

NPA News



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

April to May 2020
£2, free to members



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Front Cover
Wendy Wall, Drop Bowls

Back Cover
Shirley Peacock

Next issue

The copy date for the next issue of NPA News is 21 May 2020

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

Written on 19 February – see page 22 for an update.

The Throw Down on More 4 seems to be going well with viewing figures of over 600,000 – twice the norm for the channel. A long way off the dizzy heights of 2.2 million on the BBC but still very respectable.



I watched the slip-cast project with interest as it was the first time this had been attempted. I watched it with a non-potter who said at the end “yes but how does pouring clay into a mould work?” More explanation is needed with such a difficult technique. I thought the figurative/sculptural week was brutal!

When it comes to judging it can get a little subjective and as someone once said “all competitions are foolish”. I am writing my report before the series ends as I am off to sunny Spain on a road trip for several weeks so I will miss the final broadcasts. Not sure who my money is on up to now as the remaining potters all have their own strengths and the judges will have their own views.

The first NPA Bursary has been awarded to Kate Stride for her research into locally found clay and its properties. It should be an interesting report and we wish her well. Her first attempts were published in the June/July 2019 News. I hope this will encourage others to apply.

The new website has been launched and we have started to make our own edits to the content on the site under the expert guidance of Jack Hardie. The visual impact of the site is much improved.

Gerry and Lyn Grant, and Pamela Thorby joined the committee in January. We wish them well. Unfortunately our Vice Chair Ken Taylor has stepped down. He is going to explore his bucket list! I would personally like to thank him for helping keep the NPA on an even keel. Don't get lost underground Ken!

We will man a Potfest promotional stand for the whole of the show and site it with the demonstration area. Gerry Grant is gathering a list of demonstrators. Please see if you can help.

John Cook

Your Committee

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Gerry Grant York

Lynn Grant York

Pamela Thorby York

Diary

In the current circumstances, you should check with the organisers before travelling to events. There are links to all events on www.northern-potters.co.uk/exhibitions-events/

Until 9 May	Fresh Observations Emmeline Butler Studio Vault Gallery, Settle
From 1 April	Green Door & Holehird Artists Roger Bell Brockhole Gaddum Gallery
9 April to 9 May	Urban Joy Hanne Westergaard Yorkshire Artspace & Millenium Galleries
1 to 3 May	Fired Up Furness tba Lightburn House, Ulverston
1 May to 13 Sept	Sculpture Trail Roger Bell & Bob Park Halecat Estate & Garden Centre, Witherslack
9 & 10 May	Pocklington Area Open Studios Fangfoss Pottery, Barbara Wood Nr York
17 May, 11am to 3pm	Open House Ali Bradley et al. Car House Studio, Gristhorpe, Filey YO14 9PD
22 to 25 May	Pots in the Parsonage NPA Southwest Lightburn House, Ulverston
4 July to 1 August	NPA West Exhibition tba Fleetwood Library
13 July to 19 Sept	Prints & Ceramics NPA exhibition Platform Gallery, Clitheroe

New date tba	Ceramics in Charnwood Market Place Loughborough
30 to 31 May	GNCCF Newcastle Baltic Centre, Gateshead
Currently closed	Ceramics Fair The Hepworth, Wakefield
12 to 14 June	Potfest Scotland Scone Palace, Perth
Cancelled	Earth & Fire The Harley Gallery, Welbeck, Notts
17 to 19 July	Celebrating Ceramics Waterperry Gardens, nr. Wheatley, Oxford
18 & 19 July	Art in the Pen, Thirsk Auction Mart, Thirsk
18 to 19 July	GNCCF Sheffield Millenium Gallery, Sheffield
24 to 26 July	Potfest in the Park Hutton in the Forest, Penrith
31 July to 2 Aug	Potfest in the Pens Skirsgill Market, Penrith
8 & 9 August	Art in the Pen, Skipton Auction Mart, Skipton
21 to 23 August	Art in Clay, Hatfield Hatfield House, Hatfield, Herts
30 August	Ceramics in Southwell Southwell, Notts
5 & 6 Sept	Art in the Gardens Botanical Gardens, Sheffield
12 & 13 Sept	Pottery & Food Festival Wardlow Mires, Derbyshire
19 & 20 Sept	Sheffield Ceramics Festival Meersbrook Park, Sheffield
8 to 11 October	GNCCF Manchester Victoria Baths, Manchester

Event News

NPA & 10 STRONG JOINT EXHIBITION

**THE PLATFORM GALLERY
CLITHEROE, LANCASHIRE**

PRINTS & CERAMICS: CONNECTING CRAFTS

13th July to 19th September 2020

The Platform Gallery's third exhibition of the year brings together two Northern Craft organizations; the Northern Potters Association and 10 Strong Artists. It is the aim of this exhibition to highlight and showcase the wealth of talented artists that belong to these organisations and the wider goal of the gallery to connect visitors with local contemporary makers and their crafts.

