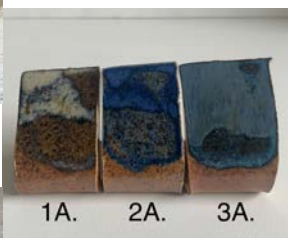


NPA Magazine



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

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£2, free to members



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Next issue

The copy date for the next issue of NPA News is 21 October 2024.

Articles should be between 200 and 1000 words saved as text files or written in an email.

Images need to be high quality for printing, saved as .jpg files. 1MB is a suitable sized file.

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 or need help.

Advertising in NPA Magazine

Per issue prices

	Small ads (30 words)	Free to members	
Boxed adverts			
colour	1/2 pp £30	1/4 pp £18	1/8 pp £10
B&W	1/2 pp £20	1/4 pp £15	1/8 pp £8
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Front Cover: Aileen Burgess, Pot before firing

Photo: Aileen Burgess

Back Cover: Bev Seth

Photos: Beverley Porter

From the Chair

Welcome to the Summer edition of the NPA magazine.

I hope you all had a chance to look at the new e-newsletter we have sent round in early July. I am so excited to see so many ceramic events happening across the north of the country. I hope you all had a chance to participate or see some of them.



Have you heard about our Potters Camp coming back on 12th October this year? Have a look at our social media pages on Facebook and Instagram and there is an article later in this magazine too. This year we will be at the much more central location of Menston, Ilkley only ca 20 minutes from Leeds or Bradford. One of our headline speakers will be Linda Bloomfield and I am looking forward to her talk on glazes and the questions & answers session. We will also have Emily Stubbs demonstrating surface decorations. There will be hands on workshops, raku firings, a wheel throwing surgery and we will also have our annual AGM. I promise to keep it short 😊. Oh and there is some parking, but Menston train station is also nearby.

How are you getting on with our new system, LoveAdmin? There are still a lot of you who have not signed up. Please keep an eye out for another email that will go out soon with the invite link. For those of you who have signed up, Thank you. If you haven't saved the link for the system, you can easily find it on our website under the membership tab. At this point, I would also like to say a big thank you to those members who have started helping with the system, migrating from a manual to an automated system is by no means easy and I am very grateful for your help and expertise.

Coming back to events, I would also like to mention that you can also find a lot of events advertised on our website under the "events tab". Many, if not all NPA run events will also now be on LoveAdmin and can be easily booked there.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Lynne Rose who has stepped down as Vice Chair, and Graham Northing who has stepped up to fill the role. Many of you will know him from his regional coordinator role in the South East. We have also been successful in finding a new secretary with Rebecca Brown and Tracy Dryden-Jones is helping with social media.

Here is to a sunny Sommer.

Best wishes

Nadine

Your Committee

Chair	Nadine Blakemore NPACHAIR@northern-potters.co.uk Ilkley
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Lynn Grant	York
Carol Newmarch	Middlesbrough
Bev Seth	Sheffield
Kathryn Stevens	Barrow in Furness
Tony Ovenell	Bradford

Diary

To add your events to the diary and website, email npanews@northern-potters.co.uk

4 August	SENPA Talk/Demonstration Day Eco Centre Ruth King and Sarah Villeneau
18 August	Pop-Up2 Pottery Ceramics Fair Stocksbridge
7-8 September	Art in the Gardens Sheffield
7-8 September	Wardlow Mires Pottery & Food Fest The Three Stags Heads, Mires Ln, Wardlow Derbyshire, SK17 8RW
21-22 September	Art at the House Shepley
12 October	NPA Potters Camp Kirklands Community Centre, Main Street, Menston Kirklands Community Centre, Main Street; Menston
27 October	Cromford Ceramics Fair Cromford

Northern Potters Association Pottery Camp & AGM 2024

We are thrilled to announce our upcoming Pottery Camp and Annual General Meeting, set to take place on Saturday, 12th October 2024, at the Kirklands Community Centre, Main Street, Menston. This central location offers ample free parking and is conveniently close to Menston rail station, making it easily accessible for all attendees.

This year's event promises to be an inspiring day filled with creativity and learning. We are honoured to have renowned potters Linda Bloomfield and Emily Stubbs among our guest speakers, sharing their expertise and insights. The camp will feature a variety of workshops, including raku firing, throwing techniques, surface decoration, and hand-building, catering to all skill levels.

Our event is proudly sponsored by Potclays, who will be providing the clay for the workshops, and Northern Kilns who will be available to help with any kiln-related questions. Tickets will be available soon via LoveAdmin, so keep an eye out for announcements. Don't miss this opportunity to connect with fellow potters, expand your skills, and enjoy a day dedicated to the art of pottery.

We look forward to seeing you.

Pamela Thorby Ceramics



Nunnington Pottery, Nunnington, North Yorkshire is the gallery and workspace for Pamela Thorby Ceramics, set in glorious Ryedale countryside. Open Wednesday to Sunday - April to December. 10% discount for NPA members on gallery pottery. Taster sessions/lessons given in York or Nunnington. Contact via website

www.pamelathorby.com for options starting from £40 per person.

Instagram @nunningtonpottery

NPA Bursary Scheme

The NPA is offering bursaries to members needing support to develop their work by attending courses, workshops or otherwise exploring new directions. The maximum award is £250, from a fund of £1000 for 2024.

