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## Editors Comment

It has been another busy two months and judging from the potters I have spoken to they have been working hard to make up orders for exhibitions and Christmas shows as well as ensuring entries for next years events have been completed and sent off with images of work. The calendar for next year is already looking hectic and it may be that potters will have to choose which events to try and submit work for. It strikes me that we could do with greater liaison between selling events as to their timing. It also begs the question as to whether there are too many events? Is it thinning out the available market of purchasers? Let me know your views.



My travels have taken me to Tullie House in Carlisle to the preview of the NPA exhibition. What a superb gallery. I thought your pots looked really good. Such a diversity of form and finish. Thanks go to Julie Miles and Jan Scott, the Tullie House staff and the selectors, and I must not forget to mention the food—very tasty! On the way back I called at the Old Courthouse Gallery in Ambleside; well worth a visit if you are passing, and I have just been told I missed another ..... Also on the list of visits was the Bay Potters Christmas Show. A really nice location and venue with some excellent pots many by NPA members—it was good to see the work and have a natter; everyone was so friendly and welcoming. I hope that other members who have had exhibitions will excuse my not visiting, but lack of time and limited funds are a restriction. If you have had a Christmas Show or exhibition then let us know how you got on. Just a few lines and an image or two would let us know what you are up to. Remember it is free advertising for your work!

I would like to wish you all a Happy Christmas and New Year.

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## Deadline For Next Issue

All material for the **February—March 2004 issue** to be with Ian Marsh **by the 20th January**.

Text and images can be e-mailed (marshiepots@aol.com), sent by CD or by long hand with photographs to 35 Meltham Road, Marsden, Huddersfield, HD7 6JZ

# A new Date for the NPA AGM

A number of members were unhappy with the running of the AGM at Tullie House and as a result the committee sought legal advice and it appears that it was not conducted according to the NPA constitution.

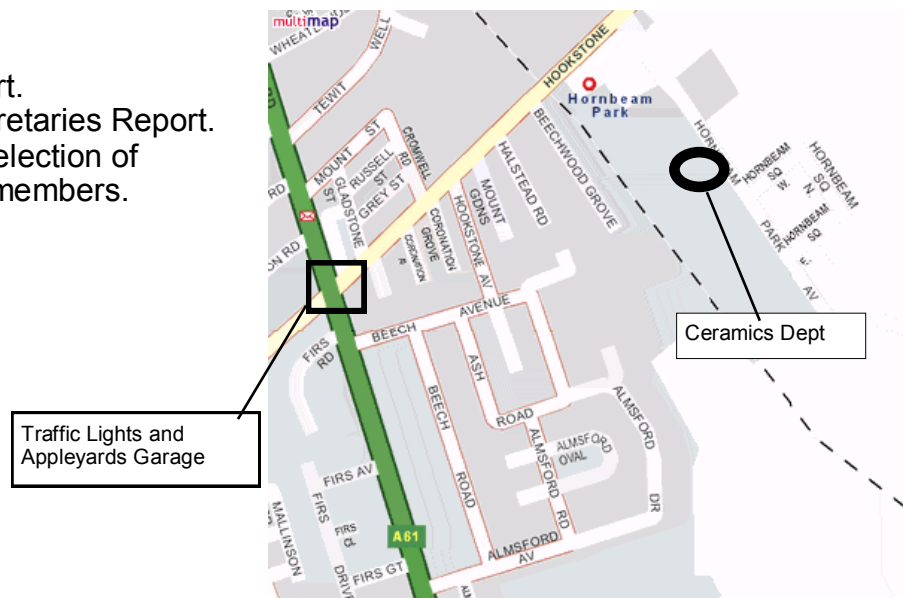
As a result there will be a **new AGM at Harrogate College on the 31st January at 11.00am in the Ceramics Department.**

Harrogate College,  
Hornbeam Park,  
Harrogate,  
Yorkshire, West Riding,  
HG2 8QT

*The committee would urge as many members as possible to attend. Come and have your say as to who is elected to the committee and about the running of the NPA. If you have an issue which needs to be discussed then now is the time to be heard.*

## Agenda:

1. Apologies.
2. Minutes of last AGM 2002.
3. Matters arising.
4. Chairs Report.
5. Treasurers Report.
6. Membership Secretaries Report.
7. Election and Re-election of committee members.
8. A.O.B.



## Note from the editor:

I firmly believe in the old adage 'that you only get out what you put in'. Having been a member for best part of a year I offered my help to the committee and as you know somehow ended up editing the newsletter. It takes up quite a bit of time but that is far outweighed by the benefits. I have met and been in contact with many interesting potters and galleries, and I am sure my ceramics has benefited as a result. I look forward to seeing a prosperous and vibrant association, but this will only happen if you the members are willing to get involved. If you feel you have something to contribute and can spare a couple of hours every other month to attend a committee meeting then I would urge you to come to the AGM and offer to be a committee member or co-optee.

## NPA News

Thanks go to those of you who have contributed to the newsletter it is much appreciated. The newsletter can only be as good as you make it - without your contributions there would be no newsletter.

