

NEWSLETTER



AUTUMN
2008

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Cover: Ely Cathedral by Erica Mattingly,
photographed by Susan Cupitt

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Erica Mattingly

It is with great sadness that I report the death of Erica Mattingly. Erica was a very talented potter as well as a great friend and supporter of the Association. A fuller tribute will follow in the Winter Newsletter in December.

Potters' Camp

This year's camp was as good as ever, despite a spectacular thunderstorm on the first night. The main innovation was the building of a pizza oven, together with dough mixing demonstrations! The Pizza Party was a great success.

The Saturday communal meal and social was wonderful. We were entertained by the Colchester Jazz Co-operation followed by a specially written *Potters Camp* song and some spontaneous community singing, while JJ Vincent used a hairdryer to clear rainwater from his amplifier. JJ then entertained us wonderfully with a marvellous set of R&B and Rock classics. He wound us up into a frenzy of dancing and excitement. Wonderful!!!

YOUR NEW EDITOR



Following in the footsteps of Mark Boyd and maintaining the high quality he established will be a very hard job.



Summer Exhibition

Our Exhibition at Emmanuel College, Cambridge looked splendid in this wonderful venue. The bright August evening light enhanced a wonderful display of excellent and varied work, and there were plenty of complimentary comments.

We kept the shelving to a lower level and arranged the exhibition work around the walls and the 'shop' two tables in the centre. The lower shelving created a sense of openness, as one could see right across the room.

My thanks go to all who contributed in any way, with the hard work being shared among many.

Victor

This time I have been sent many great contributions from members – too many to fit into this issue, in fact – so do please keep up the good work!

There will be more to come on the Potters' Camp, with extra photos, a poem and the pizza story yet to be told.

Email me details if you are exhibiting anywhere, so that we can let other members know.

Contact me if you would like to try your hand at journalism, and write up any of the demonstration days.

Carolyn

ERICA MATTINGLY

There was a magnificent special display of Erica's work in the Summer Exhibition at Emmanuel College, and her husband Harold and members of the family have been to visit the exhibition.

There is to be a Memorial Service for her in Cambridge on the 9th November at the Friends' Meeting House in Jesus Lane at 3 pm, followed by refreshments. Fellow potters would be very welcome to come.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE ART FAIR

Chilford Hall Vineyard
6-8 June 2008

The fair's second year was a stunning show of a great variety of fine art.

Most of the galleries represented were showing paintings, prints and sculpture, but it was a nice surprise to come across two of our members: Rob Bibby's burnished jars and Pat Armstrong's fumed vessels were on display on the Woodbine Contemporary Arts stand.



Susan Cupitt

Erica's Hatfield House façade

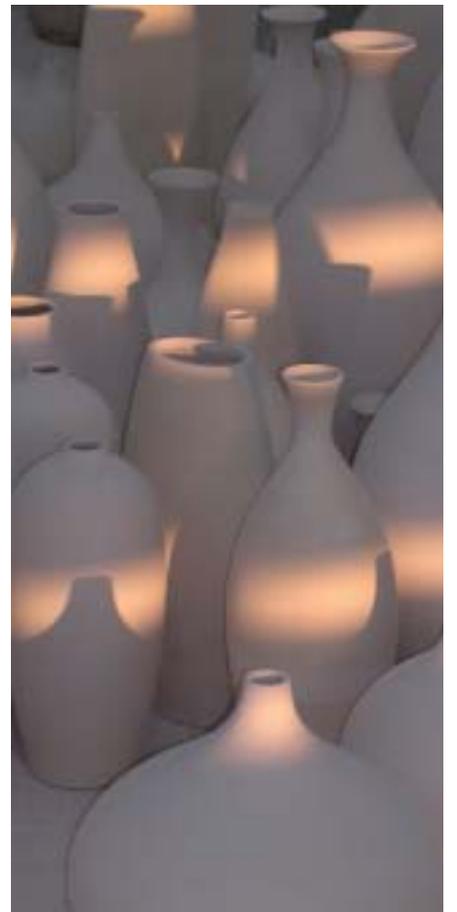


Carolyn Postgate

POSTCARDS

Greenware in the sunlight: photographed by Catherine Jagger in a pottery workshop near Hanoi on a recent visit to Vietnam.

Send photographs of potters and potteries from your travels to the Editor.