Deadline for applications w/c 11th May
Exhibition launch 18th July
Work to be collected 21st – 30th September

Applications Forms now available from:
Andrea Westall & Jack Shackleton
e: platform.gallery@ribblevalley.gov.uk
t: 01200 425566

NPA contact: Graham Hough graham@redspr.com



Pocklington Area Open Studios, near York

Six potters will be among the nineteen artists taking part in this annual open studios event – Gerry Grant at Fangfoss, Penny De Corte at Barmby Moor, Barbara Wood at Seaton Ross, Peter Edwards at Hayton, and Jill Ford and Terri Donockley at Ellerton.

There will be timed demonstrations and talks. To mark VE Day the artists will all be selling or auctioning a piece of their work to raise funds for the British Legion.

www.facebook.com/POCKAREAOPENSTUDIOS

Hanne Westergaard:
Urban Joy
10th April – 9th May, 2020

Persistence Works
Brown Street, S1 2BS
Wed-Sat, 11am – 4pm

Millennium Gallery
Arundel Gate, S1 2PP
Mon-Sat, 10am – 5pm
Sun, 11am – 4pm

Preview
Thursday 9th April, 6pm-8pm

Bookings & more information at
www.artspace.org.uk

This April, Hanne Westergaard presents a major exhibition of her work in ceramics. As well as presenting work in the gallery at Yorkshire Artspace: Persistence Works, where Hanne's studio is based, the exhibition will be accompanied by a display at Sheffield's Millennium Gallery.

Urban Joy features new work inspired by Hanne's environment in Sheffield and the surrounding countryside. It will also showcase earlier pieces, telling the story of a relationship with clay which has lasted more than 50 years.

Slipcasting demonstrations
Fridays, 2pm-4pm. *Booking essential.*
Hanne's studio at Persistence Works

Meet the maker
Saturdays, 11am-4pm.
Persistence Works



Image: Tracy Holland



Museum Sheffield

Ben Brierley talk at the Arthouse, Sheffield

We had a full day on Saturday 15th February 2020, consisting of three parts, four if you include lunch.

First was the main event, the talk by Brierley, ceramics lecturer at Loughborough University and a wood firing expert. His passion is wood-fired ceramics and has been for the last 20 years or more during which time he has built, on his own or with others, a large number of wood kilns of various shapes, sizes and effectiveness. He went through some of the technical aspects of kiln construction, all illustrated by a good slide show and numerous anecdotes and stories of successful and on occasions not so successful outcomes. His enthusiasm and knowledge for wood-firing was interesting, informative and inspiring. By mid-morning even I was wondering if I could fit a kiln in the garden (the answer is no in the end).

He also explained all about which clays he has used and which worked best for him. There was information on glazes, some of the problems and solutions he had come across, and kiln construction techniques. All was based on long experience of what he found had worked best, from the preferred height of stoking doors, to 'don't get splinters, wear gloves' and everything else in between. He also gave a host of temperature and firing tips and the things to look out for when packing a kiln. Much of this information can be found on his website as he is very free with his knowledge and experience.

The chat was free flowing with Ben happy to answer questions as we went along. This brought up a lot of extra information, although sometimes not always in a planned order. With all the chat the lunch break was a bit later than planned.

Next Penny Withers gave a short illustrated talk on the wood kiln at Manor Oaks Studios in Sheffield. I had heard of this kiln and the group but knew next to nothing about it. It looks to be a great resource and opportunity for potters to get involved and learn about wood firing. Go to their blog at www.a-n.co.uk/blogs/manor-oaks-wood-firing-group for more information.

The day was rounded off by a superb throwing demonstration by Ben who made one of his quirky 'jug' vases/bottles/sculptures. He threw some lovely forms for the three-part piece and then just bent and moulded them into shape, a very confident performance. Whatever you would categorise them as they are striking, clever and unique. To see some images of these amazing pieces have a look on his web site. www.benbrierley-woodfiredceramics.co.uk

The day finished about 3.30 and I think I can safely say that all the attendees now know a lot more about wood-fired ceramics than we did before.

Thanks to organisers Bev and Kath, our host the Arthouse, and Ben and Penny for their talks.

Graham Norton (aka Nog)



Ideas from the East

The theme for our January meet up in Leeds was the “Best thing I’ve learned about pottery”. In a lively discussion these were the points raised and discussed with contributions from everyone. We hope you find some of these useful and worth further investigation.

Go with it

Listen to the clay. You may start with an idea of what to make but if the clay is not responding, go with it! Your Greek amphora may turn into a sculptured torso. The amphora is for another day.

Clay consistency

Ensure the clay is the correct consistency for the making technique you are using. It takes time and patience to learn and feel the correct consistency

Potters

are (mostly) lovely people

Glaze fit

Getting the correct fit between glaze and body is critical to prevent crazing and shivering on firing.

Use cones



Using cones when firing is crucial. For cone 6 firing include cones 5, 6, and 7 to understand that the correct amount of ‘cone 6 heat’ has been applied.

Firing schedules

Correct firing needs the correct firing and cooling schedules, it’s not just a simple matter of firing up to the cone 6 temperature. To prevent common defects such as pin holes it usually requires a four-phase schedule with soak periods.



For example, a cone 6 schedule might be
55 degrees per hour to 104C;
quick to 945C (150 degrees per hour);
slow to 1190C (42 degrees per hour); 15 min soak
slow cool to 1135C (65 per hour); 30 min soak.