Forgot to mention, did you read NPA member Carol Metcalfe's article on Ash Glazes in the Ceramic Review in July/August 2003 issue. It was an interesting article and has made me think I need to try some triaxial blending of my own. I hope to include an article about Carol's work in the future (No Carol I haven't forgotten that I would send you some questions!).

Congratulations to Finola Delamere who has had her work accepted for the prestigious Zelli Award. We wish her every success. (see page 13)

Do you run a pottery course? Why not advertise it for free (NPA members only). You can have up to a full page for the first advert, describing in detail the course, and in subsequent issues a small advert giving details of the venue and dates of the course(s).

## A Change of Date for the NPA Festival

To avoid a clash with the Potfest at Fromme the Festival has been moved to the 3rd, 4th and 5th of September.



### **NPA FESTIVAL 2004**

**Date: 3rd, 4th and 5th September 2004**

**Venue: Rufford Kiln Site**

**We are at the moment in the process of organising a 'Dirty Weekend' for all. We are looking to bring together an exciting contrast of makers to deliver demonstrations, lectures and workshops in order to create a hands on experience for you to explore different approaches to working with clay. If you are interested in helping out sharing your skills and experience with others, and could help, please contact any of the Committee members. PLEASE HELP**

# NPA Exhibitions

Hello,

I am pleased to be your new Exhibitions Officer. Anyone wishing to know more about my background can access my website - [www.jscceramica.co.uk](http://www.jscceramica.co.uk).

I thank Julie for all her hard work and the time she has invested. As several venues are booked up for 2,3 or 4 years in advance, I will be working with what Julie has already put in place, whilst also discovering new venues for the future.

The Tullie House Exhibition is in progress – our varied selection of works is expertly presented in an outstanding space and well worth the visit. This excellent exhibition took Julie 3 years to instigate so if anyone knows of a place with similar standards I would like to hear from you now.

Northern Potters covers a large area from Carlisle, down both sides of the Pennines to Nottingham, this means a lot of travelling, which personally, I am looking forward to. Jill Ford has volunteered to assist and we will be visiting a gallery in York early in the New Year; there will also be an unselected exhibition space for all to display their work during our festival in 2004, watch this space!

I urge everyone who is 'making' to send two good photos/images which best reflect your work and a current c.v. together with contact details for inclusion in the portfolio (*the images can also be used on NPA website*) to:

Jan Scott, Exhibitions  
8 Craven Court  
Horwich  
Lancashire  
BL6 6PB

Both the Portfolio and Website are very useful tools, so please find time to help us to help you. I will be taking the portfolio to show gallery curators; therefore your information symbolizes the N.P.A.

If you have any queries or comments you can contact me by email at [jan@jscceramica.co.uk](mailto:jan@jscceramica.co.uk). I look forward to getting to know everyone and their work,

Jan.

## **OXO Tower exhibition**

A plea from Brian Holland for those who wish to be involved with the OXO Tower exhibition in the summer of 2004 or 2005 to submit a slide of your work to him as soon as possible.

## Ian Howie - Rufford Residency

18 August to 28 September 2003

Rufford Craft Centre, just north of Nottingham, hosts 6 or 7 ceramic residencies during the year, each of 6 or 8 weeks. This year potters came from Holland, Japan, Australia and India as well as Britain. The resident receives a living allowance, a materials budget and the use of the studio and the on-site flat.

The timing of my residency was perfect, coming just before I moved house and set up on my own after working at Coxwold Pottery with Peter and Jill Dick for 4 years. When I applied for the residency a year earlier I wanted to develop my own work and use my wood firing experience to fire the anagama kiln, making basically functional shapes.

I'd gained a lot of satisfaction developing my throwing skills with Peter and Jill but had realised that my own domestic ware had little distinct identity. This May I started having mentoring with Maggie



Barnes as part of a programme funded through Art Connections. At our first session we decided that I would develop some seed-pod like pots that I'd hand built before I went to Coxwold, but using my new skills to make them by throwing and altering. This proved to be very fruitful and I really enjoyed the possibilities of the organic-related shapes and felt that there was a lot for me to explore. Maggie also

encouraged me to draw and this has helped a lot, both in giving me ideas and in helping me to look much more carefully and critically at my pots. We had two more sessions before the residency so I was at a good stage to make best use of the time.

Out of the six weeks of the residency I knew that one would be spent packing and firing the kiln and one for it to cool and be unpacked, so that left four weeks for making. I tried to plan the different shapes I wanted to make and managed to stick roughly to my plans.

I spent the first two weeks enjoying taking as long as I needed on the pod forms. I was able to spend much more time than ever before trying to get them really right: looking at which parts were working and which weren't; refining the curves and lines; experimenting with different shapes of lip and neck; working on series of new shapes that interested me.

The third week I made softly-altered vase forms. I'd made some thrown and messed-around-with pots in the past, trying to work spontaneously and produce lively results. This time, over several batches, I extended these techniques of working with the soft thrown clay to make pots with a much stronger sense of structure to them. For the first time I was making pots using this method that are related to my other more hand-built pots. Their organisation of indentations, curves and bulges produce pots that echo several different organic shapes – the human body, fruit and seeds, for example – without just being a model of any one thing.

