



Newsletter



SUMMER 2022

www.anglianpotters.org.uk

ANGLIAN POTTERS OFFICERS

President – Grayson Perry

Chairman – John Masterton

15 Maylins Drive, Sawbridgeworth
Herts CM21 9HG 01279 723229
john@johnmasterton.co.uk

Vice Chairman – Carolyn Postgate

5 Whitwell Way, Coton, Cambridge
CB23 7PW 01954 211033
carolyn@clara.co.uk

**Secretary / Membership Secretary –
Vivienne Burns**

Ingate Lodge, Grove Road, Beccles,
Suffolk NR34 9QY 07920 339906
info@cowshedholidays.co.uk

Treasurer – Celia Greenaway

33 Russet Close, St Ives
Cambridgeshire PE27 3NN 01480 393067
chgreenaway@virginmedia.com

Editor – Peter Warren

2 Burrows Close, Clifton
Shefford SG17 5EG 01462 621946
peter@peterwarrenceramics.com

Press & Publicity Secretary –

This position is currently vacant

Exhibitions Organiser – Ian Vance

Larkfield, Debden Road, Newport
Essex CB11 3RU 01799 540137
ian@vance.myzen.co.uk

Selected Members Secretaries –

Christine Pike

Puddlefoot, Bridge Road, Downham
Market, Norfolk. PE38 0AE 07968 254221

Sheila Maddar

15 Turnstone End, Colchester, Essex,
CO4 3FS 07783 254221

Events Organiser – Trudy Staines

83 The Lammas, Mundford
Thetford IP26 5DS 01842 879011
trudy6218@gmail.com

IT Organiser – John Masterton

15 Maylins Drive, Sawbridgeworth
Herts CM21 9HG 01279 723229
john@johnmasterton.co.uk

Camp Planning - Nicki Darrell

46 Church Road, Cantley, Norwich
NR13 3SN 01493 701525
cantleypottery@gmail.com

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



Summer is upon us, and the show season has started. We have just finished another successful open exhibition at The Undercroft in Norwich, and by the time you read this we will have been at RHS Hyde Hall with a group of members, and the Ferini Gallery in Pakefield yet again. We're not able to be at Emmanuel College this summer, but will be back at All Saints' Cambridge for our Winter show in November/December. Meanwhile, there are lots of craft fairs and ceramics shows around the country, and many of our members will be participating, so if you get the opportunity to go along, enjoy the range of work, and talk to the great people involved.

We recently had our first firings at Stoke Farm, using the gas kiln donated by Tony Pugh, and the new wood kiln. Mixed results, but lots of lessons learnt, and a new, very tall, chimney installed on the wood kiln, with a much improved draught. We will have had an open day and Raku firing experience on the site on the 8th May, with members and locals from the village invited along. I hope those of you who made the trip enjoyed the day.

Then, we will be back again in August for our first Potters Camp on the new site. Things will be a bit different, as we are still developing, and learning about how to use the space available, so keep your expectations under control! If you didn't manage to bag a space, or you aren't able to come for the extended period of camp, we are planning some weekend or midweek firing workshops, so there's still a chance to make good use of the facilities. Our ability to offer camp this year is down to a great group of volunteers who have spent a lot of time working on site come rain or shine.

As always we have a lot to thank some

of our dedicated members for. We have another kiln under construction, originally built for Roger Kistruck, then via Fred Bramham and Dorothy Gorst, late of Kersey Pottery. Fred and Dot have been very generous, and donated a treasure trove of kiln furniture and raw materials, enough to keep us going for a long time!

We had two very successful demo days at Mundford in January and February, when it was lovely to see so many smiling faces, so pleased to be back together. Trudy has been on the hunt, and has lined up a great set of guests for the autumn and winter, into next year. See the programme of events on the back page for dates and names.

As with the rest of the world, our expenses are going up. We are proposing to leave the membership subscription at the same level for next year (2023/4), to be voted on at the AGM. We think this still represents very good value! However, we will have to increase some of the other fees for meetings and exhibitions to take account of the increase in costs. We will also be increasing the mileage allowance for members taking part in claimable activities from 25p to 35p per mile. We hope that will help compensate for the increase in fuel prices. In general, we only aim to break even on our activities, as we are a not-for-profit organisation, but it does mean we can't make a loss!

Hoping to see you over the summer.

John Masterton



Roger Cockram at Mundford

Photograph: Liz Lewis

COVER

Denise Brown

see pages 22/23

**Photograph: Denise
Brown**

CONTENTS

Page 2	Anglian Potters Officers Chairman's Letter
Page 3	Editor's Notes
Page 4	Roger Cockram at Mundford
Page 6	Ferini Exhibition
Page 8	Aphantasia
Page 9	Tea Caddy Art work for Refugees
Page 10	Jo Arnold
Page 12	The Weakest Link
Page 16	Angela Mellor Open Studios
Page 17	Frances Bache A.P.Clay Stores
Page 18	The Collector's Tale
Page 20	JJ Vincent
Page 21	Preparing Natural Clays
Page 22	Denise Brown
Page 24	Undercroft, Norwich, 2022
Page 28	Book Review Annual Selection Meeting
Page 29	Members' Websites
Page 31	Ceramic Helpline
Page 32	Stoke Farm Test Firings
Page 34	Hyde Hall
Page 36	Diary Dates Membership Fees Advertising Rates Deadline



Suddenly, it seems, the world of Anglian Potters has leapt into spring and summer with a vengeance. Such is the re-awakening that four extra pages have needed to be added to this edition. I am, of course, very grateful to all who have made contributions and to Lynda Clark at the Fitzwilliam Museum who has, once again, come to the rescue by supplying particular images from the museum's library, and to Louise Chennell at The School of Art Museum and Galleries, Aberystwyth University. Thanks go to Jo Arnold and Denise Brown for providing inciteful articles about their contrasting styles and working methods; to Ray Auker who might well have traced a 'Granny' belonging to a famous North Devon family of potters; to JJ Vincent for letting us have a close look at his latest creation and to Andrea Morton for reporting on the Undercroft Exhibition in Norwich.


There are reports about the Ferini Exhibition, the Hyde Hall Fair, the latest demonstration at Mundford, an explanation of 'Aphantasia' and an introduction to the world of the ceramics collector. We are presented with an update on the 'very-soon-to-be-in-business' Stoke Farm and the exciting prospect of the return of Potters Camp in August, a review of the recently-published book by Keith Brymer Jones and a very detailed look at a particular tea caddy.

Rob Rutterford's annual Walberswick gathering marks a half way stage in the calendar. Art-in-Clay follows and, before we know it, we will be back at All Saints, Cambridge, just in time for Christmas. Christmas? It's still only June.

Finally, please note the increase in prices at the clay stores (p.17)

Peter Warren

WISH-DARE-INSPIRE



West Acre Gallery
Abbey Farm
River Road
West Acre
Norfolk
PE32 1UA

17th – 22th June 2022

For details go to -
www.westacregallery.co.uk

An exhibition featuring Nature Inspired Wall Art and Ceramics influenced by Wabi-Sabi

by Sky Carver and Alan Nuttall

Sky's wall art is inspired by her love of the natural woods and meadows of rural Norfolk

Alan's ceramics focus on Japanese tableware and Raku sculptures, all having their roots deeply embedded in the aesthetic of Wabi-Sabi

ROGER COCKRAM AT MUNDFORD



*Liz Lewis claiming one of Roger's pots
Photograph: Liz Lewis*

The sea. The sea. From the sea to the land and back again.

Roger was born in Barnstaple, Devon and it is clear that this is where his heart lies and is the inspiration for his pottery. Although he was coerced into science at school and is a marine biologist, he ended up as a mature student at Harrow. At that time they had visiting potters teaching them – Mo Jupp, Colin Pearson, Mick Casson, Wally Keeler but interestingly no Women!

As a natural pyromaniac he tells a story of firing an oil kiln in a London garden not knowing anything, including the crucial part, when to stop firing. He resolved this by driving to collect a friend who had some kiln firing experience leaving the kiln unattended. The friend took one look and said, "It's ok, turn it off!"

After graduation he moved back to Devon to start his studio. He has always once-fired after Colin Pearson who taught him how to bisque then said "you never need to do this again" He was producing brown pots for brown kitchens (the fashion of the time) fired in a large wood kiln he built himself. Another move to the coast and he

changed to a top-loading gas kiln which was much smaller and quicker to fire, enabling orders to be fulfilled on time.

Roger produces two distinct styles of pottery: domestic stoneware and artistic porcelain. The stoneware is domestic ware: mugs, pitchers, dishes and a design award soup bowl which has a handle inspired by his daughters. He feels that this ware should be affordable and every item used, not just sitting on a shelf because a casserole cost hundreds of pounds.

This stoneware range is turquoise glazed with the bottom half decorated with various vitreous coloured slips sponged on.