Design

Design what you are going to make at the outset, sketch it out in 3D. Consider critical factors such as the centre of gravity to ensure the form will be stable. A mantra of KISS (keep it simple stupid) is a good one to follow.

Keep notes

Careful record keeping with regard to glazes is essential. Make a note of the proportions of ingredients, the firing schedule, the specific gravity and the number of coats, dipped, brushed or sprayed, that were applied. Keep a test tile to show the results obtained. When layering glazes note which went underneath and on top.

Stop

If something is not working, don’t continue with it e.g. if a dish is cracked at greenware stage bin it, it’s only clay

Practice

Never give up, practice, practice, practice.

Recycle

Do not fire everything you make, be very critical at early stages and recycle the clay if something is not up to your high standards. A form does not get better as it travels through the process. An ugly form with a fantastic glaze, will always be an ugly form that never gives satisfaction.

No matter how long it took to make the form, recycle it. That’s much more environmentally friendly than firing, followed by disposal at the rubble tip.

Clay therapy

Clay can totally absorb your time and is so therapeutic. This can have its drawbacks but is absolutely wonderful when you need to take your mind off more stressful things.

Changing elements

When you need to change kiln elements, just engage a normal electrician (or do it yourself). It’s loads cheaper. On average it needs to be done every 80 firings.

Kay Butterworth

Perfectly Imperfect, Imperfectly Perfect

Wendy Wall in conversation with Sarah Vanic



Wendy Wall is a hand-builder who shares a studio with her daughter, Lou Wills in Tapton, Sheffield.

Early in her pottery journey she saw a pot in The Hepworth, Wakefield which was totally mis-shapen, appeared collapsed, yet looked beautiful. She tried to make a similar pot and it wasn't perfect; it was "perfectly imperfect, imperfectly perfect".

Wendy likes to see shapes and forms grow and allow the clay to tell her where it's going. She is interested in the painterly qualities of glazed surfaces and the unpredictability of working with clay and different kiln firings, "I love the way the glaze changes so completely in the kiln".

Wendy's work includes large coiled and slab built vessels and sculptural forms which are glazed with a beautiful turquoise blue that she fell in love with when she was at Hillsborough College. She uses several different glazes combined with oxides and often fires her pots several times. She says that she would like to develop glazes further and has started to experiment and mix her own.

Of her practice Wendy says, "Pottery can be very solitary and when engrossed in making I can easily lose myself in the material. Tools that I return to again and again have been with me since 1976 and there is a satisfaction when using them. They are lovely and worn. An ordinary pottery day for me would be to spend the entire day in the studio then teach a class. I work elsewhere 3 days a week and

that limits my time in the studio but I often go into the studio straight from work. I run several classes a week and offer lessons with home-schooled children. I love sharing the clay with others and seeing their excitement as they begin to make".

Wendy trained as a sculptor at Psalter Lane which was then part of Sheffield City Polytechnic and has recently been exploring more figurative work. Her current preoccupation is to finish Bert the Whippet, pictured above left.

Wendy has recently taken on the role of co-coordinator of South East region and is enjoying meeting fellow potters.

Wendy will exhibit later this year at Potfest in the Pens, Cumbria and Art in the Gardens, Sheffield. See her work on www.theclayhousesheffield.co.uk Instagram @wendy_at_the_clayhouse



Photos: Wendy in her studio, working on Bert the Whippet; Green Man; Globe

What a Smashing Time!

Literally! Gerry Grant from Fangfoss Pottery has just finished his most unusual job yet. He had been commissioned by York-based "Pick me Up Theatre" to make some props for their new production – "The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?"

So what was so unusual about this request? Gerry had been asked to make a selection of very large pots which were smashed to pieces on the stage.

The play was written by Edward Albee, better known for "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf". It centres around Martin – a hugely successful architect who has just turned 50 and who leads an ostensibly ideal life with his loving wife, Stevie, and gay teenage son. But when he confides to his best friend that he is also in love with a goat (named Sylvia), he sets in motion events that will destroy his family and leave his life in tatters.

Director, Mark Hird said, "The pottery plates, vases and bowls are an integral part of the show – they represent wealth, prosperity and order in a seemingly perfect household. They are expensive works of art collected by world famous architect Martin Gray to furnish the living room of the family's New York home – and they're smashed when Stevie confronts Martin after discovering his affair with Sylvia the Goat"

Gerry said, "I have tried for over 40 years to produce pots that are sturdy and not easily broken. Now I was asked to do the opposite! The pots were specially made and fired to break easily. They were fired to a very low temperature, so that they were pot on the outside, but almost clay on the inside. They were spray painted to look as though they were glazed porcelain. The producers didn't want sherds of sharp pots to travel into the audience, injuring someone, and this was the best way of achieving that."

"We went to see the production and couldn't believe how well they smashed. The whole of the stage was covered in broken pottery, making the mess it was supposed to."

"The pots I made were difficult to throw and the finished items looked good – too good to be broken. I hope to make some more and properly fire them so that they will be ready for the various events we are doing in the summer."



On stage

60 years a Potter – Syl Macro

I made my first pot and learned to drive in the same year, 1960, and am still doing both. The pot, heavy enough to make a convincing lethal weapon, was glazed in a virulent blue vellum glaze. It took up a position on my mother's sideboard where it resided, and was regularly dusted for many years. Other pots joined it, the egg cup too small for an egg, and a teapot with a spout attached much too low on the body. As time went on, more refined pots appeared, by which time I was hooked.

