

ANGLIAN POTTERS NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2023

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Cover Photo:
Simon Griffiths



Chairman's Letter

Well, it's been very cold of late. My workshop isn't very well heated, and I lost a batch of pots in the cold spell before Christmas, when the newly made (and wet) pots froze overnight and fell apart! I hope you have better insulated work spaces than mine.

It's the time of year when we find out which of the summer shows we have applied for will let us in. There's a new show coming to our region in mid-August – Potfest Suffolk. It will be held at Haughley Park, between Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket. It looks like a lovely spot, typical of the Potfest venues, and I'm sure will be as well organised as the other shows. I will be there, and I hope that there will be lots of other AP members exhibiting. I am hoping that we will

also have an AP 'corporate' presence. As it's our 40th anniversary this year, we hope to have a space we can show what we do, and exhibit work from members through the decades. There may also be some opportunities to help out at the show. Details yet to be finalised.

I'm off to North Wales in June this year, to Ceramic Wales. Our recent guest demonstrator, Wendy Lawrence, is a prime mover behind this show, and made it sound very attractive during her talk! So I decided to apply. A long way, but a lovely part of the country, and a different audience.

You may have seen that the summer Art in Clay show, formerly at Hatfield House, now in Windsor, has been cancelled this year. The organisers are proposing to run an online show instead. It's a shame to see this happen – I started helping out at Hatfield 20 years ago, and have been a regular exhibitor through the years. We will wait to see what happens next year. The move to Windsor has made it difficult for many from our region to visit – wrong side of the Thames!

As the spring approaches we are starting to get ready for another year of activities at our site at Stoke Farm. We will be running camp again in August (2nd-6th), and are planning lots of other things on the site. Don't

panic! Booking won't be open for a bit, and we will give plenty of notice before opening up booking. We plan to start work again in March with a few more building projects and a test firing of another kiln. We are hoping that this can be converted to a soda kiln, but there's more work to be done to see if it is possible. Fingers crossed that it works, as it will give us another firing technique we can experiment with.

Our programme of demonstration days has restarted, with a super demo by sculptor Simon Griffiths in January, to be followed by Steve Booton in February. Steve is a thrower in the Japanese style. Our AGM is on 7 May, when our demonstrator this year will be Sam Dales. Sam has only recently joined AP, following a move to Lincolnshire, but has many years of experience as a production thrower and teacher. If you were at camp last year, you will have seen Sam tirelessly working away, looking after the throwing activities. The AGM bit doesn't last too long, so it's worth coming to see Sam!

~ John Masterton

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Ceramic Helpline

Alan Foxley: handbuilding,
reduction firing 01799 522631

Deborah Baynes: raku, salt glaze,
stoneware, earthenware (reduction
& oxidised) 01473 788300

Usch Spettigue: raw glazing/
single firing 01473 787587

Margaret Gardiner: salt/soda firing
01279 654025

John Masterton: reduction,
porcelain, kilns etc. 01279 723229

Angela Mellor: bone china paperclay
and slipcasting 01353 666675

Beryl Hines: general Raku and
earthenware 01394 386280

Stephen Murfitt: all things Raku
01487 711478

Moira Goodall: low fired sawdust/
smoke firing and burnishing
e: moira.goodall@gmail.com

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



Editor's Notes

Hopefully it has not escaped your notice that there have been a few changes made to our lovely Anglian Potters Newsletter. I must say it has been rather fun and time consuming, making these adjustments; I never knew I cared so much about fonts until I had to start making decisions! Similarly with the paper, perhaps you've noticed a glossier feel to the pages and a slightly thicker front cover? We decided that it was time to make things a bit more fancy-shmancy since it is the 40th Anniversary of Anglian Potters, and what better way to start the celebrations than with a new look? It was rather lovely visiting the printers in Cambridge and having a few samples of our Newsletter on different types of paper to have a good feel.

In general I am getting feedback that you're all easing into the new

year quite nicely, and getting back to making, in a gradual way. I know a few of you have big shows coming up, so that is exciting to hear about and I'm sure you're working hard to get ready for those. A few of us fell foul of the frost, so it is always good to bear in mind, sometimes when it is icy out, it is much better to get yourself a cup of tea and forget about making anything until things warm up again. At least, that is what I have done. I hope, though, by the time you read this, the daffs will be coming up in the garden and frost will be long gone!

It seems this year is already looking busy; there are plenty of events coming up (details on the back page), including Walberswick and my personal favourite... POTTERS CAMP in August! I'm already dreaming of wood frings, evenings around the camp fire and stumbling back to my tent in the dark.

In the meantime however, there is lots in this Newsletter to keep you going, including some very nice write-ups on the recent Demonstration Days at Mundford Village Hall with Wendy Lawrence and Simon Griffiths. Make sure you take a look at the Book Review on page 21 which comes with a 20% discount code!

Wishing you all a happy and healthy spring!

~ Rachael Ped



Rose Bressingham

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All Saints' at Christmas

Here are photographs of some of the members' work on display at the Private View on 19 November 2022. All Saints' Church in Cambridge was packed with visitors and potters enjoying the displays as well as delicious mulled wine and mince pies, and sales were brisk.