By the fourth week I was rather anxious about producing enough work to fill the kiln. The Rufford anagama has about 6 by 6 by 3 feet packing space – that's a lot of pots! I had planned to make some large bowls, which I knew could produce lovely effects from being fired stacked on top of each other, but I decided to throw vases whose curved voluminous forms related well to the other pots.

An important part of the residency programme is contact with the public. The studio is open every lunch time. I'm used to people coming in and out from working at Coxwold, but I was much more on show here, as once you'd come down the corridor and into the studio there was only me and my work to look at. I think it's very important to give people the chance to see and talk to people like us who are making something, particularly at Rufford where there is a lot of work on show in the galleries. There were lots of questions about making the pots and firing them. I also had some very useful discussions about my work, particularly during workshops with the Rufford Arts Society members. The relationship with the Centre was ideal: I was just left to get on with whatever I wanted to do but if I needed some help or had a problem there was

ready assistance. The country park setting is another great plus: it was a real pleasure to be able to wander round the beautiful woodland, gardens and lake, either for a break during the day or in the evening when there was nobody around.

I raw glazed all the pots when they were dry. I used a mixture of two Spencrofts bodies that had about 1% iron oxide and I had about four slips that I'd used in anagama firings with Charles Bound that I hoped would give an interesting range of results. Only one of these didn't contain a lot of ball clay but it stayed on the pots fine after I added 5% of bentonite.

An anagama kiln is basically just a tapering chamber that is stoked with wood at the front and then at the sides later on in the firing. There are no bag-walls so the flame and ash and embers make very direct contact with the pots. Different parts of the kiln get more heat and ash and the orientation of each pot (upside-down; on its side; facing forwards, sideways or backwards) and the way it is wadded all effect the result.

These firings are always a team effort and I was very lucky to have the assistance and advice of Brian Holland and the Rufford Woodfiring Society, who covered the stoking in shifts. There's no way I could have done it without them and I was glad there was space for some of their pots in the kiln. Packing took a day and a half, then we warmed the kiln with a gas burner on the Wednesday night, started stoking on Thursday morning and finished on Saturday afternoon when cone 12 was looking soft front and back. The firing was exhausting but thrilling: so much fire and heat acting so directly and visibly on the pots and then billowing out of the chimney. I felt very lucky to have the wood and kiln for my own pots and to be able to try out some ideas. For example, the end of the firing has a big effect on the colour and shininess of the surfaces and I decided to finish with a fairly clean burn, then clammed up the chimney and door and put in some wood and water over the next few hours for moderate reduction during cooling. In fact I think I could have put in more wood sooner after clamping up and reduced the shininess a bit further.

I was very happy with the firing, after getting over the usual initial disappointment when I first saw the results. I always have a picture in my head of how I want them to look and they never look like that. There were a few that were too dull and a few that were too crusty, but a lot in an interesting middle ground. All the new shapes had survived. On the final day most of the stokers came back to see the results and pick up their own pots, which was a nice way to leave.

We moved house the week after I got back from Rufford. Now I have all the pots in the living room waiting for my next mentoring session with Maggie in a couple of days. They are definitely work in progress, but I feel that they developed a lot during the residency and that things are really coming together. The next step is to work out some

surfaces, probably for stoneware temperature gas firing. Over the next few months I'm going to make the garage into a workspace and hopefully put a small gas kiln in a shed. Meanwhile, any offers of firing space near the Yorkshire Wolds would be very welcome!

Ian Howie  
[www.ianhowie.co.uk](http://www.ianhowie.co.uk), Tel. 01377 217284

Pots on show at 'Made at Rufford', 3-15 February 2004, Rufford Craft Centre  
[www.ruffordcraftcentre.org.uk](http://www.ruffordcraftcentre.org.uk)



Residency enquiries to Peter Dworok,  
[peter.dworok@nottssc.gov.uk](mailto:peter.dworok@nottssc.gov.uk),  
Tel. 01623 822944 ext. 204

Arts Connections – see the notice in this issue about their activities in North Yorkshire  
[www.art-connections.org.uk](http://www.art-connections.org.uk)

# NPA Members Courses—Jim Robison

## Robison Ceramics

Booth House Gallery, Booth House, Holmfirth, Huddersfield. HD92QT

Tel. No. 01484 685 270

E-mail: jim.robison@virgin.net

www.jimrobison.co.uk

## **2004 CERAMICS Glaze COURSE (5-9 April)**

### THE WORKSHOP:

Started in 1975, the gallery and studio are housed in a converted 19th century stone barn near Holmfirth. Surrounded by breathtaking countryside (selected to feature on the TV series "Last of the Summer Wine"), the area is famous for its rural flavour and scenic walks. Now in its 29th year, the gallery is renowned for its excellent programme of Ceramic Exhibitions, while the studio specialises in one off ceramic works and architectural commissions.