After a few weeks at Newcastle College of Art, doing an Intermediate course, I was already imagining my future pottery in an 'old mill by a stream' and droves of visitors snapping up my wares. In reality, it took quite a long time to achieve something like this dream; it has been amended many times, but amazingly I still have it.

My first pottery was in a converted lavatory in the back yard of our terraced house. By this time I was married, and teaching art and craft in a large comprehensive school in Newcastle. The staff room provided a ready market for my, by then, reasonably competent mugs, jugs and bowls.

Fast forward a few years to 1975 and I am working in a purpose built extension to our house in Washington New Town, surrounded by garden and trees, specially designed by my architect husband, Ray. From there I was able to juggle motherhood with getting involved with other craft workers' groups and selling markets and taking part in exhibitions. I had several solo themed exhibitions, in the 1970's and 80's, two at the LYC gallery in Cumbria, the first inspired by 'Seed Pods', then a couple of years later 'Trees and Landscapes'. Jarrow Hall, at the Bede Monastery Museum, was the venue for two further exhibitions.

My sons were keen to experiment in the pottery. Fantasy Castles and 'Pot People' were a series of tiny family members, mums, dads, grannies etc. which were displayed next to my work at a monthly craft market at Washington Arts Centre, and soon had quite a following of customers and orders. Armstrong Bridge Craft Market at Jesmond Dene in Newcastle, a weekly event where artists and craftsmen sold their wares, was a good gauge as to whether new ceramic experiments had appeal and were going to be saleable.



Thrown and pierced tree pot 6" 1982



Slab built landscape pot 14" 1985

By the time my boys were teenagers, I felt I could move out of the house, and acquired a studio close to Blackfriars Craft Centre, a restored 13th Century Monastery in the centre of Newcastle in 1985. I hadn't anticipated the demands of being so accessible to the general public – I had lots of surprises, the most significant being that I always seemed to be making pots which someone had requested, and not necessarily of the sort I wanted to make myself. Then followed the 'commemorative mug' period, when I developed a technique of making sprig moulds to apply to mugs, and literally produced hundreds. I could throw a hundred mugs in a day, and the following day apply handles and sprigs, soul destroying or what! I had some interesting commissions, but not always the sort I would have liked. A memorable one was a guy came in with his girlfriend carrying a Pekinese dog, my job was to make a large tile where they could all leave their hand/paw prints, like the film stars.

Another aspect of having a studio in the middle of town was the regular visitors. There was the 'friendly' traffic warden who came in several times a week, and took up position menacingly on my visitor chair, reminding me that where I parked my car was in fact illegal. I usually found a cup of coffee and a friendly chat placated him. Then there was John, the inventor, who could make all manner of things, wheel heads cast from aluminium pans and a glaze mixer made from old car parts. Having recently retired he seemed to have adopted me as his new career. Alan, from Blackfriars Restaurant, not only commissioned me to make pottery for his restaurant, but kept us nourished with left-over scones. Friends came in to change their babies, eat their fish and chips, leave their shopping, and confide in their matrimonial problems. This all began to take up an enormous amount of time, the kettle was hardly ever cold and consequently I got less and less work made, and began to feel very frustrated. This scenario came a long way short of my dream of a mill by a stream!

I have been a member on NPA since its beginnings, and getting to know many other potters in the area was a revelation. Being able to take part in exhibitions, potters' camps and raku days became an important part of my life. I found myself on the committee, and was vice chair for some years.



Collection of landscape glazed stoneware 1991



Preparing salt kiln at Old Brewery Pottery ,Alston 1992



Salt glazed coloured clay bowl 12" 1992

When in 1990 we spotted an advert in Ceramic Review for a Riverside pottery and cottage to rent in Alston, Cumbria, Ray and I felt it could be just what we needed. Ray was feeling disenchanted with the way his career as an Architect was taking him, so a life change was on the cards. Quite soon we were operating a split week, still running the studio in Blackfriars, but enjoying the tranquillity of making pots in this well equipped studio owned by Walter Storey. Ray was fast learning new pottery making skills and adapting to a different way of life, pugging clay, finishing pots thrown by me, and glazing. Eddie and Margaret Curtis, who lived nearby came over regularly and together we experimented with the double chamber trolley kiln, and had several firings in the salt kiln. There was plenty of scope for raku firings, and we held some NPA events there. Two wonderful years were spent there furthering some ideas I had about putting colour into clay bodies and experimenting with the effects of pouring multi-glaze layers over my pieces, wanting to create pots which somehow reflected the dramatic landscape of the North Pennines we now felt part of.

This was pretty close to my 'Mill by the Stream' dream, but renting a pottery and cottage, whilst still keeping our outlet at Blackfriars in Newcastle, didn't add up financially. We were enchanted with Alston, the landscape and the creative people we met, and felt we wanted to stay there. Discussing this situation over a coffee in Blueberries Tearoom, we noticed across the market place on an old, unused, interesting building "shop and premises to be sold by public auction 27th October 1994". It was already 21st October! We contacted the estate agent and Ray did a survey and felt that although there was much to be done to this 400 year old property, with three storeys above the shop and a workshop at the rear, we could make it work for us if the price was low enough.