JEREMY NICHOLS AT THE AGM



Jeremy Nichols' obsession with making things started early. As a child, he was given an Airfix kit. There followed 10 years as a model maker before going on to study aeronautical engineering at Manchester University. This proved unsatisfactory and he went travelling instead. On returning to the UK, he retrained as a social worker, and then discovered pottery at evening classes.

In this early phase of his pottery, Jeremy picked up the style of the various potters whose courses he went on: Phil Rogers, Mike Dodd and others, and it was only when he went to Harrow in 1994 that he started to find a pottery voice of his own, becoming interested in the possibilities that architecture had to inform pottery.

Jeremy has looked at the ways that architects dissect and rebuild simple forms, such as the cube and applied that to his work. In essence, his pots have become carefully assembled kits.

Following his graduation, his early teapots reflected his interest in both flight and bridges, with spout and handle spread as wings or bridge

cables. However, although he is happy to acknowledge such influences, he doesn't go so far as to name his pots based on his inspiration. Whereas some people have seen Japanese masks in his teapots or waving, cheer-leading or traffic direction in some of his jugs, he prefers instead to number his works and let the viewer tell their own story. Function is critical to Jeremy's view of his pots. The engineer in him recognises beauty of form only where the function is not compromised. More than that: part of the beauty comes from the elegance with which the function is carried out. He cited Concorde as an obvious example. It was beautiful because it flew supersonically, not just as an art object.

Jeremy's pots themselves are



technical triumphs. Again his engineering background and focus come to the fore. He seems to be happy to overcome any technical obstacle to avoid compromising his designs. This includes mastering slip cast handles to avoid the 'springiness' of pulled designs. He also turns a great deal to get the smooth shapes that he desires. When you add the turning to the various firing supports that he throws for each teapot, it is clear that each teapot requires double its final amount of clay. This is not economical throwing!

He uses Earthstone Original for throwing his two-part teapot bodies. Pieces are thrown, heavily turned and then assembled at the leather-hard stage.

They are scored and joined with



a special joining glue, made up of body clay, bentonite, gum arabic and potash feldspar. This mixture can then be squeezed from a bottle and pieces joined without recourse to slip and water. Again, this is very precise and involved working, but because his pieces will eventually be salt-fired, he wants to make sure that they will not spring apart or crack under the corrosive vapours.

Jeremy is very particular about his making, in part because this influences the patterns of salt glaze effects.

Salt is introduced at cone 8 and firing continues to cone 10, with little reduction to maintain the brightness of the blues. But at these temperatures the clay is prone to slumping, so the tall handles have to be supported in the firing with elaborate thrown clay columns, a kiln shelf bridge and an alumina wadding spacer.

To some people's surprise, Jeremy Nichols admits to being rather untidy in his studio, with mess crowding in on his working space. This is in direct contrast to his making methods, but there were clues, such as the large smears of clay on his spectacles!

The teapots are glazed inside with a shino glaze, and then glazed outside with the same glaze, running from thick at the bottom to a very light spray at the top. This glaze is used to hold the colour of the stained slips that he next sprays on and to make the surface texture smoother at the bottom of the pot than at the top. So, each teapot gets a water slip (from the body material) around its joints to stop the glaze from seeking out the joints, then at least one coat of shino glaze followed by three progressively darker coloured slips before going into the kiln.

Placing the work in the kiln isn't



straightforward either – how could it be? If he is concerned that a piece is likely to slump at the high temperature, he is inclined to, well, incline it. By placing the work on a wedge, the centre of gravity can be shifted just enough so that handle and spout have more support from the body.

The net result of all this is almost a conquering attitude to the random qualities of clay, salt and fire. Whereas many potters welcome the unexpected in a salt firing, or retreat to the predictability of electricity, Jeremy not only knows what he wants, but is prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to know how to get it. Unless this is all explained, it would be impossible to see the amount of work in the pots themselves. And that's as good a reason to come to Anglian Potters' demonstration days as any.

*Words and pictures:
Mark Boyd*



BACK TO SCHOOL...



My eye was caught by a poster in the window of Heffers in Cambridge, provocatively titled *Naked Clay*. It was an advertisement for a summer school course on smoke firing, to be held at Hills Road Sixth Form College.

The thing that most attracted my attention was the emphasis on non-glaze surface decoration. I am an extremely novice potter who has been taking evening classes for about a year and, while I feel my hand-building skills are coming along nicely, I have to admit that almost every glazing session has been a disaster. Pieces that have taken me hours of loving attention to create have been subsequently ruined by a patchy, runny, or over heavy glaze, leaving me disappointed and frustrated. At least I can comfort myself with the knowledge that I am not alone, and I know that successful glazing – like everything else – is something that comes with a good deal of practice.