In sharp contrast his artistic porcelain ware is thrown and altered, then decorated with glazes which run and mix to give the amazing colours observed in rock pools and the waves crashing on the shoreline. Still once-fired, he showed us how he slips the inside of a bowl with a celadon glaze, calmly swirling it round and pouring it out while the audience held its breath. This is left to dry completely before the outside is glazed with the celadon which is stable enough to help control the more fluid additions which are brushed on top. It is reduction fired to cone 11 and allowed to soak to

exploit the glaze reactions.

Music is another one of Roger's passions and we were treated to an impromptu song before he started a throwing demonstration of his various shapes. He uses his own mix of porcelain or Audrey Blackman porcelain.

First a lovely tea bowl to which he added a swirl thrown with a handmade copper pipe tool starting at the base and rising to the rim. It looked simple but I am sure it takes years of practice and courage as you only get one chance to get it right.

He showed us how he joins a trumpet-shaped low bowl to make a big bottle form with previously thrown parts. He added a fine flattened coil to the inside of the bottom bowl to make a gallery for the second section with much scoring and slip. They are melded together by further throwing on the wheel. The top is then thrown to make the neck or maybe a slab is added if he wants an asymmetrical shape.

A few tips I made a note of.

1. Never let the porcelain surface dry out when throwing.
2. Keep the form light by using only a few throws to achieve the desired form. (How I wish I could).
3. Leave the thrown pot on the batt unwired till firmed up.
4. After joining two or more thrown parts, leave the pot fully covered up for a few days so that the moisture is equally distributed to prevent cracking etc.
5. Have the final piece in your mind's eye before you start throwing right to the end knowing where glaze will start and end.

Roger is eager for us all to experiment with our pots, demonstrating his current thoughts by upending a thrown form or joining two flat bowls to make a cockle shell bottle. After his demonstration and knowledge which he freely gave to us all, I for one went home eager to get out into that cold studio and start potting with new enthusiasm and a desire to try something new.

Well done everyone who helped to set up the room and those who stayed to clear up at the end as well. Many hands make light work.

Roger was very impressed with our association and the friendly helpful team who assisted him. Let's hope it will not be another 25 years before we see him again.

Liz Lewis



Photograph: Liz Lewis



Photograph: Nikki Darrell



Photograph: Nikki Darrell



Photograph: Nikki Darrell



Photograph: Nikki Darrell



Photograph: Nikki Darrell

FERINI EXHIBITION



Throwing shapes like dancers waiting to perform, finely fired pots and 'Raku perfumed' forms jostle on their shelves dreaming about their moments in the spotlights.

Deep in the gloom Google idly recites the government's White Paper 2022 on 'Levelling Up' – to no-one in particular. Promises of grants and policies for change hint at the new world of 2030 – policies to support regeneration, green spaces and cultural activities – an aim "to create stronger and more cohesive communities."

Oblivious to the part they may play in the lives of people, carefully nurtured pots start to dream of holidays away from the bleak cold winter, of being boxed and lost in dark spaces.

"....restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost. White Paper Feb 2022..." drones Google.

A cold wind blows, the window rattles

and an AP pottery-person Newsletter falls open to the floor, exposing an advert: 'Fun loving pots wanted for a refreshing vacation (all needs cared for). Apply to the Ferini Art Gallery, Pakefield – we promise a month of bright lights and bracing sea air...'

Where is Pakefield? Google softly responds: "Pakefield is a charming coastal village in Suffolk with a fascinating maritime history and rural beach, plus cakes, pubs and a rich arts culture."

At this point dusty, but intellectual, pottery-person arrives, notes the advert on the floor, scans the Google text, and somehow (from seemingly nowhere) has an idea: "I need to sell more work to cover ever growing costs. Anglian Potters thrives on opportunities to promote both established and newly-emerging members' work. Solution: the hidden gems stacked in my storeroom deserve to be seen...!"

Google continues: "The light and bright Ferini Art Gallery is about two miles' leisurely stroll along the seafront from Lowestoft station – a much loved destination in the 50s and 60s when holidays on the British coast were very popular. Since witnessing a decline in light industries, fishing and visitor numbers, Lowestoft is currently reinventing itself..."

Historically 'Anglian Potters' has played a part in creating a greater sense of cultural identity in Pakefield. Indeed 'Spring Up' is the latest of nine annual displays of members' work. Word has it that Arts Ambassador Michaela, owner and manager of the gallery, actively encourages an appreciation of the arts. She is seeing a growth in her sales and sharing with people as they discover the exciting work created by local artists and others across East Anglia.

Word also notes that Mary Wyattt and her team are soon to set up a superb display curated by Pat Todd – just as work of quality deserves. Michaela will then take over to tell the story of 'artist and pot' through an illustrated booklet and furnish the exhibition with attractive labelling. She will then welcome increasingly discerning visitors – before enabling the sensitive relocation of treasured items to homes of appreciative purchasers and collectors.

On hearing this news, excitement spread amongst the pots, sensing a new purpose. Anticipation spoke of a holiday without sunscreen, in the friendly company of others – all in the temporary care of someone who cares. In a time of pop-up galleries, First Light festivals and stimulating exhibitions 'they' will fly the Anglian Potters banner. They will highlight the importance of pottery as an art form, bringing visitors into the area and supporting a sense of cultural wellbeing in a town of exciting possibilities.

From clay bag to kiln, potters spin their magic in many wondrous ways, and when they collectively get together fascinating things can happen – galleries become theatres for their creations. Lights and white stands create open spaces in which to choreograph the colours, textures, forms and characteristics that sing of the unique.

Creating ceramics is not just about damp clay and kilns..... Forget 'levelling up' by 2030 lets all 'Spring Up' now.

Harvey Bradley

Photographs by makers



Barbara Bullock



Mary Wyatt



Julia Bruce



Mary Wyatt



Harvey Bradley

APHANTASIA



Julia Stone

Photograph: Julia Stone

Creating what you can't imagine

'Aphantasia' is the inability to form mental representations of things that aren't present. Aphantasics can't visualise and may not be able to create representations of the other senses in their imagination. Wiki lists many creatives who have Aphantasia. But without being able to see in the mind's eye, how do they imagine what they wish to create?

The vast majority of people can visualise, and may not even be aware that an estimated 5% of people can't. If you asked what my partner looked like I'd give a vague description based on things I have observed about him and stored in my memory as words, because I cannot *see* him in my mind's eye. I can't visualise faces – even those of my family members.

I *think* in words, rather than pictures or sounds, but it was only last year that I discovered Aphantasia as a concept and suddenly everything made sense: my poor spelling and recall when numbers are read aloud to me – I can't recreate an image of the word or number to hold it in my mind; my failure to learn a language, copy an accent or sing a note – I cannot replay what I've heard in my head; my inability to draw anything unless it's in front of me – I cannot recreate the image in my mind's eye.

This made me think about my own creative process and the many workarounds I've developed. If I cannot create things in my imagination, how do I create?

Catalysts in the real world

Lacking a visual imagination, I find it hard to create from a blank sheet. My art work and writing usually start with a question sparked by something I've seen or experienced. For example: a glance at the contents of a discarded shopping list caused me to wonder about the person

who wrote it. This led to a flash fiction story and artist's book based on found shopping lists.

A parcel I received was packaged with springy, cross cut paper. It was quite beautiful and made me ponder how I might use it. I experimented with dipping it in porcelain slip and then draping it over pots to be fired. This led to experiments with other packaging materials and lace.

In each of these instances there was a **catalyst** that sparked the thought, that then led to the creative work. But I need a store of sources to spark my inspiration.

Build a store of inspiration

From an early age I've collected things that 'call to me'. *Mathom* is a term Tolkien used for the hobbit's trinkets; anything that has no use but they want to keep. It derives from an old English word meaning treasure or precious thing. My desk has always had a 'Mathom drawer' – a place where I stash interesting objects.

Sometimes I know that an item has potential to inspire something creative, even if no ideas come to me at the time. So I've always kept anything I discover that intrigues me, sparks a question or an emotion. These might be two-dimensional – text, photos, images – or 3D objects. For example, as a mature student I went to art college. Everyone else's sketchbooks were filled with ... sketches. Mine was full of quotes, lyrics and poems, glued-in pictures, bits of fabric, blobs of colour and lots of words. I am now a fiction writer and my notebook is similar, a repository for inspiration.

When I'm stuck and lack ideas I go to my treasure troves. I pair things that don't belong together to see if it sparks a new thought, I jot down thoughts in words and make mind maps to see where they take me.

So, to the next step: how to turn these ideas into a reality?

Experiment and iterate

Because I need to see things in the real world rather than in my imagination I work best when I can work in stages. I cannot draw my ideas or what I want to create, nor can I visualise the end product in any detail, so I work one step at a time. This approach allows me to see what works; "this looks right, that doesn't". I make scale mock-ups, collage images, create mood boards, so I can literally *see*. These strategies help whether

I'm designing a room, making a ceramic or writing a story – by seeing something take shape before my eyes I can inch closer to turning my idea into a reality. When iterating in this way there will be mistakes and dead ends along the way, which leads to my next point...