We duly turned up for the auction feeling nervous and excited. We decided I should be the one to raise my hand with a nudge from Ray, and soon we were escalating through the thousands of pounds (quite scary). It passed our figure but then was surprisingly withdrawn. Soon afterwards the auctioneer came over to encourage us to negotiate further. He introduced us to the sellers and we settled for just a little over our limit, then ended up in the pub.



Coloured clay press moulded pot 8" 2018



Coloured clay hump moulded bowl 15" 2019



Coloured press moulded vases 10" 2019

By the following Easter, after a winter of cleaning and necessary building work we were ready to open our doors to the public. It seemed a perfect situation with a steady stream of visitors passing through the town and evidently enjoying visiting our quaint old shop. After a few months we opened an exhibition space above the shop where we invited other potters to have monthly solo exhibitions, many of whom are members of NPA and also show at Potfest each year.



Landscape Triptych, coloured clay assemblage won 2nd prize at Up Front Arts Venue Jan 2020

Since our move to Alston, both Ray and I found ourselves developing new ideas. Ray began to produce his own pieces from extruded forms, which he made into tree design wall lamps, piercing and cutting them to make radiating light patterns.

I have been working with additions of coloured stains, oxides, minerals and metals to make a range of wall panels and moulded vessels. I prepare layers of coloured, textured clay using fabrics, flower and seed heads, imprints from corals, rocks and fossils. From these layers I cut or tear areas, which are then assembled in abstract compositions referring to elements of landscape, rocks, water and sky. Surrounded by wild expanses of landscape, with ever changing colours and moods, I have endless scope for ideas. This period culminated in a joint exhibition at The Ruskin Studio at Brantwood, Coniston in 2003.



Coloured clay press moulded pot 7" 2020

Around the millennium I got involved with 2000 Tiles in Eden, an opportunity to make community tiling projects, instigated by Geoff Cox. I worked with Sue Sharp to produce four wall panels made by the local community, which are still to be seen around Alston. This led to almost a decade of commissions from schools all over the North of England, to work with pupils and staff to make ceramic wall panels. This experience plus a trip to Barcelona to see the work of Gaudi, inspired me to produce my own tiled pieces for walls, floors, garden features and table tops.

2020 finds us with a smart double-fronted gallery in Alston's Market Place, selling our own ceramics and a selection of work by other potters. We are living in a 19th Century house on the outskirts of Alston with lots of scope for a workshop each and outside space for raku and pit firings. It isn't exactly a Mill, and it only has a spring running through it, but it has given us all we could wish for.



Inside the gallery in Alston

Members' Gallery

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



Amberlea McNaught, photo by Jack Hardie



Karin Hessenberg, Thomas Cromwell, stoneware, 24cm



Elaine Jones



Shirley Peacock



Maggie Barnes, Carved & Pierced Porcelain Forms



Graham Hough, Cordelia McGregor

Profile – Gerry & Lyn Grant aka Fangfoss Pottery

We set up in the Old School in Fangfoss near York in 1977. A lot of potters in the 70's named their businesses after the village they were in rather than go by their own names, and so the name Fangfoss Pottery was born.

Gerry became interested in pottery at school and was taught by a retired potter who came in once a week to work with the children. He had a red sports car and Gerry wanted to be like him! Fifty years on, Gerry can throw pots like him but never got the car!!

I had never done any pottery before I met Gerry and it was only when we got married and set up the pottery that I was drawn into it. We worked together as a team – Gerry did the throwing and I did the finishing and decorating. I did (and still do) most of the paperwork, form-filling, pot-packing, publicity and anything that involves a computer.

Right from the start we went down the route of being commercial potters making domestic ware and mugs with emblems for visitor sites all over the country. We did trade fairs, employed people and developed a range of slip cast novelty items. We no longer do slip casting, but the work with emblems is still the backbone of our business.

Gerry has always worked full time in the pottery, but I also did part-time teaching in various primary schools. I made sure that the children did pottery at least once a term so that by the time they were in the top class they were really proficient.

We are both enthusiastic in encouraging youngsters to be creative and often give free workshops in the area. Although now semi-retired we still enjoy working with children on projects.

So what has semi-retirement meant to us? We can be a bit more discriminating in what we make and for whom. In the pottery we can spend more time developing ideas and making things like large moon vases, bowls and unusual vessels.

And we have more time to do other things, which is why we have both joined the NPA committee. We want to encourage more members to become involved, to put on events, attend meetings and be socially interactive! The NPA is a means to this!

Lyn Grant (because I do all the computer work).



Saving Wetheriggs Pottery

Alarm bells rang when NPA member and studio potter Russell Akerman spotted a small piece in his local paper under the heading 'Planners approve luxury homes on former pottery site'.

Investigation revealed that planning permission had been granted to build six luxury detached properties on the historic site of Wetheriggs Pottery, a scheduled ancient industrial monument located near Penrith. Wetheriggs Pottery is the last complete example of a steam powered country pottery left in the U.K. and hence is of significant importance to our industrial heritage.