However, the idea of applying a

decorative finish to my masterpieces without having to rely on a dodgy glazing technique was very appealing. So it was that I turned up bright and early one Monday in June, along with about nine other people, to learn more about this intriguing process. We were met by our tutor for the week, Penny Hayes, who had brought along some examples of her own smoke fired work, and we were asked to introduce ourselves to the group. We turned out to be a varied bunch – some, like me, had already been attending evening class; some were quite advanced in their potting (especially the throwers), and some had had no experience of working with clay since their school days. Penny herself has a BA in Fine Art from the University of Hertfordshire and an HND Ceramics from City Lit. She has taught in America, as well as the UK, and exhibited in Providence, Rhode Island, London, and Kettle's Yard.

Given that the course was actually only three days, Penny had her work cut out to whip us all into shape and ensure that everyone had produced enough pieces by day two so that we would all have something to smoke fire on the Friday. "I can be a bit of a slave driver", she admitted, but I found her

teaching method to be very effective. She was firm but encouraging, making the odd suggestion or offering help where needed, but generally allowed each student to work at their own pace and in their own way – and somehow made sure that we all left on Monday night having made at least three or four things to work on on the following day.

If someone had told me that I would spend an entire day happily painting laborious layers of coloured slip onto pots and then polishing them, I would have been a little sceptical, to say the least. However, that is exactly how the Tuesday session went and it passed, for the most part, in companionable silence, except for the odd burst of discussion about world politics or a request to be next in line for the polishing stone. This stone (there were two, actually) turned out to be the most coveted piece of equipment as we quickly discovered that nothing buffs up an awkward area of slip quite so well as a small piece of shiny rock.

There were oohs and aahs around the room as the pieces beneath our hands began to transform into something incredibly sensuous and tactile: the burnishing process not only renders the surface of the clay



perfectly smooth, but makes it pleasantly cool to the touch and almost alive. I imagine this must be how a wood turner feels as they work – and, indeed, there are many similarities in the finished appearance of both carved wood and burnished clay.

I can't vouch for the other students, but I certainly slept very well on Tuesday night – polishing pots clearly has a therapeutic effect!



We had two days off while the work was fired to bisque, and then Friday, of course, was the day we had all been waiting for. It dawned with a promise of scorching heat and a slight risk of thundery showers. We kept our fingers crossed that the gods would smile kindly on our efforts and keep the rain off – and also that the college caretakers would remember that we were having a smoke firing session and not call out the fire brigade. This had happened in a previous year, we were told, with the result that an oil drum had been abruptly doused with water, the sudden thermal shock causing a piece of work to explode in spectacular fashion. The larger shards were on display for some time in the college garden, apparently, although, sadly, by the time we



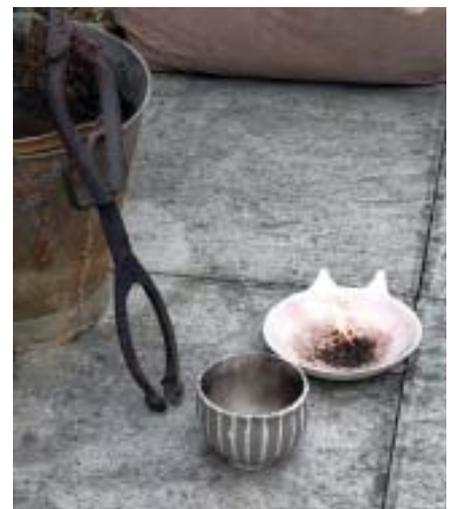
arrived, they had been removed. After going through basic health and safety procedures with us Penny demonstrated several different techniques, including the use of string, masking tape (old tape, with slightly 'gone off' glue, yields the best results, apparently), newspaper, silver foil, and brick clay slurry to create resist patterns. Having made a few test tiles, I chose to experiment with different masking effects on these, but left my one good pot and sculptural forms 'naked'.

Needless to say, the guys in the group were most enthusiastic about the idea of fire and could hardly wait to get outside with Penny's gas torch. To make them even happier, one of the vessels she had brought along was an old barbecue. This proved to give the darkest smoke effects on pieces, while the covered oil drum and buckets tended to produce more



subtle patterns.