Embrace happy accidents

The Japanese aesthetic of *wabi-sabi* embraces 'the imperfect, impermanent or incomplete'. It is a philosophy that appreciates the beauty of aged and used objects, asymmetry and the natural. *Kintsugi* is a related concept where imperfection, the broken and the blemished, are marks of life. They are part of the history of the object and to be celebrated. Broken ceramics are traditionally mended with gold inlay to draw attention to the beauty of the flaw. My art tutor said cracks and breaks in ceramics during firing are 'gifts from the kiln gods'.

When things go wrong in my art work or writing I take it as a creative challenge. How can I spark off from this in a new way?

I keep parts of my discarded ceramics and find ways to incorporate them in other projects. Odd jottings of ideas become part of another book or poem. In true Hobbit style, nothing is wasted.

Enjoy the creative journey

I feel my creative work has benefited from developing and using these workarounds. Had I started with a clear image of what I wanted to achieve the journey may have been more akin to following a map of the direct route to the goal. As it is, the goal changes and the route becomes scenic with many discoveries, detours and potential adventures that lead to other creative options. I have Aphantasia to thank for that.

Julia Stone

Julia Stone is a psychologist, novelist and ceramic artist. Her debut suspense novel, Her Little Secret, was published by Orion in 2021. More information can be found at www.juliastonewriter.com



Julia Stone

Photograph: Julia Stone

A TEA CADDY



The following article was written for members of The Arts Society, Ely (an arts appreciation society, covering a wide range of the arts).

Now and again, I wave the flag for ceramics. When members were invited to write a short article for the newsletter on a piece of artwork that they liked, I could not resist.

It was not written for potters, but for people with a general interest in the arts. The idea being to encourage them to really look, and to think about what they were looking at. I think Leonardo put it rather better.

It did stimulate one or two to say that their interest had been awakened, and Lady X said that she would never look at a pot the same way again. So I felt I had achieved what I had aimed at!

It's just an ordinary pot. But let's have a look at it together.

At first glance, we see a simple pot with a lid, and the whole thing is glazed in green and brown. Come with me, and we can look at it a bit more closely.

The foot starts off black, and as the pot swells, there's a tiny hint of blue. Then as we move up towards the full waist, we see the glaze become grey-green with small black speckles, fading into patches of rusty brown.

Coming to the shoulders, we can see streaks of glaze going round the pot, showing the potter's fingermarks when it was on the wheel. We can't see these throwing rings anywhere else on the pot, so it looks like the potter may have left them intentionally, to emphasise the shoulders.

We can now see that this tea caddy is a little more interesting than it first appeared.

Next, the shoulders curve inwards to the neck. We can't see the neck in the photo, as it's hidden by the lower part of the lid. This part of the lid acts as a collar round the neck, to prevent the lid sliding off.

Finally let's look at the lid itself. Superficially it's a flat top with a collar under it.

But if we really look, we see that the lid is not quite flat. There's a bit more to it than that. In the centre is a slight dip, and the outer edge slopes down a little, echoing the curved contours of the shoulders.

Imagine for a moment, if the lid had been perfectly flat. I think our eyes would see two unrelated things brought together, like a coin balanced on a glass marble.

I feel that the subtle shaping of the lid complements the body shape, and is a significant part of the overall design. The lid is not just an extra, it has become part of the pot.

Now that we've had a good look at it, we can appreciate that this pot is not quite as simple as it first appeared.

All the design elements we have seen result in a pot that "works" aesthetically. The pot looks "right".

This pot may not excite you, but perhaps it's intended to calm you down.

In my view, this pot may not be Fine Art, but it just may be fine art!

Ron Parker

Photograph Ron Parker

ARTWORK FOR REFUGEES call for donations

On 25th June, as part of Refugee Week, the Cambridge-based charity CamCrag which focuses its work on helping refugees in Europe and beyond (camcrag.org.uk), will be holding an art event to raise funds for refugees. This will take place in the Alison Richard Building, West Road, Cambridge, and will include music, dance (tbc), and some other stalls in addition to the sale of artwork. However, the main focus will be on art and craft, and we are asking as many artists and crafts people as possible if they would be willing to donate a piece, or pieces of work that we can sell at this event. This could be in the form of an outright donation or, if preferred, a percentage of the sale price.

I would be extremely grateful if any members of Anglian Potters who would like to contribute to this event could get in touch with me by email as soon as possible – dianakazemi@hotmail.com

With thanks.

Diana Kazemi



Beginnings

Growing up on clay-rich Hampshire soil, digging clay out of the garden and using it like Plasticene (no-one told me you could put it in the fire and turn it into pottery.)

Painting and Ceramics with David Hamilton at Portsmouth, in 1970 a city still visibly scarred by WW2. Ceramics with Geoff Doonan at Ilkley College.

Influences

Japanese Haniwa figures, Pre-Columbian, the Fitzwilliam and Sainsbury collections, Gillian Lowndes, Gordon Baldwin, Grayson Perry among others. Moving to Norfolk in 2005 after 10 years without using clay I began by coiling coat and dress-shaped figures, both earthenware and stoneware. Always interested in the stories on Greek pottery and fascinated by Grayson Perry's use of clay surfaces to tell his own story, I covered my figures in references from folk tales and myth. Other stories appeared,

too, victims of circumstance, Amy Winehouse, Ian Tomlinson, along with refugees from war and famine. At first my figures were relatively simple, enclosed hollow cones with sleeves and pockets, all the story visible on the outside. The day I decided to put a flight of stairs disappearing into a figure something changed. It implied other things happening in a space invisible from the outside. From then on the shapes became more complex, more open, the story slowly disappeared from the outer surface and became part of the internal structure. And I was still coiling, mostly in stoneware by now, using Potclays Craft Crank mixed with some paper pulp (3:1, clay to paper). I was very comfortable with coiling. I had complete control of the clay and the whole process, more or less.

And then I went to an AP Demo Day. It was John Higgins, from Stoke, and the way he treated clay was wonderful to see. We watched him pulling big tubes of it on the wheel and slicing them and throwing them down onto a porous surface and tearing them into shapes, always keeping that freshness. He set the clay free and I went home and decided to change my way of working.

I spent a happy week playing, trying out the things we'd seen John do. It was fun but not quite what I was after. I began to roll the clay out thinner to give it a quality of torn fabric. But first I needed a framework to support it. I started to build, using rectangular pieces of leather-hard paper clay, making a cell-structure of little spaces, like rooms and corridors. I worked slowly upward, adding, joining with slip, leaving gaps, improvising as I went. Some pieces were perforated or impressed with

patterns and textures like wallpaper, like the bomb-damaged buildings that were still around during my '50s childhood. The whole process reminded me of the way we used to make dens as children, in hedges, ditches, up trees, improvising into a chosen space with borrowed or cast-off materials, testing for strength as we went. "It looks like a favela!" said one visitor.

When I finished, it was fragile but stable, narrowing towards the top. I only had to roll out a thin sheet of clay and attach it with slip to the horizontal edges of my structure.

Paper clay has many advantages for this kind of work. It can be rolled thinner and stays flexible; it's easy to join wet clay to dry so the piece can be added to when dry; it's very strong at the green stage and therefore easy to move for firing.

I had planned to drape a large cloak of clay around my structure, handling it as little as possible to keep the freshness. I used toothpicks to take some of the weight but I was too ambitious, the cloak of clay slid to the floor, taking some of my structure with it. Disaster! I had to compromise, to adapt the shape of the structure, tear the clay sheet into smaller strips, leave gaps in the outer garment so I could see through to the other side of the figure in some places. The result was *Place of Shelter*, a much more ragged and fragile entity than I had planned but more expressive than I had imagined possible. So much for ideas; they have to come from the clay itself.

I have been making these figures in roughly the same way ever since, while adding other processes, for example, using press-moulded shapes from cast-

off material like tin cans, paper coffee cups and other rubbish as building material and a means to tell the story. It's not a calm way to work, it's no good making too many plans; if I do that the work goes dead on me and I regret it.

Technical details: after bisque I sponge black copper oxide over every surface to bring out texture and rustiness, then a texture of white slip on some parts and, last, some clear glaze dripped in corners and crevices (makes an interesting olive green over the oxide). Fired to 1240°C.

Coda

During lockdown I did a lot of re-thinking, experimenting, and drawing. I learned a lot and came out the other side feeling the need to make simpler things in more peaceful ways and also hoping to make something suitable for Anglian Potters online sales.

After a few false starts I have made some things I like. Very much planned, each part cut to a template, I know how they will look after firing, no disasters or surprises. How they fit with the Shelter pieces or where they come from I'm not sure. They remind me of lines from my Penguin Book of Chinese Verse:

The deep hall is silent
The little courtyard is deserted
Off and on go the taps on the cold slabs
Off and on goes the wind.'
Or 'Smoke hangs on the stream
The peach leaves shed bright leaves in the water.
Emptiness and water never far away.