All you need to do is go to the NPA website, <https://www.northern-potters.co.uk/bursaries/> and fill in the form, outlining how and when the money will be used to benefit your practice. The committee will consider your application and let you know if you have been successful. Applicants must have been NPA members for at least one year.

The final step is to write a short, illustrated article about your experience for NPA News.

Equality & Diversity

The NPA is an inclusive, not-for-profit organisation run by volunteers which welcomes and values diversity (of age, ethnicity, race, religion, disability, belief or non-belief, sex or sexual orientation) within its membership. Our aim is to ensure that all our members are treated with dignity and respect.

New Artists to the Website



Maggie Baker



Inga Winson



Donnas Peterson, Dudley Donkey



Zivarna Murphy, Smoke Fired Urchin Vessel

NPA Website – Artists Pages

As an NPA member you can have a page on the NPA website to display and promote your work. You will need to provide up to four photos of your work, an artist's statement of 100 words, email address, phone number, plus any website, Facebook and Instagram links. Email John Cook with the details and updates website@northern-potters.co.uk



Brendan Hesmondhalgh - Mo Schofield



A talk and demonstration with Brendan Hesmondhalgh

As usual with anyone attending a workshop with Brendan; we were warmly received with refreshments at the Sculpture Lounge in Holmbridge, near Holmfirth.

Brendan, is a great storyteller and treated us to anecdotes about his sculpture path in life as a student: As part of a ceramics assessment Brendan was asked to make something representing tableware with functionality, while everybody else was making forms of kitchenware and decorated their tables accordingly, Brendan presented a pig, and slapped some napkins on top claiming it to be a Napkin holder.

As was then and is now, he and his style is unique; he demonstrated how he draws with clay: whether it's his use of tools for mark making or heels of his

hand stretching out the clay; he's able to create textural quality in the rawness of the clay, enhancing an animal's body, highlighting its muscle structure; producing a style that is recognisably his.

His sculpture implies an animal's features as opposed to lifelike or detailed modelling. Common too is his use of plinths, not only for support and strength but for evolving an animal's form accentuating its strength and power. Like his famous bull's, colour matching its intent or purpose in the glazing process.

Valuable questions were answered about future of ceramics in college courses, pricing work, gallery production. Issues around being authentic, and staying creative. It's essential to keep your spirit in your work, allowing you to flourish as an artist rather than a manufacturer.



Brendan Hesmondhalgh

For anyone who has been on any of his courses, they will know what an amazing teacher he is, and that rare quality of being able to understand where you are at and push you to get to where you want to be with your sculpture. As with Brendan his generous nature always comes across, he gave his talk for free but together we did manage to make donations to the value of £334 towards his vision of a community defibrillator that will service the people and businesses of the small village of Holmbridge.



Young Makers – Hannah Staniforth

.. and why professionals also need to make time for play and community.

It's been four years since the start of the Covid 19 Pandemic and the repercussions of this are still being felt across certain aspects of life, Education especially is still recovering. But this academic year I feel it has been a lot more settled and felt "normal" again and our students have been ambitious with their work and ideas and excited to create again. I have worked in Education for 8 years and I have spent the last 5 working in Further Education (FE) teaching from Level 2 to Level 4 and this year's end of year Art Exhibition and celebration came together really well due to dedicated staff and passionate students. Our College still has access to great equipment and workshops such as photography dark rooms, a great print making studio and of course my pride and joy the ceramic studio. With this access we are able to teach our students traditional techniques and skills and some students go and study these skills further at university or through Apprenticeships. We are incredibly lucky to still have this access to ceramics at our College, as over the years there have been so many Colleges and Universities cutting courses and getting rid of kilns and large workshop spaces due to funding. And as long as I can, I will continue to advocate for clay and craftsmanship! But as a maker it is our own time for play, experimentation and our community that we need to ensure we make time for.



Hannah Staniforth

One thing that we aim to install and develop into our student's way of thinking and practice is the importance of "play" through materials, techniques and processes, and this is something I think we can all be a little guilty as professionals of for not putting time aside in the year to play, and experiment and make new work. This can be though many contributing



College Summer Show Preview Evening

factors but for me it's mainly time restraint's and costings of materials, but play is still so important to our own development. Great work comes through play, as an art student you are taught to push materials to the brink of failure because ... you can and because you have nothing to lose but everything to gain, time is on your side (apart from deadlines) your materials are free so there are no worries for costly mistakes and hopefully in turn you end up creating work that is unique to your play and thought process. Play is important to keep your work fresh and exciting for your customers and audience but most importantly yourself! You are the one making the work it needs to be something that you are passionate about and enjoy doing. Play and experimentation also helps to improve your skills. But I think the most important reason to play through materials is that it naturally helps creativity which in turn broadens your perspective as an artist and creator even if you just set yourself aside a couple of hours wherever possible it will make all the difference and hopefully spark some new ideas.