Frank Logan



Alison Tollit



Jeremy Peake



Paddy Dean



Sarah Went



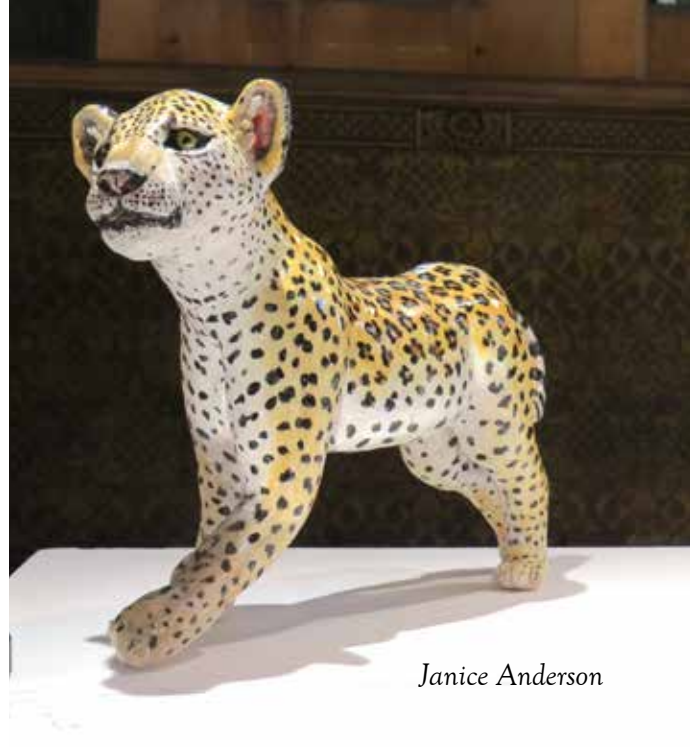
Photo Credit: Carolyn Postgate

Joy Voisey

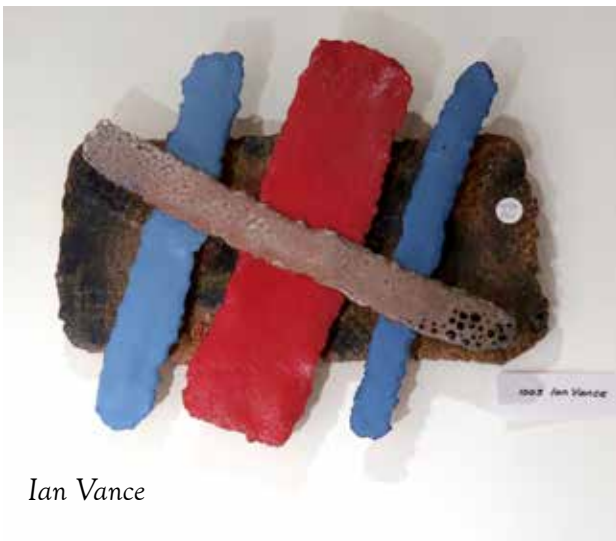




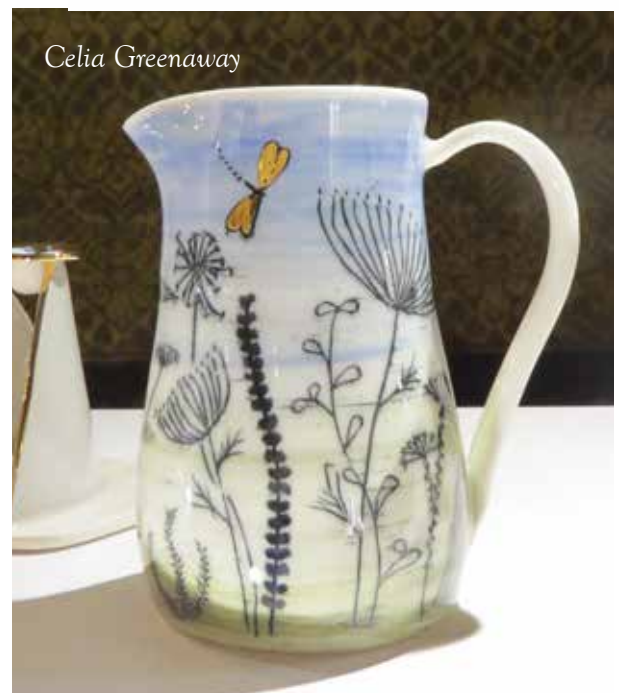
Philip Wilks



Janice Anderson



Ian Vance



Celia Greenaway



Jane Hollidge

Jane Hollidge



Catherine Pawsey Ling



The charity Christmas tree at the heart of the exhibition



Nicki Darrell



Karen George



Julia Bruce



Liz Chipchase



Viv Burns



Julia Stone



Richard Cranwell

Pottery workshop in the South of France seeks potter



Photo Credit: Mike Shrimpton

A pottery workshop and gallery in a small historic town in the French Pyrenees minutes from Spain is looking for a buyer.

Could that be you?

The workshop was created with love by an expert: Anglian Potters founder member, Alan Baxter. Developed to meet Alan's needs and the needs of thousands of students, the workshop includes an extensive range of clays, glazes, wheels, kilns, materials, tools and equipment. It is a space made for playing, experimenting, creating and showcasing.