### THE COURSE:

The emphasis is on personal development and therefore suitable for a wide range of abilities. Beginners and advanced alike. We will look at a range of Ceramic Surfaces, including slips and glazes suitable for Stoneware, Earthenware, and Raku



firing. Basic technology, and use of raw materials will be discussed along with practical sessions of mixing and firing. Surface treatments will also be explored, using textures, slips, oxides and masking treatments suitable for a variety of firings.

Participants are invited to bring pieces for glazing and there will be time for making and bisque firing of small test pieces. Inspiration for design and fired examples will also be discussed. A visit to see larger architectural items is planned. Electric, gas, reduction and Raku firings are also on the agenda.

Slides, demonstrations, discussion and practical sessions will form the basis of tuition.

The working day will be from 9:30 AM to 1 PM and from 2 PM to 5 PM, with optional evening work welcome. This years course will run during the week beginning the **5th of April**. The course will begin with an introductions on Monday morning at 10 a.m. and conclude with discussion of results on Friday; to finish at approximately 1 p.m.

### WHAT TO BRING:

- A selection of personal clay tools, along with a few bisque fired pieces and any special or raw materials you may wish to try (wood ashes for example).
- Sketch pad and drawing materials.
- Camera.
- Note pad and pen.
- Apron or overalls and towel.
- Small scales, if available.

### THE ACCOMMODATION:

Comfortable bed and breakfast accommodation can be arranged for you.

5 nights will cost £90.00.

We also have space available for camping or caravan.

--5 nights will cost £20.00

### THE COST:

The cost of your weeks tuition is £325.00. This includes both lunch and evening meals, as well as tea and coffee during the day. It also includes all materials, Raku, electric, gas and other firings as time permits.



# Exhibitions

## Booth House Gallery,

3 Booth House Lane, Holmfirth, HD9 2QT

Tel. No: 01484 685270

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

Open Weekend 12-4pm, ring during the week.

Salt glaze— Ruth King Stoneware— Liz Bowe, Ian Marsh, Jim Robison

Earthenware— Carol Glover

'Zoo' Ceramic Creatures by Maggie Betley & Tracy Wright

Plus a range of work by many Gallery regulars

## Images from the Tullie House Exhibition



## New Books

Ed Drusilla Cole	1000 Patterns	19.99	A & C Black
Louana M Lackey	Rudy Autio	53.00	Am. Cer Soc
Sumi von Dassow	Barrel, Pit & Saggar Firing	24.00	Am Cer Soc
Anderson Turner	Creative Ideas For Clay Artists	24.00	Am Cer Soc
Mimi Obstler	Out Of The Earth, Into The Fire	37.50	Am. Cer Soc
Stephen Branfman	Potters Professional Handbook	24.50	Am Cer Soc
Dick Lehman	Wood Firing: Journeys & Techniques	24.00	Am Cer Soc
FUTURE TITLES			
Ian Gregory	Alternative Kilns	12.99	A & C Black Jun 2004
Susan Peterson	Shoji Hamada	32.00	A & C Black Jun 2004
J-P Delpech & M-A Figueres	The Mouldmakers Handbook	25.00	A & C Black Feb 2004
Michael Bailey	Oriental Glazes	12.99	A & C Black Jun 2004
Emmanuel Cooper	The Potter's Book of Glaze Recipes	19.99	A & C Black May 2004
Frank & Janet Hamer	The Potter's Dictionary 5 <sup>th</sup> Ed	45.00	A & C Black May 2004
ROGER BELL, DEXTERITY			

## Book Review

### BRICKWORKS

Gwen Heeney

Publ A & C Black

£35.00

Many of you will have met Gwen Heeney and helped with her construction at the 2002 Festival at Rufford. She talked then of the book she had written – at long last it is published, just in time for Christmas stockings.

Gwen briefly takes readers through the first use of sun-dried bricks (adobe) 10,000 years ago and the first fired bricks 4,500 years ago through to the present day. Then on to the origins and constituents of brick clays, making methods and firing techniques right up to the modern continuous firing tunnel kilns.

The bulk of the book shows working methods of artists from around the world. I was not aware that Henry Moore worked in brick. David Machs 'Train' used 185,000 bricks! Contemporary artists use 'green', pre-fired and recovered bricks to produce a wide range of site specific artworks, relief murals and surface decoration on buildings. All are illustrated by excellent photos and diagrams showing stages of construction, completed works and the tools, formers and other aids used. By this stage you are probably 'fired-up' (pun intended) to build something in the garden or go out looking for commissions. She follows on with information on the use of Computer Aided Design (CAD), links to education and the brick industry and the complexities of commissions, residencies, sponsorship, suppliers and services. In simple terms it is a comprehensive and well organised book.

The cover blurb describes the book as a 'guide, showcase and practical handbook' that 'aims to teach as well as inspire.....packed full of fantastic images'. It is a unique book that while it overlaps very little with other books on ceramics, sculpture or architectural decoration has sufficient links to our own work to avoid making us feel too daunted.

Last, but not least, while giving other artists in the field exposure, it has plenty of detail on Gwen Heeneys own work which once seen is unforgettable. I have my copy put away already.