Hannah, student Ethan Burgon and ceramic Technician JJ Eteson

The importance of community goes without saying, as a student you are constantly within your community of peers and tutors. The creative conversations you have with peers that spark new ideas in your head and new ways of thinking and seeing and solving a problem or the shoulder to cry on at the debrief in the pub at the end of the day, when your final deadline is looming, or a kiln full of work you have spent weeks developing has all blown up! It's these conversations you have in your community that pick you back up and inspire you to do better. Many an hour was spent on the sofa with a brew at the ceramic starter studio at Yorkshire Artspace when I was an emerging Potter planning shows and new pieces of work and getting excited about the chance and possibility of experimentation and learning from my peers. But what happens when you leave college or university or shared studio space community and like many other Potters set up a studio at home where you can feel or become quite isolated. This is why many of us seek and join organisations like Northern Potters, to keep in the loop and join another community of like minded peers. As humans it is important to socialise which helps both mental and physical health. So make sure you contribute to your chosen communities by going to organised meetups or creating group critiques to discuss new work or going to see exhibitions to inspire discussion and introducing you to new makers or materials.

I'm not saying that you constantly need to change and develop your work that you have already probably spent many years developing and honing your craft and skill but sometimes revisiting ideas with a new

approach makes all the difference. And talking through ideas of new pieces with your creative peers and friends can help you get excited about your own work again if you are feeling like you are in a creative rut!

This summer I intend on spending time in my studio and celebrating 9 years of being self employed. I will be playing and experimenting with ideas that I have had bubbling away for some time and making sure that I spend time with my creative community in Sheffield. I am dropping a teaching day from September to spend more time in the studio this has been the goal for me for some years and if not now when?! So all the more reason to get myself going with some new projects and enjoying it!



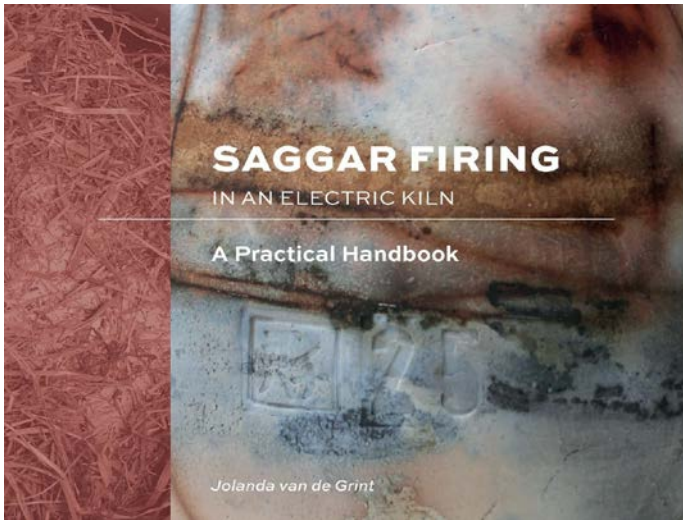
George Imrie - Ceramic Saggur and Raku

I am holding an Open Studio Event at my home studio in August in Sheffield so if you are interested in visiting give me a follow on Instagram and send me a message [@hannahstaniforth](https://www.instagram.com/hannahstaniforth).

Saggar Firing - Aileen Burgess

Introduction

I have been interested in alternative firing techniques for a while having seen examples of pit and barrel firing along with the use of terra sigillata. It was only when I obtained a book by Jolanda van de Grint called 'Saggar Firing in an electric kiln', that I was encouraged to to experiment with this technique.



My first stage was to make a Saggar to fit into my Kittec top loader electric kiln. I used E/S 50 Earthstone Crank clay for this. The Saggar is a cylindrical structure making best use of my kiln dimensions being 2cm thick and 30cm diameter x 30cm high.



The saggar is used to protect the inside of the kiln, from the combustible materials used which may damage the metal elements. The saggar needs to be a contained vessel; I used a kiln shelf as a lid. The saggar also has to have a hole near the top in order to draw in air. If the hole wasn't there, the ceramics would be blackened and not show the colours.

First stage

I made some pots using E/S 20 in the form of cylindrical and bowl shapes. The reason I used E/S 20 was because I wanted a smooth white base which also has a high resistance to thermal shock, though in actual fact the whiteness of clay isn't necessary if using white terra sigillata. I applied terra sigillata (sealed earth) to the leather hard clay. This was easy to make using a mixture of very fine ball clay, water and a deflocculant in the form of Sodium Silicate 75TW which weakens the electrical attraction between the particles of clay and allows the finer particles to float freely in the water. The heavier particles of clay sink to the bottom and the top finer clay I filtered off using a plastic tube and gravity, and used the filtered liquid as a spray. (Recipes for this can be found on the internet).

I then burnished the dried surface smooth with a plastic bag to buff the surface; this worked well as the clay was compressed to create a shiny smooth surface. I then fired the pots to 1000 degrees. A higher temperature than this would lose the shiny surface achieved by the terra sigillata. Note that E/S 20 has a fire temperature/ maturity of 1120-1300C so the finished ceramic is not vitrified and may be a little fragile (I've not experienced a problem with this so far)... An alternative to try could be Ashraf Hanna clay which matures between 900-1280, though has a slightly rougher texture rated at 8. You may find other clays more preferable.

Second stage

I wanted to experiment using a variety of natural materials that were easily around the house including banana skin, copper wire, my hair, steel wool, onion skin, feathers, pine cones, sisal string and cotton cloth. In addition to these, the book was helpful in suggesting some additional compounds such as red iron oxide, copper carbonate, manganese dioxide and cobalt carbonate which worked well in producing more predictable colours. The saggar was filled with straw from a pet shop which was used as a combustible and also to separate the vessels from each other. Other combustibles could be used, such as sawdust, though I haven't tried this as the straw was so successful.