The sale also includes the property within which the pottery sits. It comprises a home and main apartment, 11 self-catering apartments and a large garden. A thriving holiday lets business attached to the apartments would give a buyer money coming in from day one. The apartments also provide the opportunity to welcome potters, family and friends. Combined, they can accommodate over 30 people. **For more info please visit: pyrenean-pottery-workshop.com or call | email Patt Baxter on +33 (0)7 87 83 32 47 | pattbaxter29@gmail.com**

Tom Karen Remembered

Some of you will remember Tom Karen, an AP member many years ago, most famous in our exhibitions for his quirky and inventive creations in clay and mixed media. He was a colourful character and a great asset to AP.

Tom, who died in December 2022 at the age of 96, was one of Britain's most original industrial designers: among his designs were the Raleigh Chopper bike in 1969, the Bond Bug (an orange three-wheeler car which Karen liked to say, was a "Ferrari for 16-year-olds") and the Reliant Scimitar GTE. ~ *Carolyn Postgate*

Some extracts from the obituary in *The Guardian* by Jonathan Glancey:

"Karen was managing director and chief designer of Ogle Design, founded in Letchworth by David Ogle in 1954. Eight years later, Ogle crashed at speed and was killed at the wheel of one of his fibreglass Mini-based sports cars. Tom was offered his job, and stayed with the company for 37 years. Throughout this time, free-spirited yet practical, unexpected and downright maverick designs poured from the studio. These included the bestselling TR130 Bush radio, the Anadol (Turkey's first indigenous car), the perennially popular Marble Run construction game (manufactured by Kiddicraft), lorry cabs for Leyland, experimental aircraft interiors, car crash test dummies,



Tom Karen in 2017 at his home in Cambridge, a delightful meeting of cabinet of curiosities, workshop and studio. Photograph: The Guardian

Luke Skywalker's Star Wars Landspeeder (a heavily disguised Bond Bug), a bespoke Aston-Martin DBS V8 and the bullet-proof Range Rover popemobile used by Pope John Paul II in 1982.

Born Thomas Kohn in Vienna, he was brought up in Brno. The family fled Czechoslovakia for Bristol in 1939.

In 1954, his family received compensation for their lost assets, and the following year he joined the rigorous industrial design course at the Central School of Arts and Crafts. This led to design roles at Ford, Hotpoint and Philips before Karen joined Ogle in 1962. He was made chairman in 1984."

Simon Griffiths – Demonstration Day

I have admired Simon Griffiths' animal sculptures for a long time. I reckon that was enough of a reason to go and visit the AP demo day.

Simon is a self-taught sculptor with a love and passion for wildlife. He dispensed with the slide show and started with the demo right away. The first 'object' was a Tawny Owl. The process starts with building an armature.

Layers of scrunched-up newspaper are taped onto a wooden support, which is tapered towards the top (to make it easier to take the sculpture off the support). Simon stressed the fact that spending time constructing the armature makes the rest of the making process much easier. The newspaper remains inside the finished piece throughout the making and drying. Newspaper has enough flexibility to shrink with the drying clay. Top tip: extend the newspaper armature over and above the wooden support for the neck and head of the sculpture. This enables the sculptor to keep the neck and head of the sculpture flexible and to change the posture of the piece quite late on in the making process.

Simon uses premium craft crank clay from Potclays. This clay gives enough stability and at the same time evens out the drying process. He softens and spreads the whole bag of clay (whilst still in the bag) into a slab by stepping on it: 'walking' it flat. The resulting slab is then cut in half with a wire and draped over the armature.

Knowledge of the anatomy of the subject is vital: knowledge not only learned from the Internet or books but from dead specimens. As an example, the 'shoulders' on top of the folded wing of a bird stand out. Small but important details determine the shape of a bird's body. Simon gives the folded wings and the tail feathers the right curvature by placing the clay slab onto a rolling pin and tapping it onto the table.

Anatomical details can be modified in order to make the ceramic piece more stable. For example, Simon connects the tips of the wings and the tail feathers of the Tawny Owl to form a stable triangle. The overall composition does not suffer and the piece is more stable. Most pieces are fired lying on their side. Details like feathers are added by applying small lumps of clay and swiping them out with a push of the finger. Simon recommends working on the piece as an endless series of profiles whilst rotating the sculpture, rather than looking at the 3D piece. The face and eyes are often the most difficult parts. In Simon's sculptures the eyes are more a suggestion; he explains that one should get rid of superfluous details and information. The eyes of the owl are left "empty" and then emphasized with black slip.

The piece is left to dry under a plastic bag and the work continues over the next few days, looking at it with fresh eyes every time and adding more details. The main aim is to get the GISS right: General Impression, Size and Shape. Small details – for example the extended feathers of an Eagle Owl on top of the head are essential in expressing a "mood" in a sculpture. The piece should be recognisable from a distance; when you get nearer you recognise more details and close-up you should discover still more interest. Simon uses impressions of stones, net or shells to create more exciting details.

Simon biscuit fires to 1080°C to semi-vitrify the clay. This slows down the absorption of water when he uses the slip-based coloured glazes and decoration on the biscuit-fired piece. The final firing is up to 1190°C-1200°C with a two-hour soak (100°C up to 600°C, followed by 150°C up to final temperature). Most bird sculptures are fixed to wooden supports. Simon uses a polyurethane rubber glue to fix the ceramic piece, because it stays flexible when left outdoors or during shipping.