Roger Bell, Dexterity

## Adverts

### Crafts at Bovey Tracey

Celebrating Excellence in the South West

**What: The Contemporary Craft Fair**  
Mill Marsh Park, Bovey Tracey

**When: June 12-13<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

**Who:** Open to craftspeople living in Britain working to the highest standards in ceramics, glass, textiles, jewellery, metal, wood, plastics, leather and recycled materials.

**Deadline :** February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2004

Stand costs from £140-£160 (Further Discounts for Prince's Trust Supported Business) including free parking and camping and a VIP

Preview Evening plus Crafts Awards totaling in excess of £5,000, which will be selected by an independent panel of experts. Plus demonstrations and talks by internationally acclaimed makers and the opportunity to sell your work to an estimated 10,000 visitors in one of the most beautiful parts of the UK.

**For an application form and full details please contact:**

Sarah James, Project Manager, Crafts at Bovey Tracey, C/O The Devon Guild of Craftsmen, Riverside Mill, Bovey Tracey TQ13 9AF  
Or e-mail: [boveycrafts@aol.com](mailto:boveycrafts@aol.com)



**More images from Tullie House**

## Events Calendar 2004

ClayArt—Denbigh 22nd, 23rd May  
Potfest—Perth, Scotland 28th, 29th, 30th May  
Earth and Fire—Rufford 26th, 27th June  
Tredegar House—Newport, South Wales 10th, 11th July  
Potfest in the Park—Penrith, 30th, 31st July, 1st August  
Potfest in the Pens—Penrith, 6th, 7th, 8th, August  
NPA Dirty Weekend—Rufford, 3rd, 4th and 5th September  
Oxford Studio Ceramics—30th, 31st October  
8th Southern Pottery and Ceramics Show 20th, 21st November, Farnham

Do you know of any other events, local or national? Let me know and I will include them in future.

# NPA Tullie House Exhibition

Images of your pots at Tullie House. I am told there were forty nine exhibitors. I took as many images as I could but have clearly missed off some of your work—my apologies—next time I will have to be more sytematic and make a note of whose work I have photographed.  
Ed





## Zelli Porcelain Award Competition—Finola Delamere

### \* What inspired you to choose your selected extract

The Heliades appealed to me because I felt I could extend the making techniques I use to express the emotions of grief and sadness where before I had only worked on movement. This subject also chimed with a powerful sketch by Michaelangelo recently found at Castle Howard: the subject was hidden beneath heavy robes –the posture is one of deep sadness although the figure is not visible.

### \* A brief personal history

I trained as a biochemist & was a forensic scientist working for the Metropolitan Police. Although science was satisfying I always had the urge to create and have been drawn to clay because it provides the ultimate medium upon which an artist can exert change. I moved from London to Nottingham where I completed a Visual Arts in Ceramics course where I gained a distinction. I now have my own studio where I am continue my development as a ceramic artist. [www.finspottery.co.uk](http://www.finspottery.co.uk)



## CPA News

### MAAC - Future Events for 2004

**Saturday 6th March 2004**

**The Crafts Council, 44a Pentonville Road, London N1 9BY at 2.30 pm**

'Rethinking 20th Century Ceramics'

This lecture will be about some of the intriguing ways that ceramics have been looked at, displayed and talked about within the twentieth century. Edmund de Waal is a potter and writer

**Saturday April 24**

**40 Brodie Road, Enfield, Middx EN2 0ET from 12noon until 4pm**

Steve Harrison will be giving a workshop on making tools - beautiful tools that feel like an extension of your hand, tools that work well and that you are able to maintain. Materials will be available at cost to make sure that everybody has the 'essence' of a Steve Harrison toolkit. This will take place in Steve's workshop in Enfield in a relaxed atmosphere and in addition there will be plenty of fine tea and home made cake.

For more information and booking for either of these events please contact Isabel Denyer, Wighill House, Wighill, Tadcaster, North Yorkshire, LS24 8BG Tel:01937 835632

Organisation for the Dutch trip is well under way. An event at the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford is planned for May. Pot handling and photographic workshops are in the pipeline. We'll keep you all informed as soon as things are finalised.

(The CPA have e-mailed me some application forms for the above events. If you would like an application form then e-mail [marshiepots@aol.com](mailto:marshiepots@aol.com))

## Website and CD News

### **Review of Joe Finch's CD—3 Chamber Climbing Kiln, the complete building manual on CD**

I saw Joe's kiln in action at Aberystwyth, went to his talk on its construction and firing and was fascinated by the whole process (maybe there is a pyromaniac lurking somewhere inside of me). I subsequently bought his CD on its construction and for just under £10 thought it well worth the money.



The auto starting CD comes up with two options of an intro (recommended) and start now. The Intro screen gives you several options to take you through the CD:  
Shopping List—Gives suppliers used and quantities required to build the kiln.  
Firing—A detailed firing log at Aberystwyth.  
Photo Album—Images of the building and firing of the kiln at the Aberystwyth Ceramics Festival.

*Continued on page 18*

## Playing with Fire near Clitheroe A Raku Course with Jenny Eaton

When I first saw Jenny's pots at the Clitheroe Platform Gallery I really liked the form and finish and was impressed by their size. I unfortunately missed one of her early one day courses, but when Jenny advertised for her last course I eagerly signed up.