I wanted to try different combinations of natural materials and compounds in a methodical way in order to document and understand the effects they created. In an initial firing I used bladderwrack seaweed before learning the dangers of salt in damaging the elements. I did however go against all caution and use smaller amounts of seaweed in the form of horse feed 'herb' supplement, as it claims to be high in iodine but no mention of sodium. Yes I tasted it, and now have a shiny coat and healthy hooves. The following images show one of my test tubes wrapped with banana and copper wire, before and after firing to 950 degrees.



Although I carefully documented the materials attached to each pot, I then put multiple pots together in the same saggar without considering the unexpected results from cross contamination of the various materials used in the process.



Conclusion

I really enjoy this method of working and continue to experiment using a variety of materials. I particularly like the unpredictability of the process along with the colours which cannot be obtained using more traditional methods of ceramic decoration.

Since my early experiments I have looked to exploit this unpredictability with methods such as encouraging cross contamination in the saggar and considering scale and shape of the ceramics I make to exploit this technique.



This ceramic demonstrates the results of a combination of steel wool, cotton fabric soaked in cobalt carbonate, copper wire and bladderwrack seaweed attached using jute string.

Wood Ash Glazes - Adam Conway Cowdrill

Wood ash glazes, a first attempt

Since I became interested in Pottery in 2020 I have been drawn naturally to the Potters: Phil Rogers, Jim Malone, Svend Bayer and Mike Dodd - all of whom, little did I know then, used Ash Glazes extensively in their work. In the four-year period since that time I have definitely and thoroughly fallen under the spell of Ash Glazes. To compound this passion in 2021 I was fortunate enough to participate in a wood-firing. Not having any cone-10 glazes at the time I was blessed to be able to use the Green Wood Ash Glaze of a Potter friend on a couple of my pieces. After the unloading of those wonderful pots I was smitten. I knew that I had to find a way of sourcing and making my own wood ash glazes. Fast forward to the winter of 2023/24 and I requested my Dad to collect all wood ash from the two log-burners of my childhood home in Milton Keynes. He patiently obliged this unusual and somewhat irksome request so that in the Spring of this year I finally had my first ever decent quantity of wood ash. I was finally ready to begin testing my own wood ash glazes.

For the intended cone-10 wood-firings I already knew that a Simon Leach recipe worked well. I therefore decided to keep things simple, at least initially, and made up three test batches using this simple wood ash recipe of one third each of wood ash, potash feldspar and flint. Being naturally drawn to greens and blues I straightaway included Cobalt Oxide, Rutile and Copper Carbonate as additives.

The need for simple and effective tracking and recording will be apparent to any potter that has done glaze tests of their own and so I decided upon a straightforward code to identify the different recipes of:



1A - Green wood ash = Simon Leach recipe (SL) + 4% rutile & 3% copper carbonate

2A - Blue wood ash = 1A recipe + 2% cobalt oxide

3A - Too Blue wood ash = 1A recipe + 4% cobalt oxide



Nigel and David at the wood kiln

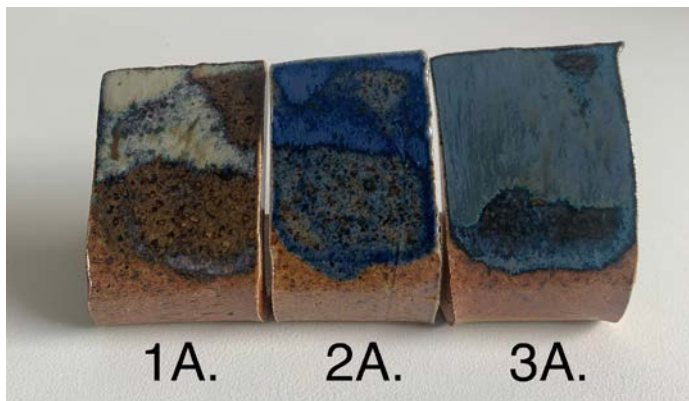
Theory complete it was time for action. I realised at this point that whatever happened it would be critical to keep these codes attached to their corresponding test samples. After weighing and combining the materials to make up the 100gram test batches (plus percentage of additives) it was the usual routine of soaking the powder with around 80ml of water and sieving through an 80's mesh test-sieve the following morning. This done I had four wonderful little jars half-full of a brown liquid identical in colour and consistency. After a couple of days to let the glaze equalize I added water to achieve my desired viscosity and specific gravity of exactly 1.34. Next was to dip my test tiles for an allocated length of three seconds, and then a second dip for another three seconds on the top half of the test tile only. Wood ash glazes are super sensitive to application thickness and to make the most of these tests I wanted to see the different results from a thin application versus a thick one (this is also why I took great care over accurate and uniform viscosity and specific gravity). Test tiles done there was plenty of glaze remaining so I proceeded to

glaze three small simple pots.