In the second part of the demonstration Simon showed us the making of a sitting fox. He pointed out the important difference in anatomy between a bird and a mammal. The skeleton in a mammal is far more pronounced compared to a bird. The spine is the most prominent and shape-determining element when designing a sculpture of a mammal. Shoulder bones and hips are also more visible and have to be more pronounced compared to a bird sculpture. In a similar approach to the construction of the bird sculpture, the front feet, the back feet and the tail are connected to construct a stable sculpture. The head pose can be changed whilst designing the sculpture, because the wooden support of the armature only goes up to shoulder height. The head is supported by newspaper, which can be moved or twisted to achieve the right posture. The fox will be finished over the next few days, adding more details.

Simon's demonstration and explanation of his designs and working processes was very engaging and easy to follow. One reason for that, in my opinion is the fact that Simon is self-taught. Throughout his demonstration the audience could clearly follow the way he learned and gained his experience.

~ Anja Penga-Onyett



Photo Credit: Andrew Wright
& Rachael Ped







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Wendy Lawrence – Demonstration Day

A Journey in Clay

Wendy Lawrence delivered a day of energy and enthusiasm in her demonstration at Mundford in November 2022. Her energy is palpable and it was wonderful to feel part of her free hand building and carving techniques as they evolved during the day. Her pieces are mainly large and designed to withstand outdoor atmospheres, mirroring the rugged landscapes from which she gets her inspiration.

Wendy is influenced by natural geological forms, textures in the natural world, monoliths and standing stones as well as architecture and antiquity. Wendy uses Ashraf Hanna clay, sometimes a paper clay or a heavily grogged crank clay such as Jim Robison.

She takes a large piece of clay straight from the bag or recycle bin and wedges by manipulating it, often quite roughly, into the mould or surface required. As she said, with her massive smile, why waste time wedging or pugging and then shaping – 'making is the best bit'. Wendy's manner of making is very physical and requires

a lot of strength but is definitely cheaper than the gym. The making process is purposeful. Using loop tools and lead dressing tools, amongst others, Wendy slowly carves marks that mimic natural erosion of the hard rocky surfaces found in nature. Other examples of her mark makers are coral, pieces of tarmac and breeze blocks. There are no thin areas. This is strong, raw and hugely expressive work that shouts but can also be delicate and endearing. Any joining of separate pieces is done by scoring, using water – no slip – and brute force. Clays are mixed, rules are broken and the results are unique. Raw materials such as silicon carbide and oxides are added to create colours and volcanic surfaces. Finally, pieces are fired in an electric oxidising kiln to 1240°C and then sometimes areas are polished with a grinder. No clay is wasted as all leftover pieces or carving excess are recycled in a plastic bag.



Photo Credit: Trudy Stains

For anyone who knows my work you will know that I am a fan of breaking the 'rules' and thoroughly enjoyed seeing, and feeling part of Wendy's making process at this demonstration. If you were not able to get there, I suggest you go to one of the many potfests that Wendy will be at this year or one of her workshops.

Wendy has lived and worked in Denbighshire, North Wales for the past 22 years. It is an area rich in pottery history. She came to pottery on the Foundation Course and then BA in 3D Design (Ceramics) at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN). Wendy was lucky to work under the tutelage of Dave Binns at UCLAN and get to know Margaret and David Frith, Meri Wells as well as Steve Tootle in Denbigh: all fantastic people to learn from and observe. As a student, and after graduating, Wendy worked for the company Craig Bragdy which made bespoke ceramic tile schemes for murals and luxury swimming pools. Through this experience she learned a lot about organisation, deadlines and the logistics of spray glazing over large areas, experiences which have informed her work ever since. Wendy has also been a council member of the Craft Potters Association (CPA). She currently teaches part time at the North Wales School of Art and is part of the team with Wayne Clark, who founded and runs the wonderful Ceramic Wales. She has participated in symposiums and workshops in Britain, Europe and America. She has demonstrated at Aberystwyth Biennial Ceramics Festival.

Wendy is a prolific maker and can be seen at many of the major potfests around the country. Wendy's weekend workshops in her compact studio take a maximum of four participants. Dates for 2023 are now on her website www.wlawrenceceramics.com, on Facebook and Instagram.

~ Lorry Cudmore



CPA in Oxford

This was a show which offered an eclectic mix, from pots for food to sculpture; from naked raku to high-fired stoneware, and included work in earthenware and paper clay. All exhibitors are members of the CPA (Craft Potters Association), and have a professional practice. I found all the potters were very happy to talk about their making processes. There were over 70 potters showing in the large sports hall of St Edwards School, and it was very full of visitors. I wished I had taken more pictures but it wasn't easy to do in that situation. As a longterm raku potter I was drawn to the naked raku of Moyra Stewart and Helen Rondell. Both made imposing tall forms: Moyra's reflected her Scottish home in the subtle smoke tones and granite-like layers. Helen's work was lighter in tones and introduced blue slip into the pieces.

Bright coloured glazes and slips were evident, but ranged from minimal restrained colours on porcelain, to exuberant slipware. I enjoyed the amazingly-layered slipware illustrating nature by Sophie MacCarthy, and the riot of colour of Richard Wilson's work "using colour to express the rhythms of shapes and making the pots dance". Barry Steadman admitted he just enjoyed playing with abstract layers of colour, a sentiment I could relate to. More restrained colours on porcelain, like the flashes of bright colour on porcelain of Lara Scobie, Ali Tomlin and Tricia Thom really enhanced the elegance of their forms.