We were all met at Clitheroe station by Jenny's husband and then followed him snake like to their home in a quiet rural setting to be greeted by Jenny and their two dogs. What an idyllic setting for a home and pottery.

After brief introductions, a description of a packed days activity Jenny demonstrated the final stages of the raku technique on a large pot which had been cooking while we were travelling on our way to their home. Most impressive to see the molten glaze glowing before being rapidly cooled and smoked in sawdust.

Jenny had thoughtfully provided several pots on which we could try the various techniques as well as trying our own small bisque fired pieces. The course covered all aspects of the theory and practise of raku firing, smoke firing, the use of terragisalti and health and safety issues. The simplicity of the construction of the raku kiln made from ceramic insulating bricks, ceramic fibre lining and propane burner has made me keen to build my own in the garden (don't tell the wife!). As a former teacher I was impressed by Jenny's teaching style; there was a good balance between theory and practise and her points were put across succinctly and with humour.

At the end of the day we all went away tired and smelling of smoke but proudly clutching our raku and smoke fired pieces. It was a memorable day. Thanks Jenny.

(Ian Marsh)



## Welcome To New Members

Name	Address	Tel. No.	E-mail
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Chris Dunne	The Potting Shed, Broadgates, Hexham, Northumberland NE46 1QN	01434 606811	chris@thepottingshed.co.uk
Kay Henderson	20 Durham Place, Chester le Street, Durham DH3 2AY	0191 4104723	kenderson@bigfoot.com
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Annie Peaker	Kirk Neuk, Fiddlers Lane, Lazonby, Penrith, CA10 1BL	01768 870492	annie.peaker@virgin.net
Nancy Pliener	9 The Green, Welton, E Yorks HU15 1NG	01482 665134	
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Prabhah Vithalbhay	37 Greenwood Park, Meanwood, Leeds, Yorks LS6 4LB	0113 274 9871	

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

## A CLAY-DIGGER WRITES IN—John Rivers

I joined the N.P.A. this summer, though mid-Derbyshire is about as southerly as most of you will probably wish to tolerate.

I'm a thrower, largely self-taught over 25 years, I dig my clay locally and a few years ago built a natural-gas kiln to complement the electric one. It's in relation to these D.I.Y. activities that I write, since – having no conventional knowledge-base – I never quite know if I'm getting things right. And I often get them wrong!

The clay comes from under an opencast coal seam being mined locally. It's a stoneware which is comfortable up to cone 7, with 1½% iron oxide and 1% titania though through a 30 mesh sieve it's intrinsically waxy and won't stand up well. The question is how to modify it for cone 9, tooth, reduction as well as oxidation, and density.

I took a sample to CERAM in Stoke for analysis and explained that I needed some layman's guidelines for adapting it. I eventually received a detailed chemical breakdown but no practical advice, and they then said it would require many more tests and hundreds more pounds. \*!?!\*.

In the event this is my 'process'

- sieve out the coal chips and debris
- blunge in 10-15% grog, 8-10% china clay, c. 5% flint and a few handfuls of Cornish stone.... Settle and dry it,
- use 2 parts of this and 1 part white 'Draycott' stoneware from Potclays.

And it throws well, seldom blebs, fires fairly pale in reduction without darkening glazes too much...but it doesn't keep its 'ring' after being washed. Which worries me.

Are there any experts, or other questers after home-produced clay in the N.P.A? (And – no. It's not cost-effective to dig one's own clay, just an eccentric, masochistic pleasure.)

\*\*\*\*\*

The gas kiln chamber is about 3' tall x 2' x 2'. Using all reclaimed materials it cost me about £750, and amazes me by working pretty well. It's down-draft with 2 huge natural-gas pipe burners in one corner and 1 in the opposite corner. On a good day it can conclude a reduction firing with a longish soak in less than 12 hours.

But...and there are always 'buts'...I regard copper red as the alchemist's gold and I don't always achieve it. Potclays' customer-adviser advised, "Look at the spy-hole flame when you're reducing and adjust things till you get a green tinge at the extremity. Then it's reducing well." So I gathered a posse of family and Joe Public and we all stared at the flame, 50% discerning a green tip and 50% asserting it was yellow.

I don't know anyone who fires with natural gas. It's a long looping flame with no forced air going in. The test flame from a spyhole can roar out like a blueish dagger with a bright tip, be vigorously blue/yellow, mostly yellow or a lazy, smokey yellow, according to the damper. Whereabouts is the optimum reduction?

The other snag is how to pack. I know the areas that are good for iron-glazes, have found out which glazes hate reduction and I'm beginning to generate fine reds on smaller and flatter pieces; but when I want to copper-reduce large plump vases (15"-18" high) or tall bottle

shapes (20" – 24"high) the reduction is pallid and incomplete. I presume the large 3D areas needed to get them in simply allow too fast a fuel-flow past them. Has anyone a solution to trapping gas around very large pieces?