With cross-contamination in mind I had so many separate stirrers, lids, jugs and mixing bowls crowding my worktop that it was quite challenging to keep track of which glaze was going onto which test tile. It took a consistent focus to ensure that nothing was mixed up before I had the chance to write on the test tiles in my underglaze pencil. It's worth noting that the code identifying the test tile was written on the underside as the top-side would be exposed to melting wood ash and potentially cover the all-important letter and number of 1A, 2A or 3A. After some clearing up I was ready to go, my first ever home-made and partially self-sourced wood ash glaze tests were ready for the flames and fury of the wood-kiln.

Upon loading day I was sure to see the three test tiles go into a central area of the kiln and crucially right alongside each other therefore minimising the effect upon my experiment of the firing factors; temperature variance, wood ash exposure and reduction. After they were loaded I had done all I could do and the rest would be the Kiln's work. The firing day went smoothly as usual due to superb kiln design in harmony with flue, chimney and dedicated team of stokers.

A consistently brilliant load of pots were the result on unloading a few days later. My three test tiles all came out with a good melt and just as importantly easily distinguishable from one another.



Adam - the Author - by wood kiln

On reflection I'm proud of myself for putting in the time, effort and planning to testing these three wood ash glazes. For me such a task initially seemed quite dry when compared to actually making pots. I'm really pleased with the results and will be making up a larger batch of '2A blue wood ash' for glazing a number of my pots. I hope then things will get really exciting and crucially that I'll dream up a better name than '2A blue wood ash'.

By Adam Conway Cowdrill of 'Pottery Conway'

With thanks to the NPA bursary scheme.





Ceramics in Southwell 2024

Sunday 25th August
10.00am - 4.30pm

featuring the work of
over 30 selected
ceramic artists



vessels by Natalie Bell

Market Square, Southwell
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www.ceramicsinsouthwell.org.uk



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Raku Day with SENPA - Peter Marshall

Earth, Fire, Heat, Smoke, Steam were the flavour of the day, along with copious cups of tea.

creative concentration enveloping the room! A table of drying out raw glazed forms quickly filled up to dry



Raku Firing, the centuries old technique of a low fired process using lead based glaze, coupled with a tea drinking ceremony was favoured by Japanese tea masters and valued for its simple artistic potential; unusual colour and surface textures created through a quick method of producing handmade tea bowls were made thickly with open clay bodies to help alleviate cracking and handling when full of hot tea, as the bowl was to be used immediately as a drinking vessel as part of Zen Buddhism practice.

In Rotherham, between 20 to 30 NPA members took up the invitation to attend the walled garden courtyard at Clifton Museum Park, where the day started in an area set out with containers of glazes, a variety of brushes, combs and sponges.

My friend Inga and I had been excited to partake and celebrate in this ancient process of excitement and intrigue, and I'm sure that feeling was reflected in many others attending.

Opening words from Nog were most appropriate, "Have Fun today" - The Japanese symbol for Raku Firing means "Enjoyment".

The activity began; a friendly group of ceramic artists were let loose delving into the wide variety of glazes provided for the day. I noticed a soft twittering of excited whispers coupled with quiet absorption of

out ready for Nog, Andy Lee and Caroline Lee who had earlier set up the two kilns and 'danger' area in readiness for the activity.



Roaring flames could be heard as the gas burners were lit. Raw glazed forms were moved on to the tops of the kilns to preheat. A noticeable kettle heating-up noise accompanied, as potters needing some liquid refreshment. I felt a spiritual connection to the process already!

The weather was kind, so many were now moving in and out of the courtyard to join in the fun of the firing. When the kilns had reached about 500 degrees the team of firers jumped into action, removing doors, placing preheated pieces with tongs into the firing chambers. Doors were replaced, and gas burners turned up roaring into further action to ramp up the temperatures required for glazes to start changing into a fluid, shiny layer. Not just relying on digital pyrometers, the firers were carefully monitoring this critical part of raku firing through spy holes. Once satisfied, other people came into action, they were the 'reduction team'. Red hot ceramics carefully lifted out and placed into metal bins, covered, or partially covered with combustible material, in this case hardwood shavings, bursting into flame on contact. Once the bins had been filled the lids were quickly replaced to create an oxygen starved atmosphere. Reduction or 'Carbonisation' was now in action, and eager makers buzzing excitedly to see what had happened to their carefully made pieces!

In Japanese ceramics, the descendants of Chojiro, (the first to be given the appellation, Raku) were given high respect for their work and dedication to that original and highly innovative spirit that motivated their ancestor; Eastern Raku was usually painted on and a wash of glaze applied over an asymmetrical handmade form, fired and then placed out of the kiln to cool, and therefore oxidised. We Westerners depart from the traditional Japanese methods at this point, using reduction. We have moved from the central idea of 'function' in ceramics, with a shift to a quest for originality which has become more central in our modern times. Much impetus has come from low-fired ceramics with its emphasis on colour and unglazed clay, celebrating the repertoire of 'Kiln Gifts' resulting from lesser degrees of control perhaps. 'Crazing' and 'Crawling' once regarded as faults in higher fired ceramics are often the sought after qualities in Raku, helping in creating unique and original beauty.