Traditional domestic stoneware was well represented with its timeless qualities. I liked the beautiful reduction glazes of Stephen Parry, James Hake, Matthew Blakely and saltglazes of Ruthanne Tudball and Lisa Hammond, all

illustrating the true roots of pottery.

I noticed that among the domestic work there were experiments in teapot handles cropping up, some made of flattened copper tubing by Francis Lloyd Jones, some of moulded plastic rods, both showing ingenious ways in joining them to the pot. A work in progress maybe?

The level of skill everywhere was so high, but for me, one person really stood out. Justine Allison made her nearly closed, angular four-sided vessels from extremely thin slabs of porcelain. These were subtly sgraffittoed to give fine texture. She really pushed the construction limits for porcelain, let alone in small textured slabs. It is hard enough to make good slabwork with thick clay, but her technique was awesome.

I became aware of the Japanese influence, with the indigo patchwork *Boro* work of Yo Thom. Barbara Gittings' pots were in subtle earth colours, intricate marking, and so tactile, with a velvety touch. Made in the *nerikomi* tradition, smoke-fired and waxed, they were so very different from anything I had ever seen.

The most amazing sgraffitto work I have seen was a shallow bowl made by Julie Ayton. I asked her how long it had taken her to make. She said it was her first lockdown occupation and took three months to carve, "But what else was there to do?" It was so finely detailed, and it was a joy to see such incredibly fine sgraffitto. It was nice to see the meticulous refined salt glazed porcelain of Jeremy Nichols. And I recognised Roger Cochrane, from his Mundford demo. Ashraf Hanna showed his large subtle sculpted vessels mostly in yellow, and I admired the



Moyra Stewart

smoked vessels inspired by tribal art, made by his wife Sue Hanna. I noticed some distinctive brush decoration, which reminded me of a visit I made many years ago to Alan Caiger-Smith's pottery at Aldermaston, and found Ursula Waechter, who had worked there. She still makes the timeless tin-glazed ware with the distinctive calligraphic brushwork, and soft colours. I so envy her fluency with a brush, so I came away with a small piece for old times' sake!

In all it was an inspiring show, which encompassed the many making processes of our versatile material – clay!

~ *June Gentle*



Julie Ayton



Barbara Gittings



Justine Allison



Barry Steadman



Francis Lloyd Jones

Meet the AP Officers

Here's a chance to put a face to a name and find out a little more about the volunteers who work behind the scenes to make Anglian Potters a success. Contact John Masterton if you are interested in helping.

John Masterton

I make mostly thrown work in porcelain, with excursions into stoneware. Everything is reduction fired, usually with oriental style glazes. I started firing copper red glazes while at Harrow, and have developed that into a 'signature' glaze.

I have been Chairman of Anglian Potters since 2016, as well as looking after the website. I am also on the steering committee for our new kiln site at Stoke Farm, and have been very involved in the leasing and development of the site.

In a previous role I was involved in booking and running the demonstration days. I joined AP in 2003.



Celia Greenaway



As Treasurer I maintain our electronic accounting package, posting all receipts and payments to the appropriate cost centre so that we can track all the organisation's activities. As well as paying the bills and reimbursing expenses I also calculate the payments for potters' sales at our exhibitions and ensure

everyone receives their cut. I keep an overview of the income and expenditure for all our events and exhibitions to ensure that overall we achieve a break-even position.

I'm a retired primary school headteacher turned hobby potter with a home studio in St Ives. I'm mainly a thrower of porcelain but I also dabble with slipcasting and a bit of hand building at Christmas. I sell my work through Anglian Potters' exhibitions, a few local events and from my studio.

Nicki Darrell



I am a member of the steering group involved with development of the new kiln site at Stoke Farm, resurrecting

the Potters Camp at the new site and salt and soda firing.

Vivienne Burns



I'm a retired art teacher and now spend all available time in my studio making hand built ceramic sculptures from black clay. Constructed of slabs they are decorated with slips, underglazes and sgraffito.

I've been a member of Anglian Potters for ten years and I am the Secretary and Membership Secretary.

Sheila Madder

I am a mould maker, and slip caster, creating layered and carved coloured porcelain tableware. Attachments are marbled up and slab built from reclaimed clay.

Christine Pike and I are the Selected Members Secretaries, organising exhibitions for the Selected Members. We are also in charge of the application and selection process for new Selected Members.



Trudy Staines



I taught pottery | ceramics to GCSE A level and City and Guilds both in college and privately in London. I moved to Norfolk in 2011 where I was hoping to continue teaching privately and also concentrate more on my own projects. Unfortunately, life had other ideas!

I became actively involved in Anglian Potters in 2015 taking on the role of Events Organiser. This involves networking potters and ceramicists, mainly through shows, and inviting them to Mundford to give a presentation or demonstrate their techniques and working practices.

It takes quite a lot of organising behind the scenes to ensure the day runs as smoothly as possible. I have a great technical team in Anton Todd and Paul Ostro. I don't practise pottery as much as I would like but I hope to do more in the future!