A particularly nice 'halo' effect was achieved by sprinkling a teaspoon of sawdust mixed with turpentine substitute into the centre of a bowl and igniting it. By turning the piece quickly it was possible to have some control over where the smoke ended up (fortunately, there was very little breeze to contend with). One student became particularly adept at applying this technique to the outside of her pieces as well, creating some lovely, delicate effects.



Looking back, I am astonished at how much was achieved on this course. By the end of Friday afternoon, everybody's work had been fired and there was even time for a photo call before clearing up and going home. Penny had worked incredibly hard to make sure that we all got something out of the three days, and some students went away eager to sign up for one of the evening classes come September.

As for me, I came away feeling inspired to experiment with more smoke firing techniques at home and a pile of old *Daily Telegraphs* is now growing in the garage, just waiting for the right opportunity...

Words and pictures:
Christine Pike

POTTERS' CAMP (PART ONE!) by SALLY MACPHERSON



Preparation: two days before the start of camp the gang of four (Beryl Hines, Sally Macpherson, Maureen Read & Mary Wyatt) were at Jerry's turning the ground floor of his barn from a workshop into a cooking, eating and socialising area for 60 plus potters. Mid afternoon we got a request from Jerry to



Richard Hirst

Other Activities: mould making with Colin Saunders and knocking an oil drum into shape ready for the oil drum firing – of course there were pots to be made and kilns to be fired.

The Bonfire firing: pots were made at the beginning of the camp and dried. These were stacked in a bonfire made by Beryl Hines. The results weren't quite as good as last year, as we had a few fatalities. The pots that survived were wonderful.



Raku Firing: tucked away in the bushes Martin George and Rob Wickens helped potters fire hundreds of pots in their raku kilns. This photo shows Martin transferring a pot from the kiln to a dustbin of sawdust which seems to be on fire. It's a good job he has got his kit on this time!



The Roman Kiln: Beryl Hines successfully fired the Roman kiln again this year with the able help of Mary Pitcairn and others, even though it started to rain halfway through the firing. Here you can see the pots just before they were unpacked, with the kiln dragon guarding his precious hoard.



Happiness is... Marie Thompson, one happy potter with her pot from the wood kiln. Marie said she hadn't had so much fun for 35 years.

Photos by Sally Macpherson unless otherwise credited



help move his collection of cars to make way for the Marquee. Two had no engine or brakes. No problem!



Sisters Susan & Sanya starting off the dancing

And then there was the Summer Social: we started the evening with a jazz band called Colchester Jazz Co-operation. Lorna joined them with her sax and got everyone going.

They were followed, after a short interlude to mop water out of the amplifier and dry it off with a hairdryer, by JJ Vincent. He was very entertaining and played just the right combination of music to get everyone up and dancing. It just so happened that the 'dance floor' had one of the

Chris George



Chairman Victor strutting his stuff

marquee poles in the middle. A pole in the middle of a dance floor is like a magnet to most females (and some men) between the ages of 16 and 60+ and, combined with several glasses of wine, stirs up latent desires to make a career out of pole dancing!



Pole dancing duo – Tony and Sanya

Party photos by Chris George



Sally dancing in front of the pole, not hanging onto it

Status Quo – or is it Sally under there?

CERAMIC HELPLINE

Having a bit of bother that your supplier can't resolve?

Why not contact one of these members who have agreed to share their expertise?

- Alan Foxley** – handbuilding & reduction firing 01799 522631
- Colin Saunders** – mould-making, slipware, transfers 01379 588278
- Victor Knibbs** – oxidised stoneware, electric kilns, modifying clay bodies 01480 214741
- Deborah Baynes** – raku, stoneware, earthenware (reduction & oxidised), salt glaze 01473 788300
- Beryl Hines** – general, earthenware, raku 01473 735437
- Usch Spettigue** – raw glazing/single firing 01473 787587
- Tony Eeles** – paperclay 01366 382586
- Margaret Gardiner** – salt glaze 01279 654025
- Sonia Lewis** – high-fired ware including porcelain 01353 688316

If you are willing to give advice, and are willing to be added to this list, please contact the Editor.