Once our forms were taken from the smoke chamber some potters chose to cool their works in the air, whilst others opted for quenching in water, sometimes seeming a 'violent completion' with steam, bubbling and hissing water cooling the fired piece down. Lifted out of the water, one expected to see a beautiful combination of colour adorning the form. Unfortunately not! Those who have done this will know, emerging from the ashes is a charred blackened form, covered in wood tar and smoke damage which has to be cleaned off through

vigorous scrubbing. Shared scrubbing bowls created gatherings to admire, wonder, marvel and coo at each other's results. Some fantastic pieces emerged and an inspiring array of very different approaches were viewed to the credit of talented makers.

I think I'm correct in saying that the appetite for low fired ceramics has grown substantially, especially in America and Europe. It is of no surprise to me as people embrace the techniques with enthusiasm, focussed on qualities of accident and fortuity in the outcomes. In my opinion it is an ideal way to learn about firing, progressing from bonfire, pit and sawdust smoke firing to the gas burning Raku Kiln, where the proximity of the potter with the firing pot or form is a seductive relationship. If you've never participated in a Raku firing, I would strongly recommend you get involved, such fun and happiness to be gained from the experience, coupled with a spot of tea drinking, maybe even a spiritual if not a conceptual link made to those ancient pioneers!

The SENPA organisers created a magical return to raku for me, for which I am truly grateful.



Experiments - Bev Seth



Sometime over lockdown I moved from domestic ware to a range of mythical creatures and a series of hills that told stories of their past in the landscapes and buildings within it. I think it was a good move and I felt I was achieving some degree of success doing this. But the one thing I have been struggling with was the transition in size, I found that while I've gradually moved to more sculptural work, I'm still working on a domestic scale, so took The Land We Live In series as a start to begin experimenting. It was time to go big.



My first experiments were still quite small, but I wanted to capture new ideas about surface pattern and mark making. I was quite pleased there was a blend of textures I'd used previously but also newer more graphic shapes. So, good start, I'd made my first pieces and while they were not large, they had evolved.



Next a complete change, working with slip to bring in colour and texture. I was keen not to just test in a way that seemed any more damaging to the environment than I could help. In fact, this was my aim during the project, to try and be ruthless and recycle anything that didn't make the mark and if possible, make useful objects while experimenting. I made vases first, some of which I kept, then moved onto the hills.

Again, some degree of success, I layered the slips from black through green and finally blue. Mono printing on the last layer. I was not in control of the finish though and while I liked the unpredictability,

realised there was a lot of time and effort needed here to gain those skills. But another promising attempt.

I also tested a range of clays to support the larger pieces I wanted to make, but struggled as the changes in colour to the glaze and slips was less appealing than using my usual clay or a grogged version and getting better colours.

Time to try and go big, I began the larger hills by rolling a large slab and shaping it into a curve while soft. Later I started to coil onto the original shape, from the inside I smoothed and pushed the curves out, outside I paddled the walls until they were the shape I desired. Compressing the clay in this way proved to be a substantial way to build larger pieces.



Adding the story, I would say I am still working on this aspect. I experimented and made one with similar sized house and trees to previous versions, another I increased the size of the house and on the third I included more parts. They all worked in their own way and this made me think it was the story I wanted to tell that would lead me to the answer.

After all the tests and experiments, I made three large pieces in total, each only just over 25cm high. I didn't achieve my original plan to make something significantly larger, but as I worked, I realised it was going to be something that happened in its own time. Outside this experiment my work is naturally increasing in size without any seemingly conscious effort from me, the new marks have flowed into the old textures and I'm getting (slowly) better at keeping the slip in control.

What have I learnt? Ultimately what I knew all along, its clay and it keeps its own time.

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From the Membership Secretary

Jen Donkin Gourley
Membership Secretary

Visit <https://www.northern-potters.co.uk/> for membership forms and subscription rates.



Some reminders:

Don't forget to let membership@northern-potters.co.uk know if you have changed any of your contact details so that you don't miss out on any events and/or information. You can do this for yourself via your LoveAdmin page.

Also, please remember that we don't send out membership renewal reminders - you're in charge of your membership.

If you have any queries don't hesitate to contact me at membership@northern-potters.co.uk

Jen Donkin Gourley

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Book Review – Sarah Vanic

Pots in the Kitchen

By Josie Walter

“Never make anything that I shall have to dust.” Josie’s grandmother

Utility sounds such a dull word. Doesn’t it sound dry, but it is exciting, c’mon.

Utility in the kitchen. Utility in the pottery. Utility in aspiration.

Are you numbingly bored by my introduction?