Carolyn Postgate

I have not made pots for a long time but am always interested in pots and potters. I trained as an archaeologist so learned to pot to discover more about ancient techniques.



I have been an AP member since the 1980s and have served on the committee doing various jobs over the years: Exhibitions Organiser, Newsletter Editor, designer of posters and publicity, and now, as Vice Chair, looking after GDPR matters and helping the Newsletter Editor.

Ian Vance



I make sculptures and heavily textured pots with very groggy clay and volcanic glazes. I'm mostly interested in surfaces and design forms that show off this detail. Inspirations come from nature, especially mountains and rocks.

I head up the team that organises exhibitions for Anglian Potters, especially the big shows at All Saints, Cambridge and The Undercroft Gallery, Norwich. Lots of people are involved in making these happen and it illustrates the best of AP members coming together. I have also created the AP online exhibitions website which I look after and populate with the work to be displayed.

Rachael Ped

I'm generally a people person and find much joy in teaching pottery to beginners and building their confidence working with clay. I throw, sculpt and hand build depending on how my mood takes me and love wood firing whenever I get the chance.



As Editor, my role is to put together all the lovely articles I'm sent for the Newsletter and arrange them with good photography. I'm still new to this but it has been very rewarding so far!

Being an Anglo-Saxon Potter

This is a follow-on piece to Beryl Hines' "Thoughts about Clay" in the Winter 2022 Newsletter.

I volunteered as soon as I saw the notice on the Anglian Potters website a year ago from the Suffolk Archaeology Department, for a project called Rendlesham Revealed, to build a reproduction Anglo-Saxon kiln and load it with reproduction Ipswich Ware pots made from local raw clays.

My interest in clay is at the opposite end to refined porcelain – I have a passion for exploring clay from the ground from places that are significant to me, so this project was right up my street.

My interest is to do some meaningful experimental archaeology, learning how the ancients would have managed with the local clays available – there are several in different strata – and exploring the properties of each, including different mixtures. What would it be like to make accurate reproductions of their pots?

Beryl Hines has been a mentor to me since I first attended Potters Camp 18 years ago. I was fascinated by her Roman kiln and took a keen interest in what she was doing. The Rendlesham Revealed project is all about community involvement – and she volunteers with the forest school run by Hands on Heritage near Tunstall, which gives children lessons in the open air. The children had an opportunity to play with clay for this project – as described in Beryl's article.

My own samples have been small quantities (carrier bag sized) from cliffs or building sites so the large pile of quarried London clay* delivered to Hands on Heritage was a new experience. To be honest, that clay is horrible – black, sticky, and dries like a woolly jumper in a hot wash, usually warping, cracking and falling apart in the process. We also got a sample of brickearth** from the Bulmer Brick & Tile company near Sudbury which was tan coloured, sandy and much kinder. The original source of clay used for Ipswich Ware is of course now built over by Suffolk University and the art college.

Beryl managed to prepare that horrid sticky black London clay by wedging it with sand so the children could work with it – though they only had one session, so no chance to refine their pieces. The clay dries very slowly – it even takes ages to dry enough to be workable – so there's time to refine the pieces for days afterwards, even in high summer.

I used the wet method to prepare it – drying it completely in small pieces, then slaking in plenty of water in buckets, sieving with a domestic sieve – which is more to reveal reluctant lumps than to sieve out inclusions as the clay is very pure. Then leaving it to settle over the course of a week, sponging off the water, pouring it into pillowcases and hanging it up to drip dry. Once in a workable state, it seems to improve a lot by being left in the bag for at least a week. Bacteria, probably.

test mini pinch pots



Ruth Gillett and I made a number of test bars and fired them to different temperatures to find out the vitrification temperature. Between 1000°C and 1100°C the clay begins to slump, and above 1100°C (Cone 04) the clay dunts and foams. Ruth fired one to 1250°C degrees where it looks like something the bakery might produce!

Our test shrinkage bars revealed a shrinkage of 16% for the London clay, and 10% for the brickearth. I was surprised by the brickearth, as once I'd refined it with the wet method, which removed a lot of sand, it was very plastic and responsive and seemed stable. Surprisingly, I could throw a bowl easily with both clays. It does vary a lot over the county, even over short distances (those glaciers pushing things about).

The Anglo-Saxons fired their pots in half-buried kilns made from clay. They used a single firebox leading to a chamber with a central spine which supported slabs with gaps between for the heat to rise through. The pots were tumble stacked, covered with straw and then a roof dome of wet clay slab made with vent holes – no chimney.

Contd on page 20



puddling clay



large cauldron brew pot



model of the kiln

***London Clay**

London Clay comprises brown and grey predominantly silty clays that were deposited in a shallow sea, up to 100m deep, that covered much of south-east England during the Eocene Period. England had a warm, subtropical climate, with luxuriant rain forest and coastal mangrove swamps. Large sluggish rivers carried sediment and plant debris out to sea, where it settled and compacted on the sea floor. *"The Suffolk Geocoast The London Clay Of Nacton And Harkstead Shores"* Roger Dixon – Suffolk Natural History, Vol. 48

****Brickearth**

The term 'brickearth' is not a geological description of a rock type, as these are classified by particle size into sediments of clay, sand, and pebble grade, but means a soft rock material, particularly silty clay containing an amount of sand, suitable for making bricks. The term may also be used in a stratigraphical sense, as a name for a deposit, for example, 'Stutton Brickearth'; confusion can easily be caused by this, as most bricks made in the Stutton area seem to have been made from London Clay, not 'Stutton Brickearth!' *Ipswich Geological Group Bulletin No. 18, September 1976*



the kiln begins to take shape



first sample pinch pots



Cooking pots made with London and brickearth clays

We will find out how they managed to draw the heat to the back of the kiln without a chimney. At the end of the firing the fire mouth would be sealed, and the dome vents sealed and covered with sand to achieve a reduction effect. Kiln design has improved over the centuries from that simple model, so I guess we will find out why.