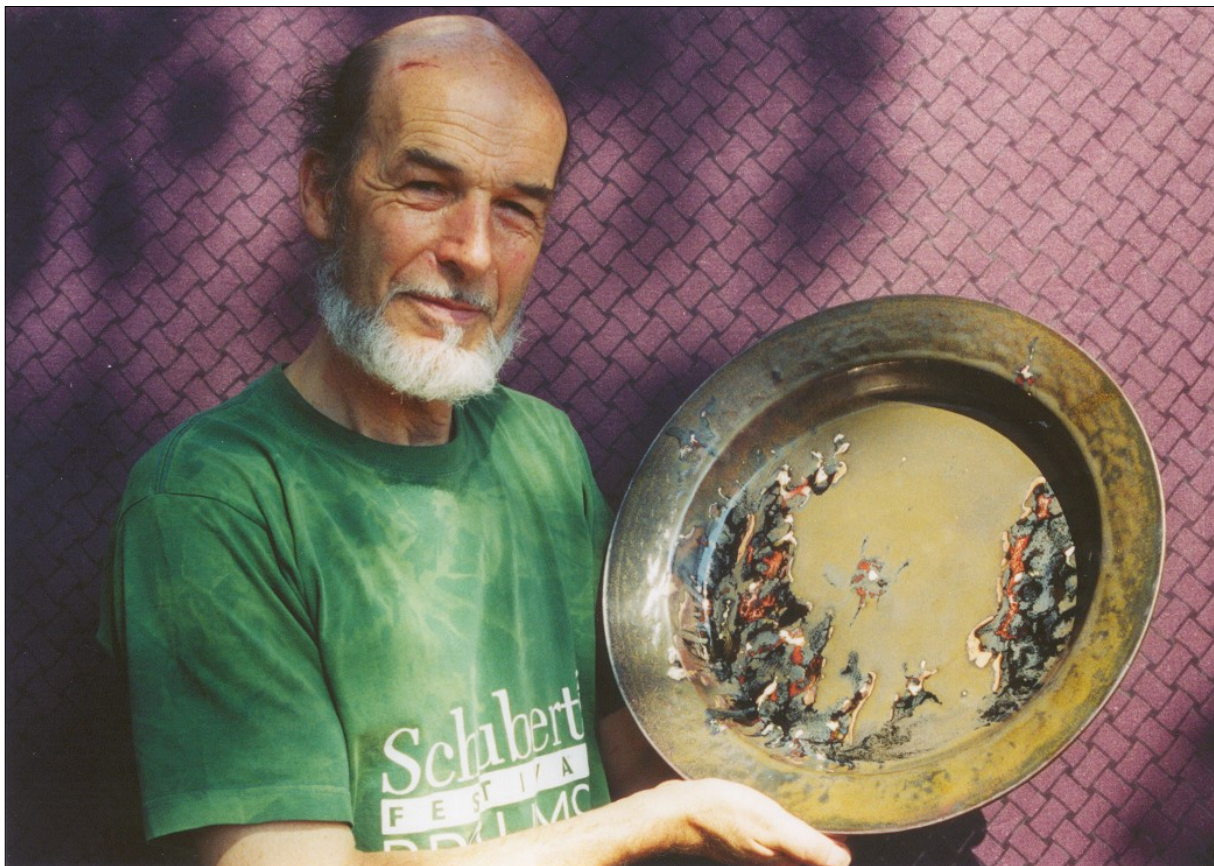
Is anyone using natural gas?

Thanks for the space to introduce myself and air these queries. I'll be delighted if anyone responds.

John Rivers

Riddings Pottery (tel: 01773-603181)  
www.riddingspottery.co.uk  
email: riddingspottery@hotmail.com

"John with a 20" diameter flat bowl."

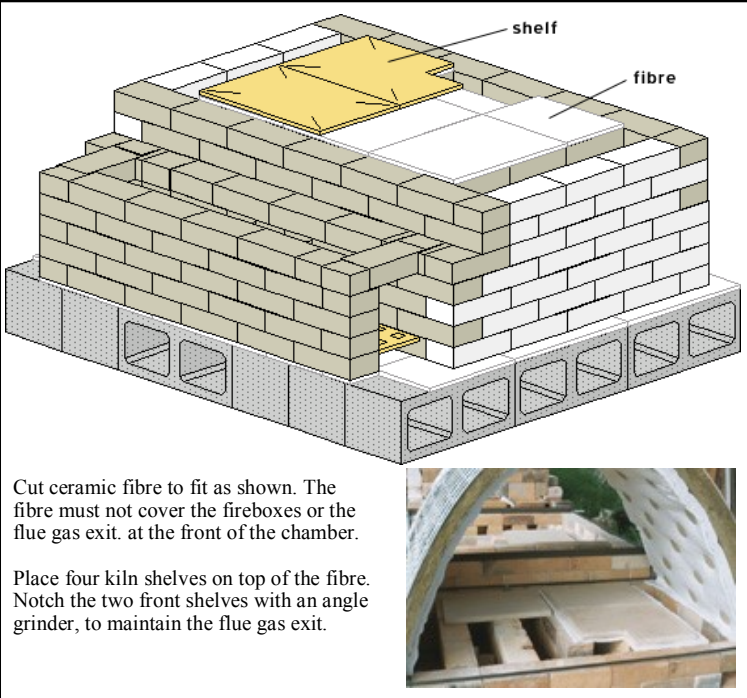


Feedback—How to contact Joe with your experiences and suggestions for future designs.  
 Access pdf version—process for printing an A4 manual.  
 About Joe—A brief summary of Joe’s work.  
 Begin—takes you through the construction step by step.