Jo Arnold

Photographs: Jo Arnold



THE WEAKEST LINK



Isaac Button

When I started throwing pots in my first studio, I used a highly plastic terracotta clay from Fremington, North Devon. I had had the fanciful notion after seeing Isaac Button throwing of serving the people of Greenwich with the rural pottery they must desperately need! However, I soon discovered there was little demand for chicken feeders and cider jars, but I did make and sell some strawberry pots and some slip-trailed lidded jars and jugs but making any sort of living was totally unrealistic, except that a genuine appreciation of the 17th century slip-trailed dishes of rural potters like Thomas Toft and Ralph Simpson was established. My attempts did however pay off, my improved throwing skills created an opportunity for some part-time teaching pottery evening classes. Even now when travelling around Britain I have made the point of visiting small rural museums where pots or sherds can be seen made by regional potters using local, mainly terracotta clays, often decorated with scraffito decoration through slip or trailed and combed. A general observation shows that slip trailing was more common in

the area around Stoke-on-Trent, but also at Wrotham in Kent where elaborately adorned slip-trailed ware can be found.

North Devon, Bideford and Barnstaple were the two principal areas of manufacture in the 17th and 18th centuries, with some production carrying on until 1920. Of particular note are harvest jugs, made to celebrate the end of the harvest. The best-known makers were several generations of the Fishley Holland potters who had made their pots from Fremington clay.

Now to my weakest link: my Granny was born, I see from her marriage certificate, in South Molton, North Devon and her maiden name is given as Holland. Could there be a connection, something in my genes that had drawn me to Fremington clays and a respect for the potters who made functional and decorative slipware? Could members of my family be related to the Fishley Holland, master potters, wouldn't that be fantastic? A further look at the certificate revealed my Great Grandfather's employment was as a labourer, so could mine have been at times. I am recorded as a potter journeyman, which would seem about right.

I carried on using Fremington clay for several years, making more elaborate, larger, altered pieces with surface modelling, more urban than rural, inspired by Doulton and the Martin Brothers I had seen at the V&A's English gallery.

Using a slip trailer to decorate is often a matter of going with the flow, the same became true of my trail on the internet looking at North Devon Potters, where I came across a paper written by C. Malcolm Watkins "North Devon Pottery and its Export to America

in the 17th century" written by an archaeologist working in various sites in America including Virginia, Massachusetts, and especially Jamestown, where large amounts of pottery sherds from Bideford and Barnstaple potteries were dug up. Shipping records show that several ship loads amounting to a vast tonnage of pottery were sent from Plymouth and Bristol docks to supply the needs of the early Puritan settlers from Britain around 1620.

So much for the thought that Country Potters were only supplying the needs of the local population with their produce! By the 1920s most of the slip-decorated production on an industrial scale had gone, although W. H. Lakes in Truro lasted until 1987.

Bernard Leach produced some slip-trailed decorated chargers in the style of Thomas Toft, seeking to find some roots in English traditional pottery. Michael Cardew also produced terracotta pots with slip-trailed and scraffito decoration in his workshop in Winchcombe, Devon (1926-1939). As a boy Michael had taken holidays in Devon and watched Edwin Beer Fishley at work at Fremington Pottery.

Recently I read a copy of Northern Potters Newsletter where one of their members, John Hudson, a traditional potter, still makes wonderful harvest jugs in the same vein. In the interview with John in the Newsletter, John expresses his concerns that those traditions handed down from Thomas Toft are in imminent danger of being irretrievably lost. I sincerely hope not.

Ray Auker



Harvest Jug, English, North Devon, 1724
©The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge



John Hudson
Photograph by kind permission John Hudson



Thomas Toft. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Michael Cardew. Heron Dish, © The School of Art Museum and Galleries, Aberystwyth University



Wee Three Logerheads, Samuel Malkin 1720-1730
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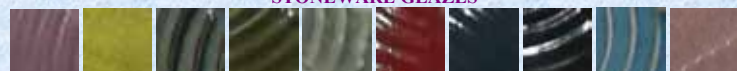
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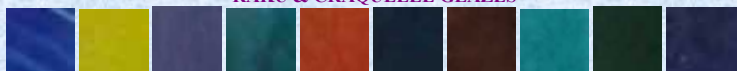
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Rob Rutterford
robrutterford@aol.com

A MESSAGE FROM ANGELA MELLOR



Unfurled Light, Angela Mellor

Dear Peter,

I hope this finds you well. Good to see you're still doing a great job with the Newsletter. The Spring issue was a bumper read!

I've just got some thrilling news: I am delighted to say that the

Fuller Craft Museum in Brockton Massachusetts, USA is exhibiting my piece, "Unfurled Light", in its exhibition, *Making History: Recent Acquisitions from the Permanent Collection*. The exhibition will be on view until Spring 2023.

You can view the work on the

Fuller Craft Museum digital archive here and explore others in *Making History*:

<http://collections.fullercraft.org/mExhibit.aspx?rID=Making%20History&dir=CRAFT>

"Unfurled Light" was featured in the 2020 Fuller Craft Museum exhibition "Particle & Wave: Paper Clay Illuminated." It also is the museum's first acquisition of paper clay – a material that artfully conflates tradition and ingenuity within the ceramic framework. With its beauty, translucency, and strength, "Unfurled Light" is a stellar example of this innovative medium.

I am thrilled to learn that the piece is the Museum's first paper clay acquisition, which I wasn't aware of until I now!

With very best wishes,

Angela Mellor

OPEN STUDIOS 2022

At the time of writing, I have been able to provide the following information

CAMBRIDGE OPEN STUDIOS

www.cambridgeopenstudios.co.uk

First four weekends in July (Saturdays and Sundays)

Excellent website. Click on 'discover' for participating artists, maps, opening times etc.

SUFFOLK OPEN STUDIOS

www.suffolkopenstudios.org

Weekends in June

Online directory with individual disciplines and participating members' contact details.

HERTFORDSHIRE OPEN STUDIOS

hvaf.org.uk/open-studios

Saturday 10 September – Sunday 2 October

Good website with details about participating artists.

NORFOLK OPEN STUDIOS

norfolkstudios.org.uk

Applications being taken

Saturday 24 September – Sunday 9 October

FRANCES BACHE

Frances Bache studied pottery at Aberdeen Art College. She also was given personal instruction from Pat Laurenson at Glen Tanar pottery. Frances specialised in stoneware figurines, especially of traditional Scottish characters such as crofters and fishwives. She exhibited at the Scottish Craft Centre in Edinburgh. Frances moved to Cambridge in 1984 with her husband and joined Anglian Potters. She was regularly showing at Christmas exhibitions, which usually included a Nativity set. Frances died at home, after a recurring illness, aged 85 in December 2020.

Jenny Bache

Frances was a member of Anglian Potters for more than 35 years and Jenny, Frances's daughter, will be happy to provide any further information. Jenny's contact details are:

email: JennyBotanicals@outlook.com

mobile: 07816 111947

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Diana Ng

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07516 503016

diana@ngpottery.com

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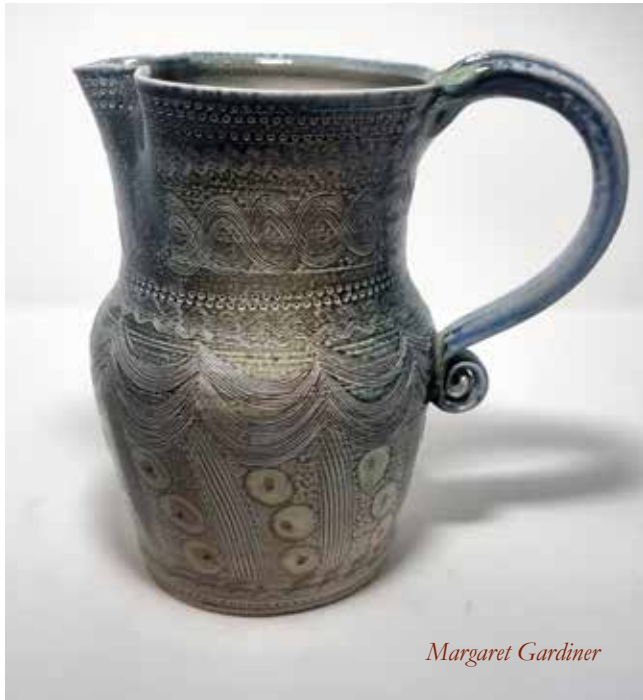


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THE COLLECTOR'S TALE



Margaret Gardiner

How does one become a studio pottery collector? Especially when there has been no other noticeable exposure in the first 50 years of your life. Well, it's a slippery slope.