I learned from Ruth that we could achieve a reduction effect in our electric kilns by firing samples in a sealed saggar with charcoal. So, while all my pots waited until we could fire the reproduction Anglo-Saxon kiln (it was too dry with the drought in the autumn) I was able to conduct a lot of tests at home, making little test pinch pots with different mixes. Well, I really enjoy making little pinch pots. One question remains – how strong are these clays, especially when compared to commercial terracotta? Maybe if I break them, and measure how much force it takes to do that, I'll find out.

Now we wait to be able to fire the kiln.

~ Jnana Emmett

New Organiser Needed

**for Anglian Potters' exhibitions
at the Ferini Gallery, Lowestoft**

I will be stepping down as organiser of this exhibition. It would be great if another member of Anglian Potters would take this job on.

Michaela at Ferini does all the invigilating and selling. We need someone who will send out a call for members via Ian Vance (twice a year) and then co-ordinate delivery and take-down dates with interested members. Pat Todd and I have always helped with the unpacking, display and labelling of the work. The Ferini is a lovely gallery and a great place for Anglian Potters to display work, so I hope someone will continue with this.

~ Mary Wyatt

Anglian Potters will be exhibiting at the Ferini for the whole month of May this year.

Contact Mary: marywyattart@gmail.com or 01394 671033 if you would like to take part.



Book Review

Design and Create Contemporary Tableware

Linda Bloomfield and Sue Pryke

Herbert Press 2023 £30/27

ISBN 9781789940749

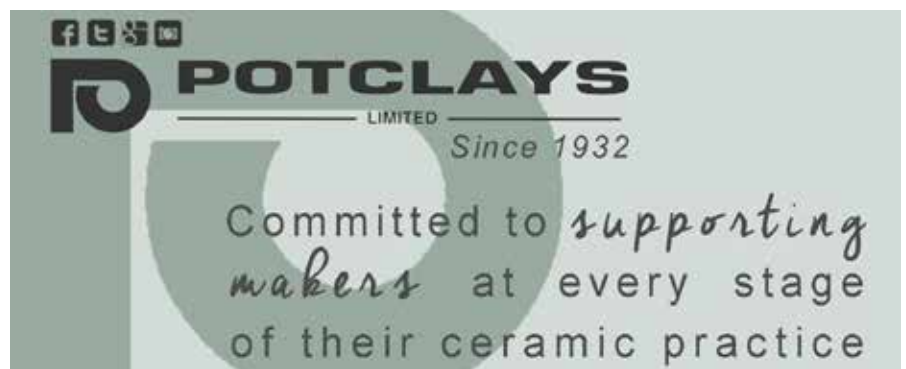
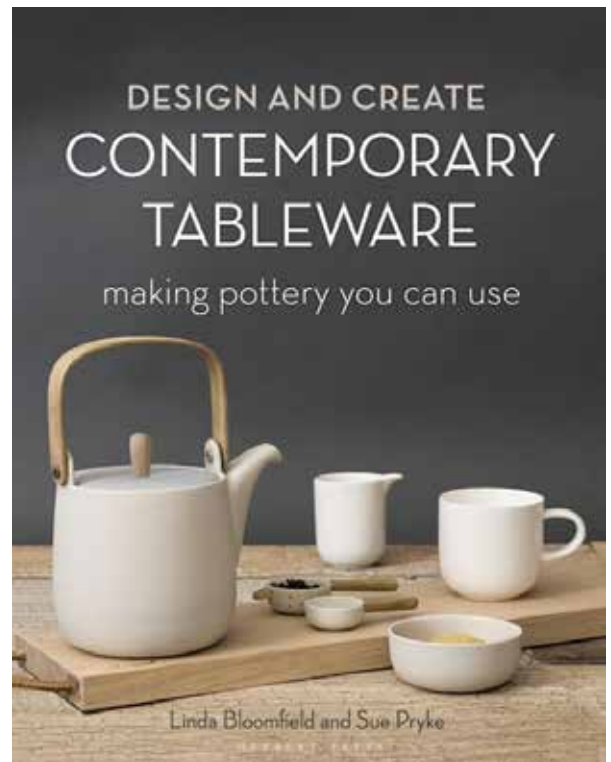
This book is beautifully produced and superbly illustrated with over 500 photographs. As you might guess from the title, it is very focused on 'modern' tableware, with an emphasis on simple shapes and Scandinavian influenced designs. Examples are given from mass produced items for IKEA, to individual work of the sort made for high end restaurants. The book is divided into sections on Inspiration, Design, Materials, Clay Preparation, Health and Safety, Making Methods, Glazing, Firing and Combining Materials. The contents list is very comprehensive but many of the sections are very short (2 pages on Materials, 4 on Clay preparation and 2 on Health and Safety), so there isn't a lot of useful information. The sections on making methods are well illustrated, and cover handbuilding, throwing, mould making and slip casting, with examples from different makers. The Glazing section is rather more in depth, which isn't surprising, given Linda's knowledge of glazes and glazing techniques. Rather like AP demo days, the examples might give you a tip or two of how something is made, rather than teach you from scratch.