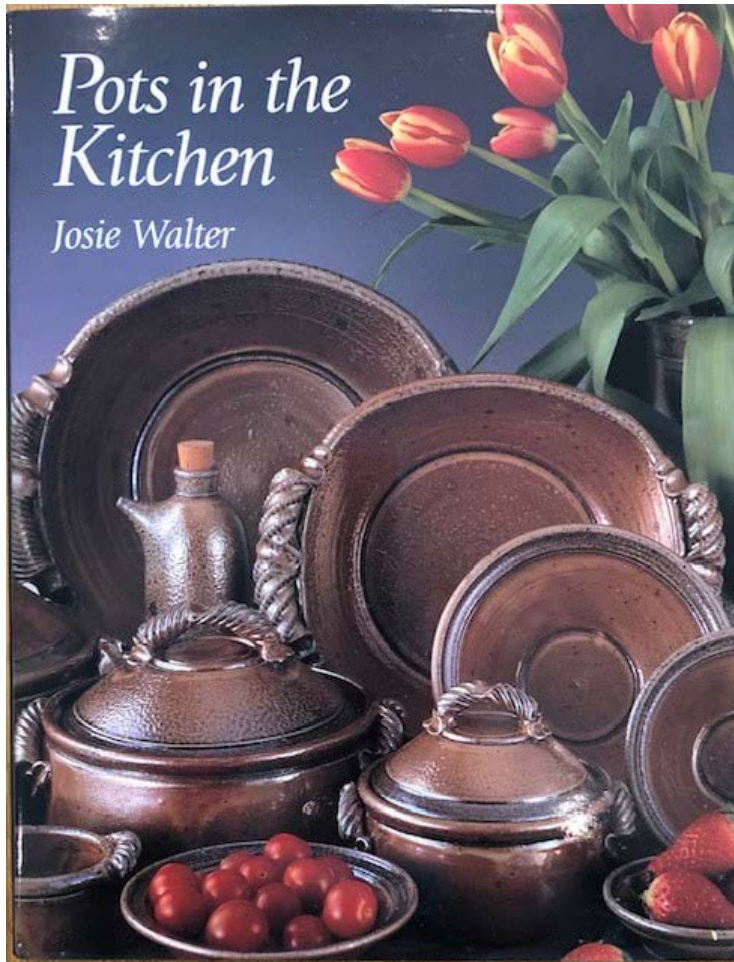
Persevere, as I have a trick up my sleeve; well it’s not really a trick, it’s the real deal.

‘Pots in the Kitchen’ written by the well known potter Josie Walter is wondrous. I first caught a glimpse of it at Josie’s stall last October during Wardlow Mires Pottery and Food Festival 2023 and was immediately drawn to it. If you throw pots and explore the making of tableware; this book should be open on your workbench. It highlights the need for a functional pot to be a particular way. Shape, form and the design of a pot sharing a symbiotic relationship with cookery. Within the pages published by Crowood Press you will find a multitude of images displaying why potters make specific and unique containers to enhance a necessary part of everyday life.

Josie starts the beginning of her book with the depth of early clay making and no surprise it is about the function that clay provided many years ago. Pots were made to suit purpose. Cooking, storing, containing. Digging into this topic required thorough and extensive exploration

and Josie aids the potter on a journey through time and geography.

If you are a pottery geek, you will like the inclusion of many old advertisements and excerpts from trade catalogues promoting the newest jam/pickle jars, spirits kegs and water filters just to name a few. There is also a section entitled Potters at Work, which is just the right amount of Step by Step, How to make something by seasoned pros. Josie also references the history and legacy of Studio Pottery. The reader will also find a useful chapter at the end of the book offering clay slips and glaze recipes by well known professionals.



and glaze recipes by well known professionals.

But what piqued my interest most, was the awareness and sensation I began to experience, that I was part of a continuum in time which reverberated deeply within me; that I as a modern maker was part of a vast history of clay production and I liked that feeling.

Josie has integrated her love of making, academic research and adventurous travels within her writing. She is a pioneer and very charming. We can all learn a lot from her approach to life.

Do not wait for things to come to you or to be rewarded by others but seek out your passion & interest and pursue it zealously, make it happen, find a way and whilst doing this, embrace handmade functional pottery; use it,

chip it, drink out of it & know that you are part of the cycle too. Enjoy!

You can obtain Josie’s book directly from her website online shop, www.josiewalter.co.uk



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Regional News

Regional groups were set up to help members communicate with others local to them and arrange events in their area.

At present NPA North West region have no organising group leadership. If you want to volunteer to organise events in this region then please just start organising events.



NW Regional co-ordinators:

northernpottersnw@gmail.com



[NPAnorthwest](https://www.facebook.com/NPAnorthwest)



[@northernpottersassociationNW](https://www.instagram.com/northernpottersassociationNW)



West update will focus on our ClayLab exhibition at SHOP. We spent three weeks June/July presenting work at SHOP in Preston from 19 makers, all members of UCLan ClayLab.

It's a great space filled with natural light, which showed the work beautifully

It was a showcase to gain people's interest in ClayLab, where members have access to the ceramic studios at UCLan for 4 hours on a Monday eve, there is also a separate Wednesday afternoon session.

ClayLab applications for 24/25 will be available soon so if you're interested please contact Cath Criscenti, UCLan ClayLab technician.

CCriscenti@uclan.ac.uk

Happy potting!



Kim Graham

west@northern-potters.co.uk



[NPAwest](https://www.facebook.com/NPAwest)



[@northernpottersassociationWest](https://www.instagram.com/northernpottersassociationWest) (TBC)

SWnpa is hosting a Summer Pitfiring Camp at Williamswood near Tarvin, Chester on Saturday 17th August. Campers can stay overnight in their own tents or campervans, or go home and come back in the morning to unwrap their pots. We have just four places left for NPA members. It will be a fun, educational and social gathering, with a barbeque in the evening and lots of pottery chat as well as feeding the flames of the pits. Participants can bring along two 20cm X20cm pots (or one bigger pot) to be

fired in the pit. If people want to email cheshireclaystudio@gmail.com for one of the remaining four places they are most welcome. Partners who are not bringing pots to be fired are very welcome. No pets. £35.00 per person (partners are free of charge if you bring your own food).