During its 165-year life, Wetheriggs Pottery made a large contribution to the local community, creating traditional wares and providing many skilled jobs. Until 2007 Wetheriggs Pottery was a historic visitor attraction with over a hundred thousand visitors per year, where people could see traditional pottery being made, make a pot themselves and buy pottery to take away.

Russell decided to raise public awareness of the potential loss of such a historic site, and set up a Save Wetheriggs Pottery Facebook page and petition on Change.org

He is also investigating ways of preserving the pottery for the benefit of future generations, possibly through a public or private trust.

The Facebook page includes much wonderful material about Wetheriggs. There are photos and videos, including films made about the restoration undertaken by Fred Dibnah in the 1990s. The giant blunger and a steam driven potters' wheel, are not to be missed.

The comments also include reminiscences from former employees, customers, visitors and potters including NPA member Mary Chapelhow, now at Brougham Hall, who was the last Master Potter at Wetheriggs.

Facebook: [Save Wetheriggs Pottery](#)

Petition: <http://chnng.it/XJTYYb7>



Books – Roger Bell

Review

Handmade in Germany, Ed. Pascal Johanssen

Why review a book which is not about ceramics for a pottery group? The chapter headings will give a clue as to why I chose 'Handmade In Germany'. They are *The New Ethics of Things, Independence, Authorship, Time, Beauty, Accountability, Resilience and Design Evolution*. Appropriate themes for individual potters as well as small and larger enterprises. 'Made In Germany' has been recognised for many years as a mark of quality worldwide.

The focus of the book is on combining the use of new and future technology with the credibility of the art and design concepts of the workshop to maintain individuality while retaining independence and viability. Each chapter uses several workshops to elaborate on the theme. Some are individuals, others have up to several hundred employees. There is a very wide range of materials and end products involved. Paper, leather, glass, metal, wood and plastics are among the materials used. End products include clocks and watches, jewellery, furniture, musical instruments, clothes and fashion, typography and interior design.

Ceramics comes in early with KPM, 250 years old and originally a state organisation. It has a workforce of 200 employees and produces porcelain, mainly dinner ware. They maintain traditional hand-painted lines but have constantly evolving modern lines. They sell in Germany and also have a large Asian market. At the other end of the size spectrum is Claudia Schoemig working alone throwing fine porcelain ware.

Babette Wierzerek and Daval Young call themselves digital craftspeople. They use a Delta 3D printer designed by Jonathan Keep from East Anglia to produce decorative ware that often references textiles. Programming is one of the skills needed. They point out that hand-building would take an inordinate time for a single piece and a mould could take a month or more to make.



There are other featured ceramicists and workshops but the other end products give as much insight into what can be done to 'stay ahead of the game'. The bell foundry cannot rely on sufficient orders so develops ornamental castings for the home and uses new metal combinations.

From different parts of this book you may experience that eureka moment that moves your work or business ahead in an unexpected way.

Published by Arnoldsche at £38.00.

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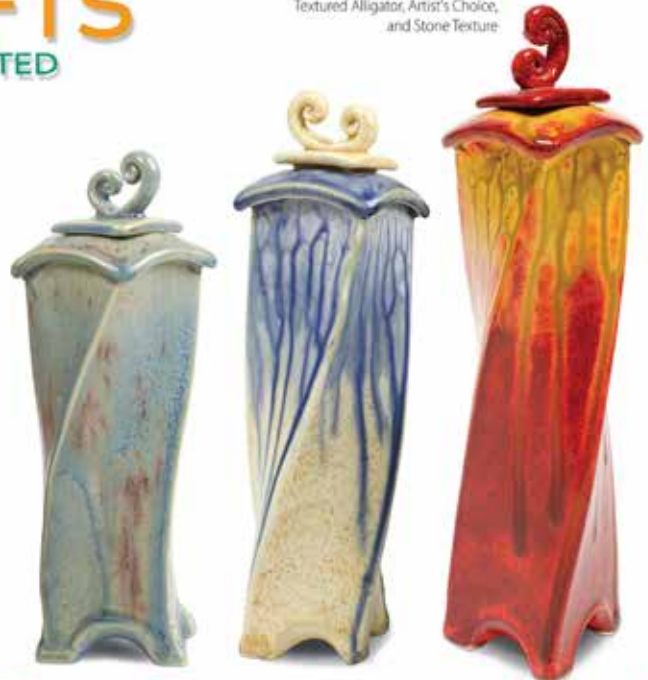
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A warm welcome is extended to all our new members.

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Michael Charles Smith	Milford, Derbys
Elaine Jones	North Sheilds
Kevin Terence Rodgers	Doncaster
Marisa Jane Devonshire	Sheffield
Aileen Burgess	Sheffield
Melvin Fowell	Newcastle under Lyme
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Janelle Gardiner	Sheffield
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Ann Davis
Membership Secretary

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Committee News

Coronavirus Snapshots

John wrote his 'From the Chair' in February before going to Spain for a holiday, hence no mention of coronavirus in his report. He's now back. "I had to travel to Alicante airport in a 9-seater vehicle on my own, 4 feet from the driver. My partner travelled in another 9-seater. We could have stayed on but we were unsure when the flights would start again. The tipping point for me was when an army tank appeared on the streets!"