The CD is well thought out and well presented. There is enough detail to guide you through the construction of the kiln even to the tools you would require to build it. Dimensions are given, and step by step guidelines, in understandable language. I would not be apprehensive about tackling such a project although my neighbours might be a bit alarmed. I just need to find someone with a big field who is willing to let me loose.

Further CD’s are planned including one for his original wood firing kiln.

Ian Marsh

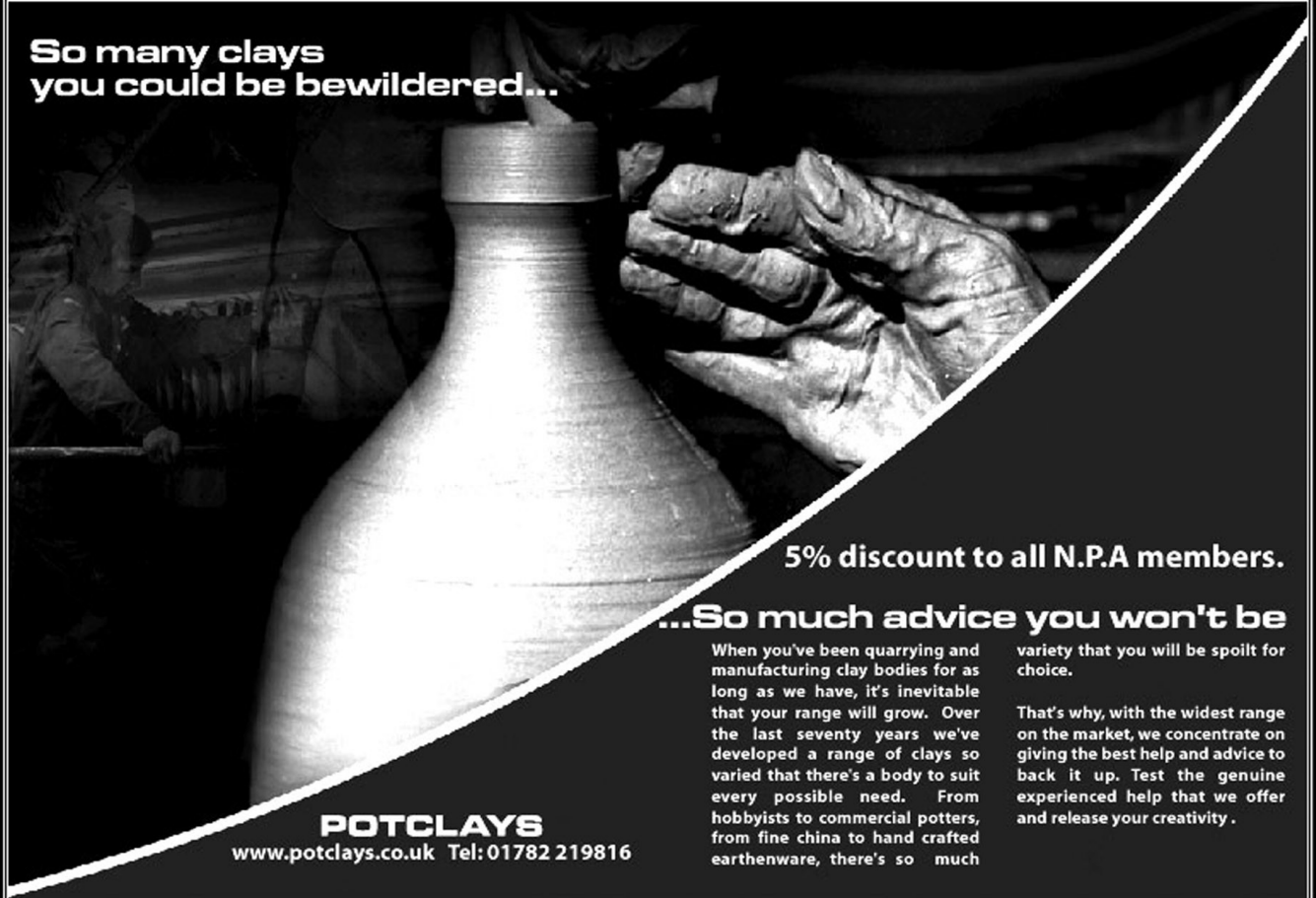


Cut ceramic fibre to fit as shown. The fibre must not cover the fireboxes or the flue gas exit, at the front of the chamber.

Place four kiln shelves on top of the fibre. Notch the two front shelves with an angle grinder, to maintain the flue gas exit.

*Sample page from the CD*

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