I blame a small art gallery that used to be in Belsize Village in London. Before we married, my wife, Sam, had a small flat in London in a less salubrious area than the Village, but needed occasionally to visit to see an osteopath. I agreed to meet her after her treatment and was killing time looking in shop windows. I rather liked a painting in the gallery window and when my wife joined me, we went in to ask the price. We decided to go away to think about it, as one does when the price is a little more than you were hoping, but also had a good look around before leaving. And we found an unusual (to us at the time) vase that rather appealed. The lady in charge told us it was by a potter called Nic Collins and while neither of us had been expecting to buy a vase, that's just what we did. It was an interesting tall vase with that 'ugly beauty' that wood firing often imparts; the bulb of the vase led to a tall 'chimney' top, it was almost roughly constructed but exuded confidence with a glazing that seemed haphazard but hung together 'just right', and it had a large peach coloured spot on one side. Anyway, we went home and talked about the painting but somehow ended up agreeing that we needed something else in ceramics to go with the vase. When we returned to the gallery we were shown some Lisa

Hammond pots... and that's where the trouble started.

That time, we went home with a Lisa shino glazed bowl and a tall faceted vase. The collection had started and our fate was sealed.

Lisa's pots had an additional attraction – Maze Hill produces functional ware as well as Lisa's one-off pieces, and our kitchen needed a few new pots. This sparked a mini frenzy and we bought mugs, casserole dishes,

a pestle and mortar and a coffee pot. Lisa also mentioned that she would be showing at Ceramic Art London and this introduced us to pottery fairs. As I said... it's a slippery slope.

CAL led to Wardlow (an absolute joy to visit) led to Potfests (many and varied and also a joy), Celebrating Ceramics, Art in Clay etc. Our initial flurry of enthusiasm has been slowed by my retirement a couple of years ago. Beautiful ceramics are addictive, but with no further salary arriving we've reined things in... a little. Who needs to eat after all?

This year we'll need to be more careful and either go to fewer meets, or agree to 'go but not buy anything'. The latter is so easy to say, and so not easy to do. However, a key joy of the various pottery fairs is not just the buying of pots but the chance to talk to the potters. I've found that most potters are completely happy to talk about their pots, their glazes, their choice of clays, their teachers and influences... and as a collector I love to hear these details. Very few potters don't want to talk and very few attempt any form of hard sell of their pots. It's so surprising to find a potter really pushing their pots that I find it a little off-putting, although I suspect that's unfair. A potter's got to sell to keep going after all.

The conversations are enhanced by the sheer difference of the pots available from stand to stand. You can be looking

at Amanda Banham's raku work, then move to the slip decorated bird jugs of Phil Arthur, then the vapour glazing of Margaret Gardiner and then the brightly-coloured work of Richard Baxter. (We have work from all four in our collection.) I've obviously chosen members of Anglian Potters, but when there are often a hundred or more stands it can take a dedicated collector at least a day, and sometimes a second day to make sure you've seen all the work on show.

I do try not to waste the time of any potter who has possible buyers hovering to one side if I'm really just chatting and am not going to buy. However, over time I've managed to repay quite a few of those chats with an eventual purchase even if it's several shows on. I also, and inadvertently, came across another way of repaying it. My other retirement hobby is photography and I took some photos at one show. I put these online via the Facebook group 'British Studio Pottery Collectors' and found that they were highly appreciated by the many collectors who cannot get to a particular show. I was also told by a couple of potters that they really appreciated their work being shown to the wider audience, so I decided to do this a little more determinedly. I swapped my larger i.e. proper camera for my mobile as it's less intrusive and still takes pretty good photos. It's also rather better at allowing for all the different lighting you can get in a tent/marquee without me needing to keep resetting the controls. I always ask permission to take photos and do my best to get at least three or four nice shots that show the pots as best I can. These are never going to be professional quality, but a little editing usually gives an acceptable end result. The final discipline is that every photo must be labelled with the name of the potter. This sounds logical enough but can be a surprisingly difficult challenge when faced with several hundred photos of a hundred different potters work. I've developed sensible ways of resolving this, but still manage to mis-spell a name or two every now and then. And when Facebook carefully posted all 400 shots in the album but left out the names I had added as labels to each photo, my language was not the best. But then... I doubt there are many potters who don't let loose occasionally if the kiln gods decide they're not happy with your latest load of pots so I don't suppose there's much vocabulary that would shock the potting community.

As well as fairs, we've started to enjoy visiting potters in their studios. Once again, potters are a gracious lot and there's a particular joy in visiting both the relatively near Maze Hill and also a far flung studio such as that of Andy Priestman. We were also incredibly lucky when we dropped in on the open studio day of Margaret Gardiner, as I had not read the details correctly and we arrived an hour early. Nothing daunted, Margaret invited us in, made us tea and coffee and showed us around her incredible home that looks like it's just served time as a Harry Potter film set. Thank you, Margaret, for such an enjoyable visit.

There is also the fun of reading up on the history of various potters and potteries. The web of interconnections of the potters who worked at Leach, Wenford Bridge, Winchcombe and other potteries and the many influences of those who've taught at places like Farnham are fascinating to the collector in me. So many potters of the 1970s and 1980s have been forgotten and their pots now surface unsuccessfully in groups dedicated to identifying old potter's marks. It's good to capture the past and while digital photography and the internet mean far fewer potters will labour without trace, I still feel there is value in capturing as much memory as possible from our older potters and as much detail on all current work as we can.

So where do my wife and I go from here? Well, my wife has one serious fault for a studio pottery collector. She hates dust and she also hates dusting. When buying pots for her, I now stick to the requirement that they must be functional. However, I've been given a single room in the house for my own collection and I'm gradually filling it. It's been made very clear that dusting will be required and will be down to me. I think these are all sensible restrictions as left to my own devices I am unlikely to ever equal the knowledge and scholarship of the famous Bill Ismay, but I would certainly be cramming pots onto every shelf and into every nook available. I just wish I could choose between raku, wood fired, tenmoku or shino or oribe glazed, hand built, thrown, coiled, functional, sculptural etc etc, but there's really something to love in each form. Oh well, perhaps I could negotiate with my wife for a second room.

Rod Mearing

All Photographs: Rod Mearing



Nic Collins



John Masterton



Phil Arthur



Claire Knight



Lisa Hammond

JJ VINCENT

The Champion of the Earth – Part 1: A mixed-media case study

With just a handful of days to go to the copy date for this article, I heard that the UN had nominated Sir David Attenborough as Champion of the Earth.

The UN conferred its "most distinguished environment award" on the 95-year-old for his dedication to informing the world about nature and the climate crisis and advocating for the protection of endangered species. I was then galvanised into action, recalling that in January 2020, I had embarked on a rather complex sculpture of the great man in a narrative situation inspired by a scene on TV – New Guinea, 2015

Original TV screenshot © BBC



The sequence featured Sir David "doing battle" with a rather excitable Greater Bird of Paradise who was proudly displaying on a nearby overhanging tree branch. The bird was desperate to upstage the intrepid naturalist's every

My initial rough concept sketch



attempt to present a piece to camera. My first task was to study dozens of reference photographs and video clips of both Sir David and the general species appearance of that arrogant bird with a view to devising a composition for my proposed sculpture.

I decided upon an intimate composition and scenario in which the noisy bird had come down from its vantage point and had alighted on Sir Dave's head, so as to achieve the dominant position in this great battle of wills.

Hands-on clay

With the general notion that I would somehow plug the assembled bird into the presenter's head, I started to fashion soft clay into an approximately life-sized torso shape.



I find it very useful to build all my major pieces on a heavy duty lifting scissor jack (intended for motorcycle repair workshops). This is topped with a very robust banding wheel that I made from a redundant bronze pottery wheel-head that was donated by Hills Road 6th form college several years ago.

Knowing that the final work would perhaps weigh in at maybe 15-20 kgs, I followed my normal instinct to build in some substantial infrastructure.

Borrowing some basic techniques



of anything from ship-building to architecture, I formed lots of partitions, bulkheads and reinforcements to ensure a robust structure.

Without fail, I must ALWAYS check and double-check that each and every internally-enclosed void can ultimately vent to the outside world. Every so often, this consideration is overlooked, and an explosion is almost guaranteed during the first few hours of bisque firing. A recently sculpted fox was not provided with a vent hole and so he is now, unfortunately, a fox with no tail.

Head and shoulders

Once the torso was closed to form the shoulders and neck, I was able to sculpt the fluid lines of the famous open-necked shirt. To give an impression of the stitching, I used a rotary pattern marking wheel from my wife's haberdashery tool collection.



Once the previous work had become a bit firmer, the arms and head began to appear.

Although I usually have a pretty good idea of how most of my sculptures will look, the exact technical details tend to evolve intuitively as work progresses. As long as the groundwork is robust and well-formed, access to areas needing further work can be maintained.

I do a great deal of surgery (lengthening, shortening, tucking & pleating) to most pieces. Sometimes cutting off heads or limbs in order to accommodate some new thought concerning a gesture, the general pose, or just to ensure the item will still fit into the kiln.

I use Earthstone ES60 Smooth Textured Crank clay for almost everything these days. I find it very forgiving of repeated editing. As long as all joints are carefully made and well compressed, I rarely get any mishaps (in that respect).