Lisa Pritchard and Liz Anspoks south-west@northern-potters.co.uk



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NE

It has not been possible to get news of the endeavours of North East Region for this edition of the magazine.

I understand that the Ways of Making exhibition hosted by the Sunderland Glass Centre on 15 June was postponed.

I trust all is well with your other activities.

Please submit any news you may have for the next edition by 21 October.

From the editor

NE Regional Co-ordinators Group: Carol Newmarch, Helen Pickard, Michelle Webb, Christine Walker, Claude Frere-Smith
north-east@northern-potters.co.uk  [NorthernPottersAssociationNorthEast](https://www.facebook.com/NorthernPottersAssociationNorthEast)  [@northernpottersassociationNE](https://www.instagram.com/northernpottersassociationNE)

“What a great day for clay in York” said Angela Collinson owner of Bish Bash Pot, as she came into our Summer Fair - The Joy of Ceramics”. This event, which followed on from the success of the first York Potters Fair last Christmas, was supported by NPA and every potter was a member.



E

The Summer event was much larger than the Christmas Fair and we had three rooms with over 40 participating potters counting stalls with multiple potters. Volunteers from Refugee

Action York ran another successful silent auction with potters donations and raised nearly £600 for the charity.

The team of NPA volunteers that put the event together was Sylvia Schroer, Pamela Thorby (Regional Coordinators for NPA East), Helen Casey and Sarah Schiewe.

The event, which was well attended, was something of an experiment to see how the space worked and to explore how an event that was as inclusive as possible could work. Feedback is being sought from participants so we can take things forward and make improvements. Our aim is to create a fair that can potentially be of benefit to a wide range of potters at different stages in their pottery journeys - and an enjoyable experience for all.

Pamela Thorby & Sylvia Shroer east@northern-potters.co.uk  [NPAEast](https://www.facebook.com/NPAEast)  [@northernpottersassociationEast](https://www.instagram.com/northernpottersassociationEast)

Events and happenings are now coming up thick and fast as the summer (damply) progresses. We have had a great raku day in Rotherham with 20 potters producing some great work. And it was fun to. By the time this comes out one of our members, Laura Lee, will have held her degree show at Doncaster College and by all accounts it went very well. Many of our area potters were at the Dovecot Ceramics Fair which was another success.



SE

Also we will have had our first charity night. It's coming up in late July in conjunction with AgeUK. They wanted a fundraising throwing

evening and we are more than happy to help out. It should be fun.

Other events that have happened in this area since the last newsletter are Holmfirth Art Week 7-13th July. We were in Holmbridge Church and it all went very well. We also had a talk to the group from Brendan Hesmondhalgh, very enlightening.

Still to come (at time of typing) we have the talk/

demonstration day at the Eco Centre on the 4th August by Ruth King and Sarah Villeneuve. Pop-Up2 Pottery ceramics fair Stocksbridge 18th August (spaces). Art in the Gardens, Sheffield 7-8th September (full). Art at the House, Shepley (spaces) 21-22nd September and Cromford Ceramics Fair (spaces) 27th October.

Our other big event is an Empty Bowls fundraiser, again with AgeUK and that is on the evening of Saturday 12th of October. We are all really excited, and nervous, about this event. We need about 50 donated bowls for the evening to work and we are collecting bowls at any and all events from now on. The local quilting group are also making individual bags for the pots.

We held one of our regular area meetings at Joy Gibbs-Price's studio at Everton near Bawtry in May, and had a lot of constructive talk. Our next meeting date is still to be decided. Probably either Long Easton or Lincoln.

As always we are on the lookout for more ideas for events and venues to hold them in.

All the very best, Kate, Mo, Nog and Wendy

Graham Northing & Wendy Wall senpacoordinator@outlook.com  [NPAsetheast](https://www.facebook.com/NPAsetheast)  [@northernpottersassociationSE](https://www.instagram.com/northernpottersassociationSE)

Ceramics in Southwell - Lesley Nason



Now in its 9th year, Ceramics in Southwell has become one of the foremost one day ceramic fairs in the country, attracting both exhibitors and visitors from far and wide. The quality of the ceramics at this show has always been extremely high, from 70 plus applicants this year a panel of 3 expert selectors have had the very difficult task of choosing just 38 potters to exhibit.

Originality of ideas, mastery of technique and uniqueness are just some of the qualities the panel were looking for. There will be many types of ceramics on display including domestic wear, functional, sculptural and purely decorative pieces, ceramics for your garden to ceramic jewellery. Many different types of clay are used by the exhibitors including porcelain, stoneware and earthenware, a variety of different glaze types and decoration techniques, also work that has been fired in kilns fuelled by electricity, gas, or wood. You will also be able to see many construction methods including wheel thrown, hand built and slip cast.

Many well known ceramicists have regularly exhibited at the show for several years, excitingly along side these more established names you will find new up and coming potters maintaining the freshness and vitality of the show.

This year again there will be live music provided by fringe artists from Southwell Music Festival.

So come along on 25th August Bank Holiday Sunday, the event runs from 10am until 4.30pm in the Market Square, Southwell, where you can talk to the potters and maybe treat yourself to one or two unique treasures.

More information can be found on www.ceramicsinsouthwell.org.uk

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