability to chat over a cuppa and 'make' at the same time was great.

We all introduced ourselves, some non-potters readily joining in with their spouses or friends. I initially gave a demonstration and later said my favourite piece for making texture on the animal was a bud from a piece of magnolia tree, with the runner-up being an old toothbrush.

We all talked about our methods of working, types of clay we used and so on, and exchanged stories. The potters then had a few hours to make their pieces and the results were fabulous.

Catherine Boyne-Whitelegg

Recognise anyone?



Cover photo from NPA News Oct/Nov 2007

Editor's Post Script

No room for a Foreword in this feature-packed edition, just for a P.S. to make three requests.

First, please use npanews@northern-potters.co.uk for all submissions in the future.

Second, it is very helpful to me if submissions are sent well before the deadline! This helps me to plan the issue, know if I need to conjure up some additional material, and address any technical problems (e.g. photos too small) in time.

Thirdly, to extend the NPA News archive on our website, I will need to borrow (and later return) printed copies of the newsletter from 2005 and earlier. If you have a substantial collection of newsletters, please let me know.

Joan Hardie, NPA News Editor

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