In this case, I cut off Sir Dave's cranium in order to provide a "plug-in" structure for easy insertion and removal of the raucous bird of paradise. I knew the composite structure would certainly not fit in the kiln as one piece, so whatever happens, some post-firing work is required.



Now, with his cranium restored to the right place, a nice haircut was provided, along with a pair of useful forearms and a particularly animated pair of hands.



As soon as the whole piece became somewhat firmer, I applied some basic

colour slips to selected areas. This helped to provide some delineation between hair, shirt and flesh in order to judge if I



had finished sculpting or not.

The colour slips are made from dried porcelain scraps, ground in a food blender with 15-20% Contem underglaze powders. As long as it is applied to green ware, not too thickly, it is pretty well compatible with my chosen stoneware clay.



After a successful bisque firing, I started making a few experiments with mounting the bird onto the now robust base sculpture. It became clear that having effectively two separate sculptures to be packed, shipped, handled and assembled at potentially more than one gallery, might become a bit troublesome.

I decided (for better or worse) to commit the final assembly to be permanently fixed and shipped in a single, dedicated crate.

At this stage then, some welding was called for – but more on that later!

All images: JJ Vincent



Please see the concluding part of this article in the Autumn edition, where Sir David is adorned with the raucous Greater Bird of Paradise and how a yellow builder's bucket and some old plastic milk bottles were recycled to provide some elegant plumage.

JJ Vincent

www.facebook.com/JJVincentUK

A VERY BRIEF NOTE ON PREPARING NATURAL CLAYS

We are very lucky in East Anglia as there are many deposits of beautiful natural clays here.

Dry the natural clay, break up the bigger lumps and put into a container with enough water to not quite cover the clay. It should soak down quite quickly into a slurry. Pour off the surplus water and allow to dry a little. The clay can then be piled up on a board and, when dry enough, wedged and kneaded. If the clay contains stones add more water, make it into a slip and pour the slip into a second container through a household sieve, leaving the stones behind in the first container.

A fascinating experiment often resulting in really interesting ceramics.

Have Fun.

Beryl Hines

DENISE BROWN

My first foray into ceramics was in 2001 when my youngest son was around a year old and I had resigned from my banking career after almost twenty years. Unsure of what I wanted to embark upon next, I enrolled on a weekly class at City College, Peterborough (then Brook Street College). Under the guidance of tutor Eddie Butterworth, over two years I explored a range of techniques (and a term or two of throwing... but it wasn't for me!). A small group of us were keen to learn on a more formal basis and to take a qualification (that small group are all still making, and some are Anglian Potter members). Thankfully, our supportive and enthusiastic tutor was happy to take on all the additional admin required and so for the next four or five years we worked our way through the NCFE (Northern Council for Further Education) Levels 1 to 4, covering Creative Craft, Ceramics and Art & Design modules. The structure of the course helped me to better understand techniques and materials and refine, evaluate, and document the development of my ideas. A brief for one of the modules was to produce final work inspired by recent trips to Southwold, Suffolk. I started incising cottages and lighthouses on the vessels and as my ideas developed, I incorporated elements from other coastal locations, particularly South Devon and Cornwall where we were spending family holidays at the time. The designs became increasingly detailed and my drawings skills more refined.

My coastal vessels are slab built using Valentines V9A clay which has a smooth sandy buff colour after firing. I cut the shapes using paper cut templates and then form the clay over newspaper-covered drainpipes. I join the pieces using slip (to which I add boiling water as this makes for better joins). The tools I use are simple, and most frequently a (sharp) potter's knife and a pin tool. I draw all my designs freehand, using the knife for the straight lines and the pin tool for detail and curved lines. I don't often sketch or pre-plan the layout, but work intuitively, creating a unique scene on each piece. The potter's knife blade creates fine sharp lines when new, but they don't last long before the very end of the blade becomes blunt and worn, and my oldest knife has evolved to become a great tool for pressing into clay for the windows on the small buildings

and boats in the background. I use two or three different pin tools, each with varying degrees of sharpness. The more rounded tip gives a much softer (slightly wider line) with fewer clay shavings produced. The key to incising and avoiding burrs is timing and waiting for the right leather-hard state of the clay. It needs to be very firm. In my studio this can range from overnight in winter months, to just half a day in the height of summer.

After I have incised the design, I cover with clingfilm and leave to dry fully. Once bone dry, I use a watery wash of copper carbonate and brush lightly over the incised lines. After several hours I take off the excess copper carbonate, using a kitchen scouring sponge and wearing a mask. I rub vigorously as a tiny amount of the fine green powder in the recessed lines is sufficient to create a visible brown line after bisque firing. Whilst working on the various features of my early coastal illustrations I spent a lot of time experimenting with a range of commercial underglaze colours to find the right tones and matt finish from the one glaze firing. The search was incredibly time consuming. I settled on a selection of underglazes, mainly from Contem (exclusive to CTM Pottery Supplies) and Duncan Covercoat. I underglaze after bisque firing and then fire to 1228°C. The final stage of my making process is the gilding using 22ct gold leaf. Glue called "size" is applied with a small brush, and then the gold leaf pressed on by hand after several hours, rubbing with a forefinger. A clean-up of edges is always needed, using a cocktail stick dipped into white spirit and then it's finished with a coat of shellac to protect the delicate gold leaf.

In 2011 I took the plunge and exhibited my coastal ceramics at the British Craft Trade Fair (BCTF) in Harrogate. In the vast hall of the Yorkshire Event Centre my work was displayed alongside other exhibitors and interested galleries could approach me (rather than the other way round) which felt far less daunting. It turned out to be a good decision for me, and I came away with a large order book. On the final day as I was about to pack away, a couple who owned a gallery in Germany bought all the sample pieces on my stand, so I came home feeling much more confident. From then I gradually increased my gallery representation across the UK, and in the ten years since have exhibited work at approaching thirty galleries.

At the end of 2019, my youngest son left home for university life, and although I found myself with more time on my hands, I felt uncertainty about where I wanted my career path to go. The pandemic and resulting lockdowns in 2020 and 2021 emphasised the feeling. The lockdowns afforded me more time to experiment with new ideas, and to investigate new clays too. I got more involved with pit firing, digging a new deep pit at the edge of the field on the farm and exploring this exciting method of firing. Not only did this give me more time outdoors but it was a complete change from my highly detailed illustrative coastal pieces to a much less controlled and unpredictable result. I also walked the droves around the family farm, taking photographs of the isolated farm buildings, the crops in the fields and the rusty sheds. Picking up discarded broken and rusty farm machinery parts from the paths and rummaging through the scrap heap in the farmyard, I made texturing tools from my finds. I collected dried grasses and stubble from the fields and made brushes. These found items and constructed tools are without doubt the most pleasing to use, and I played around with mark making on slabs of clay. Running the Cambridgeshire Clay Store for Anglian Potters, it was easy to try out a few new clays, and settling on B17C grogged (an off-white slightly textured stoneware body) I started making new work inspired by the open farmland views of the Fens.

I am currently at the stage with this work where I am now happy to see if there is gallery interest. I have posted images on social media to a positive response from followers so far. However, there's no urgency... for now I am just enjoying creating the new work and re-discovering my local Fenland landscape after being driven creatively by coastal locations for so long!

Denise Brown





All Photographs: Denise Brown

Denise Brown: A new departure

UNDERCROFT, NORWICH, 2022

It never ceases to amaze me how the stark and cavernous space that is the Undercroft can be so quickly and successfully converted into a bright and attractive exhibition gallery.

However, as Richard Cranwell points out, it isn't merely the input of three days' setting-up that makes an exhibition. It all starts at least twelve months previously with Ian Vance securing the venue; Richard making bookings for the removal men to collect and deliver the display "furniture" and sundry equipment; Claire Knight designing posters and flyers; Ruth Fairhead creating social media posts promoting the event, and Celia Greenaway managing all the financial administration for taking sales. Finally, in "a process similar to herding cats" – (Richard's quote), the rota of volunteers to set up and take down, and to invigilate is devised, cancelled and re-organised. All this and more, to make for a smooth-running exhibition over two weeks.

51 exhibitors took part this year, submitting a wide range of work encompassing wall hung pieces, sculptural works, smoke- and saggar-fired pieces, raku, stoneware, earthenware and high-fired porcelain. Although the number of exhibitors was down on previous years, there was no compromise in the quality and range of the pieces submitted. As is usual, ask fifty-one potters to fulfil a brief and you will get an equivalent number of different interpretations and renderings of an object, all contributing to the incredible diversity and imaginative skill that comprises an exhibition.