Joan "As over-70s, Jack and I have been staying at home, making pots on our own and washing our hands a lot – much like business as usual. We'll run out of gas for firings and storage space for stock before we run out of clay. Social media, including NPA Facebook groups, keeps us in touch with other potters. I urge everyone who can to support other potters by buying pots."

Sally "One son with a wedding to postpone, one stuck in Canada and one with no lectures to go to, so the virus is having its effect but we are all fine."

Ann "As an ex-NHS nurse I've offered to go back but am not sure whether they'll take me up! In the meantime if we all do as we're told there's nothing more we can do. Make more jam, sew more things and keep on walking in secluded spots! Oh and of course keep potting."

Lyn & Gerry "Our business is really suffering – cancelled orders, meetings and exhibitions. The government has given us a lifeline to keep our part-time employee of 25 years on for a few months, which is a relief. We are thinking of all potters and other self-employed creatives, possibly with a family, who are trying to manage."

Dianne "I'm recycling clay, working on new ideas, dog walking and gardening. Also, my sister Jo is on the 'at risk' list, or house arrest, as she has to take post cancer treatment drugs! I'll continue to post 'Reasons to be cheerful' (Ian Dury) on the FB page although not many members are doing so!"

Nadine "I attempted to home-school my two children with limited success. Eventually I decided that they will learn more by doing less: schoolwork, structured exercise, screen time. Luckily, I still have plenty of clay for us to play with."

Pamela "I'm keeping my kids on track with their schoolwork, making a list for sorting out the shed, loft and studio, weeding, doing my accounts etc. I was about to be in my first Open Studios event so, though disappointed it can't happen, I'm very fortunate to have some clay supplies in and my wheel and kiln at home to carry on practicing and making. No excuse now not to get on top of my website. Delivering shopping to my Mum and neighbours. Time to open those glaze books?"

Emmeline "I'm a part-time potter, so I am still working at the day job albeit mostly at home, while also keeping an eye on my mum and volunteering to help vulnerable or isolated people in the village. I have enough clay and potting supplies to keep me going for quite a while. Obviously lots of shows are gradually being struck off the year's list, so it's going to be a chance to get stocks in for shows hopefully later in the year, and maybe finally crack on with setting up an online shop – something I keep putting off!"

www.northern-potters.co.uk

Our re-vamped website is up and running. You probably won't notice much difference but under the surface everything has changed. As well as being more secure, we can do updates ourselves.

All members can show their work in the artists' gallery. Send new entries and changes to the artist's gallery to website@northern-potters.co.uk

For now, information on events should be sent to npanews@northern-potters.co.uk

Members' Survey

As reported in the last NPA News, we are planning a survey of NPA members so that we can actively involve and benefit more people.

The survey has been designed and tested on committee members and is ready to roll. It will be sent out by email to members who get communications that way. Others will receive a paper copy to complete and return. It isn't very high tech but with everyone's goodwill, it should do the job.

Joan Hardie



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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.

The focus of our last meeting was publicity and marketing for events and encouraging new members to join the NPA. To help showcase our work to venues and attract people to join, please use the hashtag [#npanw](#) in instagram posts or send pictures by email with a brief artist statement.

We have applied for a bursary to host a Leach Pottery Centenary Raku Party over the weekend 15 to 17 May, with public raku sessions at Brougham Hall, Penrith on Saturday 16th and at Halecat, Witherslack on Sunday 17th. If successful, details will follow by email on how you can get involved and potentially be chosen to have your piece on show at the Japanese Embassy. To get in the party spirit we are looking to hold a Jacobs Join on the evening of Friday 15 May.

We have applied for a "pop up" selling event at the Silverdale Art Trail on 26 to 28 June. In its 16th year, the Trail is a major event in the area attracting thousands of visitors and 90 exhibitors. We are currently looking for a suitable venue and hope to have confirmation of selection shortly.

Future proposed exhibitions include Upfront Gallery in late 2020, Rydal Hall in summer 2021 and Newby Bridge Hotel in autumn 2021. Booking forms will be emailed out when confirmed. Our next meeting will now be held online on Weds 22 April at 7:30 pm. Details by email.

[Kathryn Stevens](#)

northernpottersnw@gmail.com

Facebook: [NPAnorthwest](#)



NW

There's an opportunity to slot-in an exhibition next January. I know it's a long way off but the gallery like to select their exhibitors. It's at Arteria Gallery Lancaster and the title of the exhibition will be 'Affinity'. They have requested images of work which will be selected and displayed in January and the exhibition will run for 4 months. Images need to be with them by September, with artist statement.

Contact: Sharon with images and statement e-mail: info@arteriashop.co.uk

[Geoff Wilcock](#)

ghwilcock@uclan.ac.uk 01772 862852

Facebook: [NPAwest](#)



W

Sadly Deiniol William's lecture and demonstration was cancelled because of the dreadful storms and we will not be able to reschedule in the near future.

I had started to update the application forms and make arrangements for our annual exhibition, at The Didsbury Parsonage at the end of May but unsurprisingly they have closed their doors to visitors. They hope to give us a future date. When I know it I will pass it on to you.

Clay College, Middleport, had also given us a date at the end of August / beginning of September for an exciting exhibition. However with so much uncertainty we will have to approach things with a huge amount of flexibility but it is something we can keep our fingers crossed for.