JJ in full swing

Chris George

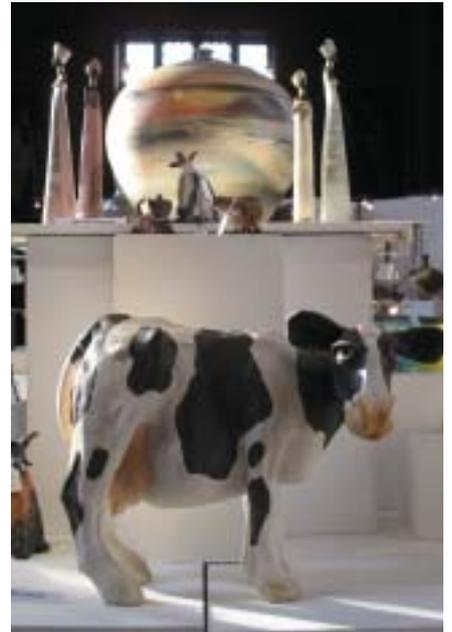
JJ writes: I will operate under the name *Doctor Tango* and I am currently putting a CD of cover material together. The working title is "Dance the night away". The album will contain cover versions of popular pop, blues and rock songs, plus an original song I wrote called *Doctor Tango*. The cost will be £5, available from www.doctortango.biz (up and running very soon).

SUMMER AT EMMANUEL COLLEGE



Two days of exceedingly hard work by many people resulted in a superb exhibition and a very busy Private View evening. Clockwise from right: admiration at the Private View; JJ Vincent – cow, Rob Bibby – burnished jar, Juliet Gorman – tall burnished figures; pots by Dave Kirkman, Anya Penger and Inge Diener; dancing figures by Daniela Stief; central display; Cathy D'Arcy with refreshments for the workers; a pensive Margaret Gardiner. Below: cheery barmaids Penny Hayes and Linda Luckin!

Photos by Carolyn Postgate



HOME-MADE GAS FIRED KILN

During the past few years my pottery has mainly incorporated soda glazed stoneware pots fired in Margaret Gardiner's gas fired kiln. Recently I had the opportunity of firing and glazing some pots in a friend's kiln and was very taken by the possibilities of the variety of glaze decorations particular to reduction fired techniques.

My husband David offered to make a gas fired kiln for me. Based originally on the plans of my friend's Sayvit type gas kiln, David set about building it. Corrugated roofing sheets were used as the outer sheath of the kiln, with ceramic floor tiles for the base.

Adapting the dimensions to the available materials David built an angle iron external framework with additional section for the outer flue, which was required because the Sayvit kiln design had an integral flue needing a case yoke section that is no longer available.

David used a soft 1" thick ceramic fibre blanket for the layer inside the outer sheath, which fitted snugly into the

corrugations. Lightweight ceramic bricks were used for the main kiln insulating structure, fitted on the base and sides of the kiln and chimney flue, cut to size to fit accurately, with ceramic fibre paper between the bricks to permit expansion during firing.

David decided to place the two burners horizontally at the bottom of the kiln enabling firing along the sides of the kiln floor. Access holes were cut into the outer sheath of the kiln and the bricks at the burner positions. To direct the flames to the rear of the kiln during firing the lower shelf was positioned at the sides of the kiln on bricks, which provide a flow channel to the rear. Angled bricks assist the flame to rise to the kiln roof. The flue exit is positioned above the lower kiln shelf at the burner end.

The kiln roof was constructed of three rows of light H.T.R. bricks, each row clamped together to bridge the kiln width. These clamps were made of out of portions from metal bed frames.

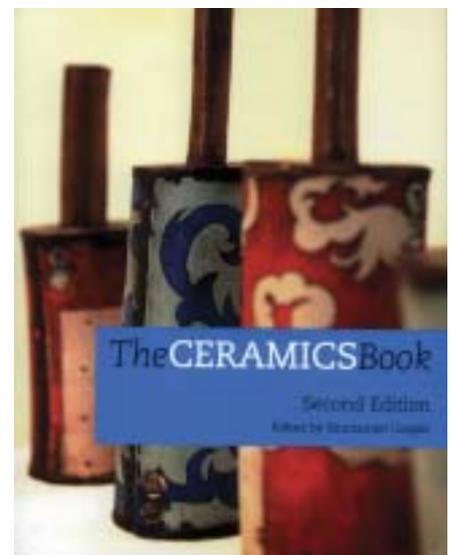
The three part roof lids were placed on a 1" ceramic fibre cushion on top of the bricks which serve as the top of the kiln sides. The kiln is adaptable in height by adding extra brick layers onto the sides and flue. The two propane burners positioned horizontally are connected with pressure control valves.