Aproximately 20 of a total of 37 volunteers fronted up early on the morning of the 6th April and while waiting for the delivery trucks to arrive spent a happy few hours unpacking, checking in each other's pots and catching up on news after an absence of two years. Kate Cranwell's suggestion of taping out named individual "stock" areas worked a treat and kept the 'stock room' in good order. Under Richard's directorship, carrying the equipment between the vans and the space was quickly and easily accomplished. We then spent the remainder of the day erecting the backdrop boards (much to the distress of those who dislike climbing ladders on uneven floors) and with the usual mismatching of

thick and thin boards, topped with the difficulty of deciphering how and where the connector fittings sit. Nikki Darrell and team constructed Trevor 'JJ' Vincent's display cabinet, (which for a variety of reasons is never straight forward – this year saw a difficulty in locating the shelving brackets). Mary Wyatt and Paddy Dean with their group of volunteers painted plinths and display boxes and then progressed to painting the backdrop boards, which, after two years' storage, appeared considerably tired and stained. The central free-standing units were constructed and electrics sorted and placed ready for fitting once the paint had dried. Thursday saw a further 24 volunteers checking in more pots, erecting lighting units and moving plinths and boxes into place. Cloths were hung appropriately with the usual battle between thumb tacks, hammers and reluctant boards. After lunch most volunteers retired to allow Liz Chipchase and Tracey Parsons to curate the exhibition, starting with wall hangings and large sculptural pieces. This continued on Friday, with placement of a selection of each exhibitor's pots in their allotted areas. Allowing three days to set up and curate made the process a lot more relaxed and even allowed us to sort and tidy the many boxes of display stuff that have accumulated over the years. Thank you, Philip Wilks for sorting through the connector fittings for the backdrop boards.

Some of the newer participants were impressed by the amount of work involved in setting up but were not at all daunted by the task and were happy to get stuck in. As Rosemary Coles described, volunteering is a 'fun' opportunity to put faces to names and to meet other potters who passed on their knowledge and experience so generously.

A feature of this year's exhibition was the display of teapots made in response to a Keith Brymer Jones challenge, curated by Nikki Darrell. This drew a lot of interest despite items not being for sale.

Like many small businesses recovering from the COVID 19 pandemic, overall trade took a hit of around 30%. So it is impressive that after two weeks over 1,530 visitors were recorded. On average 100 people attended per day during the week, and 150-170 on Saturdays. 227 pots were sold with a total value

of £8,498 (an average of £37.50 per item), and an average of £530 per day. A rewarding result considering that a Private View was not held (this usually generates a large proportion of sales) and that there were fewer than usual potters exhibiting. Although sales were down, exhibitors, like Diana NG, were grateful for the opportunities for exposure the exhibition provided: 'The silver lining is that I met a potential client to do a commission...'

It was a good feeling to be back at the Undercroft after two years' absence.

Thank you all for your hard work.

Andrea Morton

All Photographs: Nicki Darrell

The letter below is from first time exhibitor, Zena Tooze.

Hi Andrea,

It was my first time exhibiting with many other potters, which was a quite different experience to craft fairs! I didn't sell much but learned a lot.

And, to echo Rosy, met loads of nice people happy to chat and share ideas whilst putting up and taking down the displays, which I thought looked very impressive! Amazing, really, how the space was transformed with white boxes, backdrops and lighting. And seeing how things were curated was also a learning experience.

I would like to have invigilated to learn more about the selling side of things – there were enough experienced people that I wasn't down on the list. It would have been interesting to hear the public's perception of what they were seeing.

Good luck with your article.

Zena Tooze



Zena Tooze



Viv Burns



Liz Smith



Liz Deeks



Fiona Fitzgerald



Richard Cranwell



Sheila Madder



Christine Finney



Celia Greenaway



Pam Schomberg



Ian Vance



Paddy Deans



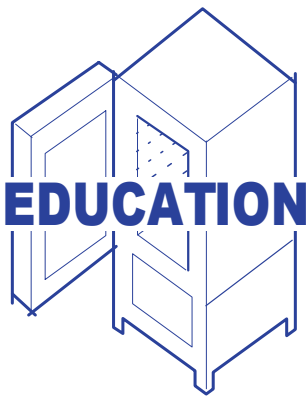
Rebecca Upson



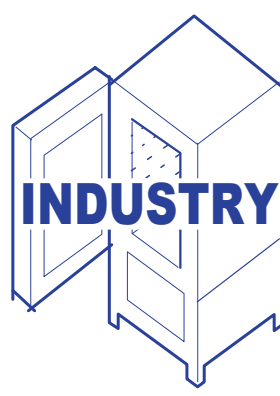
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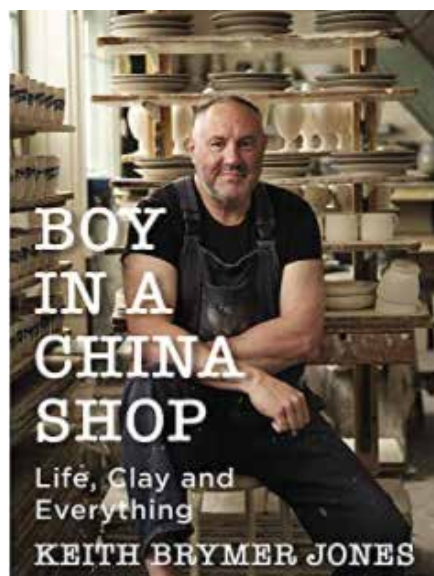
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BOOK REVIEW



Boy in a China Shop

Keith Brymer Jones
Hodder and Stoughton
ISBN Hardback 9781529385229
RRP £13.99 Blackwells

Within the space of one week I came across three references to Isaac Button: first whilst reading the transcript of a local newspaper interview with Mirfield potter, John Hudson (see page 12), second by Shaun Greenhalgh in his book, *The Confessions of a Bolton Forger* and third, at the outset of Keith Brymer Jones' book, *A Boy in a China Shop*.

Robert Fournier had produced his much-celebrated film about Isaac Button in 1965, the year in which Keith was born. At the time, the Milk Marketing Board carried a slogan: 'Drink-a-pinta-milk a-day-a'. Students in my group instantly dismissed Bernard Leach and adopted Isaac as their hero and echoed the MMB slogan with one of their own: 'Throwa tona clay a day-a.' All three authors hold Mr Button in their very highest esteem.

If you were expecting a speciality ceramics book explaining the secrets of Chinese glazes or pathways through difficult throwing techniques or where to buy your favourite equipment, this is not the book you need to read. If, on the other hand, you want an inspirational push to spark your dedication and industry, then read on. This book is clearly a spin-off from the popular 'The Great Pottery Throwdown' television series and not a ceramics text book. In reality it is an autobiography.

Before the first pages proper, Keith's dedication of the book is to his son Ned: "If you take the time to read, you may

learn a little bit more about me, and in turn about yourself". I certainly made a great many connections with Keith's story and, indeed, learned a great deal about myself.

Keith's forte for becoming emotional when viewing the work of contestants is something with which I can certainly equate and is just one of the 'somethings' I learned about myself: there have been times when I have been just as emotional but mainly about work my pupils had produced.

Inevitably, because of the nature of the book, the author takes us through his childhood growing up amongst a Welsh family removed to North London, his aspirations to become a ballroom dancer and his resolve to work in a pottery against the advice of the school's careers officer who would have had Keith become a policeman. There is an insight into the former Harefield Pottery and Keith's involvement in the punk music scene of the 1980s with 'The Wigs'. There is an account of the setting up of 'Highgate Pottery'; Keith's work as a parcels courier; selling pots to major London outlets and the unexpected turn of events which took Keith to China. The opportunity to work with Love Productions leading to the success of 'The Great Pottery Throwdown' is, of course, given good coverage as might be expected but there is sense of nostalgia for the ceramic industry of Stoke-on-Trent and a hint that the author has his sights set on some sort of revival. After reading of his singular vision, dedication to tasks and his workaholic tendencies, it would not be a surprise to find 'Make International' making an appearance in 'The Potteries', an aspiration shared, I am sure, by thousands of people who mourn the decline of the pottery industry, and the impending loss of a large part of the museum service.

Peter Warren



Keith with Marge at Mundford

ANNUAL SELECTION MEETING

When Anglian Potters was first founded, galleries offering exhibition space wanted to be assured of the standard of work submitted. A selected membership category was set up to guarantee quality, and give us access to a wider range of exhibition space.

All our selected members are skilled ceramic practitioners, though not necessarily professional, producing work that reflects their personal approach to working with clay.

Selected membership provides Anglian Potters with a broad knowledge base from those willing to give advice on many skilled-based techniques. Many give their contact details in the Newsletter (see page 31).

Our Annual selection meeting will take place in September, at Mundford (covid restrictions permitting!).

If you would like to consider putting yourself forward for selected membership, please contact either Christine or Sheila to find out more and obtain an application form.

Applicants for selected membership must have shown their work in at least two of Anglian Potters' open exhibitions to be eligible and will have been a member for more than a year.

You will need to present six pieces to the panel that represent your best work and make a good visual grouping.

In advance of the meeting you will need to send us your CV and/or your artist statement and six clear images of your work photographed against a plain background.

If you would like some feedback on your work first before applying, we can arrange to do this either at one of our demonstration days at Mundford, or via Zoom.