I am sure that many of us have found out that the things we rely on like craft fairs, shows, exhibitions, and teaching opportunities have been cancelled. These are very uncertain times. I hope to use the time to develop new designs, experiment with new techniques, and as long as I still have clay, to make pots. I have often moaned about how much clay is in the soil in the garden – I wonder how far down I will have to dig to get to a seam, if it comes to that!

Don't forget we have our facebook page to share our work, our ideas and our friendship. Things are changing so quickly at the moment that one of my personal mottos is 'Take Life One Cup at a Time'. I think I'm going to be using this more and more!

[Juliet Myers](#)

email@sw-npa.co.uk

Facebook: [NPAsouthwest](#)



SW



Nothing to report from NE this time.

Please could anyone with any good news stories and planned events get in touch for the next issue.

Hoping everyone stays well, and productive, at this tricky time.

NE

Helen Pickard

helen.pickard@icloud.com

Facebook: [@North East Potters](#)

Twitter: [@ne_npa](#)

The meeting in Leeds generated a lot of ideas and suggestions for this years events which makes life for the pair of us much easier. We have a suggestion of a social gathering in York in April (look out for your emails, we are nearly there with the planning). We have confirmed a digital photography event in May when we are hiring a professional studio to learn how to take better pictures of our pots and we have started to arrange studio visits.



Our first studio visit is to Barbara Wood in May and we have generous offers of studio visits from two other people. If you are happy to offer one we are very happy to advertise. These events are lovely relaxed, social events and help to build our community of potters in the East region.

We also have one of Fangfoss Pottery's legendary BBQs to look forward to at the end of June. There are other events at the planning stage which will be sent round via email but if you have anything to offer the group please let us know what, where, how many and costs.

E

Lyn Clarke & Kay Butterworth

enpa.coordinator@gmail.com

Facebook: [NPAEast](#)

Twitter [@NPA_E](#)

Our first event of the year was a very successful talk and demonstration about wood-firing by Ben Brierley at the Arthouse in Sheffield. You can read a full account by Graham Northing on page 6.

Our first 'In conversation with' interview of Hanne Westergaard by Claire Allam appeared in the last NPA News. We hope it will be the first of many – get in touch if you would like to take part.

Ceramics are difficult to photograph at the best of times so we're pleased to announce that we're planning a full-day photography workshop with Ian Daisley at his Matlock studio. It's designed for people who want to learn how to photograph or improve the photography of their work, for use on websites, art fair submissions, and printed materials. It will help us present our work in the best light. Unfortunately this has been postponed but we'll be sending out the details asap.



We had a great response for volunteers to run the NPA stand at Earth & Fire and are sad that it has been cancelled.

SE

Steve Rodgers has kindly agreed to host the next SENPA meeting at his studio on 26 April at 12.00. Blue Elephant Pottery Studio, Unit 2 Harland Works, 70 John Street, Sheffield S2 4QU. Access to the pottery is on the first floor via the Harland Works courtyard, up the metal stairs on the left. Sorry, there is no disabled access. This meeting is of course hostage to the unfolding virus situation and we will update as necessary.

Graham Northing & Wendy Wall

senpacoordinator@outlook.com

Facebook: [NPAsoutheast](#)

The Back Page

Big changes to one of the best websites for studio ceramics, but all is not lost!



www.studiopottery.co.uk closed

After more than two decades supporting the UK and wider ceramics community, the information website www.studiopottery.co.uk has been closed and replaced by a news blog.

Set up by London Potters President Stephen Dee, studiopottery provided an online presence for many makers in an era pre-dating personal websites and social media platforms. From promoting exhibitions and maker profiles through to courses and classified adverts, the site soon developed to provide a range of services bringing the ceramics community together.

Speaking about the closure, Stephen said: *“It is with much regret that I have decided to close the site. A number of factors have led me to this decision, not least the changing environment and expansion of social media for sharing information which in part reduces the need for a portal website such as studiopottery. In addition, there was a need for an expensive rebuild of the website, the fifth in 20 years, which was started, but faced increasing cost escalation. I can only repeat how very sorry I am to close the service but it is better to stop now rather than see a gradual decline in the website’s usefulness.”*

“I have been encouraged to retain the domain name and keep writing a ceramics blog which I will develop in the coming months.”

Karen Tooth

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www.studiopottery.co.uk reborn

The same web address now connects to the blog. Here is how Stephen describes it.

Welcome!

This is an independent blog! It aims to help potters and ceramic artists to become better known, to sell their work, to fill their courses and to provide a window into this fantastic world of 3D art!

Background

Formerly (for 20 years) studiopottery.co.uk was a comprehensive information website, but continuation of this has not been possible, due to changes in demand, costs and complexities of creating a ‘fifth generation’ website appropriate to members needs. It has therefore been closed in its previous format and replaced with a News blog.

Future

It is planned to add further information on topical news, makers events, courses and articles on makers, together with information useful for makers, such as deadlines for applying for fairs and events.

It is hoped that makers (and others) will provide information about future events and as many as possible will be published.

If you want to advise about forthcoming events or courses or just wish to comment – email – info@studiopottery.co.uk

Many NPA members have benefited from studiopottery.co.uk over the years. We thank Stephen for this and wish him the very best with the blog.



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