The first firing produced successful glazes, but it was obvious from the excessive smoke, length of firing time and the need to provide additional air into the burner holes to reach temperature, that the flue slot and space around the burner

entries was insufficient. This resulted in unsatisfactory combustion and large quantity of fuel used. These dimensions were increased substantially (the flue slot doubled in size, the burner entries only slightly increased in width) and a subsequent firing has proved the kiln to be highly satisfactory.

I have now a reasonably inexpensive and adaptable gas fired kiln which will provide new opportunities for my future potting.

*Words and picture:
Erica Dennison*



BOOK REVIEW

The Ceramics Book

Second Edition, edited by Emmanuel Cooper

Published by the CPA: £9.95

This is a beautifully-produced pocket size handy guide to Members and Fellows of the CPA.

Each page has a really good photograph of the potter's recent work, with brief description and sometimes a photo of the potter and their mark.

There is a section containing up-to-date contact details, including email and websites: in fact, all you need to know about the best potters and where to find them!



FOR SALE

Cylindrical Top Loader Electric Kiln

Outside:
24" high x 22" di.
Inside:
18" high x 16" di.
Needs 30 amp
fuse electricity
supply.



Complete with Pottery Crafts Kiln sitter Model LT-3, manual included. Has only done 10 firings!

Kiln furniture included, metal stand, 2 circular kiln shelves, stilts, bat wash and mini bar cones for firings to 930°C, 1115°C, 1260°C and 1040°C. Instruction manual included.

Buyer collects.

£550 or Nearest Offer.

Tel: 07772 494786

susan_borbas@hotmail.co.uk

POTTERY CLEARANCE

Laser Gas Kiln FREE

Laser Model G4 front loading fibre kiln and stand. Firing chamber measures 45cm x 50cm x 50cm. Fires to 1300°
To be collected

Tel: 01787 476155

RESTORER WANTED

Mary Reed, a member who runs Brick House Crafts in Essex, is looking for someone who can **mend ceramics**. Is there anyone out there with these skills? If so, please contact Mary.

Tel: 01376 585655

sales@brickhouseceramics.co.uk

SMOKE/SAGGAR FIRING WORKSHOP

With Jane Perryman.

October 11th/12th

for details tel: 01440 786228

www.janeperryman.co.uk

jane.perryman@btinternet.com



EXHIBITIONS

Cathy and Phoebe D'Arcy

exhibit at Craft Co in Southwold.

The private view is on 6th September, 11.30am – 3pm.

6-18 September. Craft Co: Upstairs Gallery, 40a High St., Southwold, Suffolk IP18 6AE
Tel: 01502 723211

www.craftco.co.uk

Margaret Gardiner exhibits as part of Herts Open Studios on 3-5 October at Glebe House, Gt Hallingbury, Bishops Stortford CM22 7TY

Tel: 01279 654025

www.maggygardiner.com

www.hvaf.org.uk

Helen Martino exhibits her ceramics and prints at Cambridge Contemporary Arts 3-26 October

6 Trinity Street, Cambridge, CB2 1SU
Tel: 01223 324222

www.cambridgegallery.co.uk



DIARY DATES:

Steve Woodhead:

28 September
Mundford Village Hall

David Cooke:

12 October
Mundford Village Hall

Christmas Exhibition:

15 November-14 December
All Saints' Church, Cambridge

MEMBERSHIP FEES:

Ordinary £27 (half year £15)

Joint £45 for two people at the same address – half year £25

Institution £45 for a college or workshop – half year £27 (details on application to the Membership Secretary)

Student £10 for full-time students of ceramics – proof of status is required

MEMBERS WEBSITES:

www.alexallpress.co.uk

www.animalceramics.co.uk

www.annamcarthur.co.uk

www.broadwayceramics.com

www.cathydarcy.com

www.corbykilns.co.uk

www.helenhpottery.co.uk

www.helenmartino.co.uk

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www.jjvincent.com

www.madeincley.co.uk

www.maggygardiner.com

www.phillippoceramics.co.uk

www.potterycourses.net

www.rebeccaaharvey.com

www.richardbaxter.co.uk

www.sculpturelounge.com

www.susancupitt.co.uk

Contact the Editor if you want to add your site to this list.

Check out our website for the latest news:

www.anglianpotters.org.uk

COPY DATE FOR

WINTER NEWSLETTER:

15 OCTOBER 2008