The deadline for applying is 31st August 2022.

Contacts:
Christine Pike -
christine@christinepike.com
Sheila Madder -
sheila_madder@hotmail.co.uk
Christine Pike and Sheila Madder

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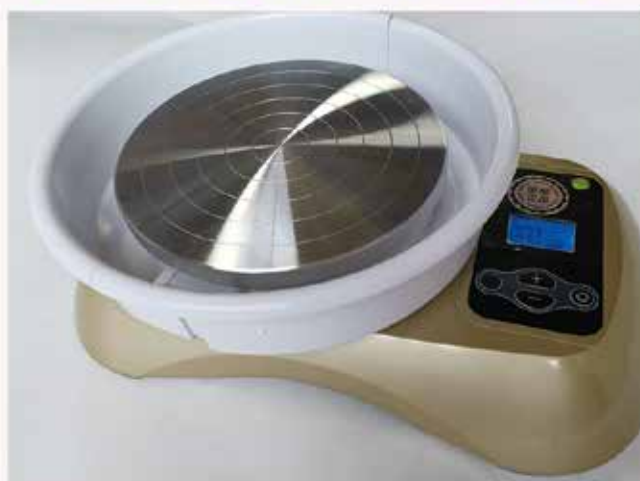
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CERAMIC HELPLINE

Selected Members to contact:

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

Sonia Lewis: high-fired ware, porcelain 01353 688316

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

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

Madelaine Hanman Murphy: Throwing with porcelain, commercial glazes. 07545 375246

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

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If members are taking part in events wholly organised by Anglian Potters, they are covered by our insurers.

Members taking part in any event not organised by Anglian Potters will need to arrange their own Public Liability Insurance.

Editor

ART IN CLAY

Friday, 19 Saturday 20
 Sunday 21 August
 Royal Windsor Racecourse
 Maidenhead Road
 Windsor
 Berkshire
 SL4 5JJ

STOKE FARM TEST FIRINGS

At the start of the two days I knew that I would need to ask a lot of questions, since I'm not experienced in either glazing or firing reduction kilns.

Everyone was excited about firing the kilns for the first time in their new home. We were all able to glaze seven pots plus some extras in case there was space. I had some porcelain and Earthstone Original pots which had been thrown at Margaret Gardiner's pottery classes and were only bisque fired.

The Friday was spent glazing. It took me most of the day, but everyone was very friendly and bore my questions graciously. Then the kilns were packed, and I had two pots in the gas kiln and another six in the wood firing.

I confess I retired to a B&B at the end of Friday rather than face sleeping in my car! By the time I arrived on Saturday the early risers had the kilns well and truly started.

There were plenty of expert members to oversee the firings, so I just kept track of the progress, and asked yet more questions. I was aware that there were problems with the wood kiln when it started belching copious quantities of black smoke. More than one team of soot-stained stokers worked very hard to rectify problems on the go and try again to get the temperature up.

There was lots of time during the firings on Saturday to carry on with other jobs around the site, and several of us started to create foundations for Roger's kiln and its splendid metal framework.

A week later we arrived back on site to unpack the kilns. Despite its problems, I was delighted with a 20cm Earthstone vase from the wood kiln. I had partially dipped it with orange shino and the rest was bare clay. There was also a lovely 16cm porcelain bottle from the gas firing in green and red shino – a bit of serendipity because the green glaze was not deep enough in the bucket to dip the entire pot!

I learnt that bare porcelain in a wood kiln comes out white (and boring), unlike the Earthstone Original with its iron content. I need to understand why the ordinary shino inside some of the pots crawled. I also learnt that sieving glazes is important.

Paul Ostro

As an enthusiastic newcomer, I had no experience of using either wood or gas kilns.

Friday started with the final preparation of the kilns and the glazes. It seemed to me that there was a lot to accomplish before we would be ready to load the kilns. I began to wonder if a morning was going to be enough?

In preparation I had made a few pots using various clay bodies, I also brought along a couple of larger pieces that I had available and I was very keen to see how they turned out in a reduction firing.

Careful loading of the kilns took quite a while, eventually leaving Dominic still loading pots into the wood kiln when we went for dinner at the local pub at seven pm.

When we returned, the wood kiln was finally lit. Ruth and Steve stayed with the kiln stoking and monitoring while the rest of us went to get some much-earned sleep. I woke at five am and went to help with the stoking. Others appeared soon afterwards relieving Ruth and Steve who had been on duty all through the night.

Stoking of the wood kiln carried on all day with different teams taking turns to monitor the rising temperature and adding fuel when necessary. John, who had also risen very early, fired up the gas kiln and stayed with it monitoring and controlling all day.

Saturday continued in a whirl of activity: monitoring, selecting and fetching wood from the woodpile, stoking, sealing cracks, moving insulation, building wind breaks, etc. As a novice it was interesting to see how the kiln firings were managed. The temperature was recorded at regular times and the data entered into log books and transposed onto large graphs. The various stoking teams all had slightly different approaches to managing this process. The temperature rose slowly until eventually the top achievable temperature was reached and the various indication cones had bent over. The wood-fired kiln was finally shut down and sealed up in the late afternoon.

The following Friday, both kilns were carefully unloaded, recording the position each piece came from in order to learn as much as possible for future firings.

It was hard to keep eager hands from picking up and then effectively moving the the pots from the order in which they

had been placed on the tables as they came out of the kilns.

I thought all the pieces were stunning, each was pretty spectacular in its own way. The unexpected and seemingly random outcome of each piece told a story of how the kilns and glazes had performed this time, providing valuable information for the next firings.

It was good to meet those of you who, up until this event, I had only seen on the fortnightly Zoom Meetings.

My thanks to the members of the Anglian Potters camp working party for including me in their team and allowing me to take part in this event.

Kevin Nicholas



Photograph: John Masterton



Photograph: John Masterton



Paul Digging kiln foundations



Wadding production



Gas kiln firing



Checking the cones



Wood kiln firing



Green man, Helen Humphreys



Sieving glaze



Raising the new chimney, 1



Raising the new chimney, 2



Gas kiln opening

All Photographs: Nicki Darrell



Paul Ostro's pots

RHS HYDE HALL

29, 30 May, 1 June 2022

Comments from two Anglian Potters

I really enjoy the Hyde Hall event. It is the third time that I have taken part and I learn so much from the other potters who are so helpful and supportive.

The friendly atmosphere, superb venue and the opportunity to spend time with other potters make the event really worthwhile, even before selling my work.

Visitors to the exhibition are very complimentary about the work displayed by all the potters. They also increase your awareness of what is likely to sell well amongst people who seem to really appreciate hand made work.

Thank you to Anglian Potters for organising this lovely event. It has been a great pleasure to have been able to take part.

Lucy Fowler

JAE Ceramics as a creative business is only six months young and the RHS Hyde Hall Show is the second Anglian Potters' event in which I have participated.

On this occasion, I chose this show to launch a new range of vessels in Vulcan black clay, which I have called "Earthyware", owing to the rich colour of the clay and the dramatic application of red glaze.

A light and airy structure at Hyde Hall set in landscaped gardens overlooking the peaceful Essex countryside made for a great location to showcase to the RHS community and general public the fruits of our hard work in our respective pottery studios. One of the most enjoyable aspects of participating in this show was the opportunity to meet other ceramic artists, discuss and admire the work on display, and to share tips and experiences from the collective hive mind. I think we all agree that pottery can be a solitary activity. As a rule, I certainly welcome and respect constructive feedback from people who are knowledgeable and passionate about ceramics. I am especially grateful to the various members who are more established in the show circuit for their pointers as to how to attract more visitors to my stand, demonstrating that the AP spirit of supporting fellow potters is indeed alive and well.

Judith Annakie-Eriksen



Photograph: Nicki Darrell

Judith Annakie-Eriksen



Photograph: Ian Vance

Lucy Fowler



Jacquelyn Cade-Bonyer



Photograph: Nicki Darrell

Paddy Deans



Richard Cramwell



Photograph: Nicki Darrell

Anglian Potters at Hyde Hall



Photograph: Ian Vance

Ian Vance



Photograph: Ian Vance

Moira Goodall



Photograph: Nicki Darrell

Lucy Fowler



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Vivienne Burns



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Claire Porter

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Ferini Gallery, Pakefield
3, 4 and 5 June

Rebecca Appleby

Mundford
23 October

Wendy Lawrence

Mundford
27 November

Richard Batterham

V@A Museum
until 26 September

Steve Booton

Mundford
26 February 2023

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AUTUMN 2022

NEWSLETTER

1 AUGUST 2022

FOR PUBLICATION BY

1 SEPTEMBER 2022



Meet the Makers event at CPA in January: the launch of Stephen Murfitt's book: Contemporary Raku.

Left to right: Stephen Murfitt, Tim Andrews, Bridget Johnson, Moyra Stewart, David Roberts, Kate Schuricht, Shaun Hall and Denise Brown