I finished reading through this book and was left with the sort of feeling you get after a visit to one of the high end restaurants they reference, and working through a multi-course tasting menu. It looks superb, but only provides a fleeting flavour of each ingredient. If you really want to make contemporary tableware, this will give you some ideas, and lots of beautiful illustrations of what is possible. If you are interested in more than tasting any of the particular ingredients, you perhaps need to visit a more down-to-earth café for a more substantial meal!

~ John Masterton

DISCOUNT CODE

Order your copy at www.bloomsbury.com and receive 20% off across all formats of the book by entering the discount code **Tableware20** at checkout!
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The Beastea Bird

There is an element of truth in my story of the Beastea Bird's existence in that I started throwing without the intention of making a teapot. In fact, the body emerged from a different failed shape altogether. I suppose the teapot challenge must have been in the back of my mind as something I was going to respond to, but not consciously at that time. The clay, having exposed its desire to become a teapot, I had little choice but to obey. Each addition, the spout, lid and handle, needed

its own reflective action in the making. Without any overall plan of form or function, step by step the Beastea Bird grew, unrelated to any other teapot I had previously made.

This was all a very odd experience, enough to prompt one of my silly poems that are also conjured up somewhere in my brain; as you will become aware, this is not a natural phenomenon or talent of mine. Just a bit of nonsense.



The Ballad of the Beastea Bird

It is unlikely you would ever have heard of
A mythical Creature known as the Beastea Bird
Or heard her bellowing croaky tuneless call
For the Beastea Bird had no song at all.

The Beastea Bird was heavy, plump and round
With Wings that could not lift her off the ground.
One day on her wobbly legs she fluttered about
And fell from a branch and knocked herself out.

Landing breathless in a puddle of soft slimy clay
You will be sorry to hear she quietly passed away.
No need to grieve, it is not the end of this bird's story
Beastea Bird's demise will yet find fame and glory.

Imagine a million years or more
Fossil remains found with a metal detector.
Around a leg was a copper metal band
That told it belonged to a bird that once live on this land.

Forensic evidence made it easy to see
The bird's only consumption must have been tea.
Further research confirmed the feeling
That the Beastea Bird's origin was most likely Darjeeling.

(Tea Masters analysed the content of the gut and saw
It was brewed with a greenish-brown tea,
Thick as tar and heavily stewed).

A potter one day, might even have been me
Spotted some clay that looked very plasticky.
With his hands he tugged and with a mighty wrench
Took the clay home to his wedging bench.

(In the preparation sieving out feathers and stones
he was amazed to find fragments of bones).

Kneading his clay, he pondered, "What shall I throw?
A teapot's a good shape and something I know".
Starting to centre and then ball and cone
The clay suddenly took off on a form of its own.

A body and then a spout flew out of his hands
Thrown out of one piece just like Ruthanne's.
The wheel seemed driven as if by a peculiar force
Made a teapot with legs by some mysterious source.

Carbon dating of the bones revealed traces of DNA
From a bird never seen or known until today.
To make a replica took quite a bit of bother
This Beastea Bird is a one off, there will never be another.

The Saga continues:

Peter Warren's review of Tristan Hunt's fascinating book on Wedgwood encouraged me buy a copy. To my amazement at the start of Chapter 5, Hunt quotes from a correspondence between Wedgwood and Thomas Bentley about the digging of the Trent and Mersey Canal and the archaeological discoveries they found.

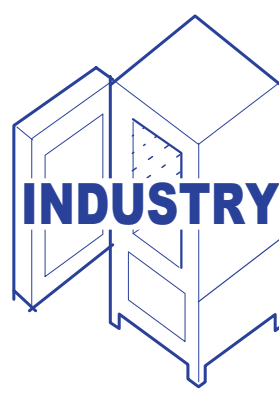
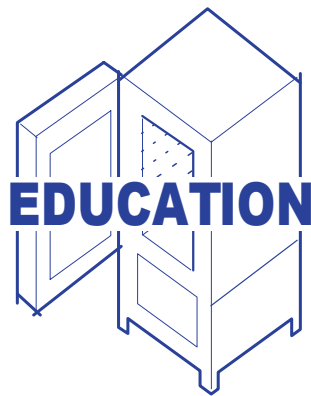
Amongst the finds they found bones that were shown to several able anatomists, who could not decide if they were the vertebrae of some monstrous animal nor if that animal was an inhabitant of the sea or the land.

~ *Ray Auker*





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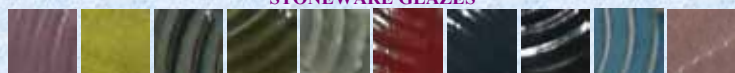
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Newsletter Deadline Summer 2023

1 JUNE

FOR PUBLICATION BY

1 JULY