

Potter's Camp 2024 – Information Sheet

Dates: five days from Wednesday 31st July to Sunday 4th August 2014

Location: Stoke Farm Orchards, Straight Road, Battisford Tye, Stowmarket, IP14 2NA

There are quite a lot of you coming to camp for the first time, so we hope this will give you some ideas about what to expect, what to bring etc. This is a fairly long note, to give you as much upfront information as possible. There will be more information published as we get towards camp. so keep a look out.

Thank you to everyone who has offered to help at camp. Several first timers have asked about how to volunteer. There will be a chance to sign up for various activities when you arrive. Camp only works when everyone pitches in, so there will be chances to help, not only with the pottery related activities, kiln firing etc., but also with all other aspects of the week: Food prep, housekeeping, washing up etc. There will be time to sit and socialise as well!

Please read all of this carefully, particularly the health and safety information. This information is to help you have a great time at camp, and to stay healthy and safe while you are with us.

We regret that day visitors will again not be allowed at Camp, as there is a limited amount of space on site.

Accommodation

Camping in tents will be between the rows of trees in the apple orchard. The rows have about 2m of grass between them, with extra width for guy ropes, so there is space for tents two metres either wide or long. If your tent is significantly bigger than this, and you haven't already told us on your booking form, please tell us **now**.

A limited number of caravans and campervans can be accommodated. There will be no electric or water hook-up available: the power supply to the kiln site is limited and will be required for the communal facilities.

If necessary, a small number of larger tents can also be placed on the field. However, you are strongly encouraged to bring a smaller rather than a larger tent for reasons of space. If you arrive with a tent which is too large for the orchard, and we haven't agreed it with you in advance, then finding space to pitch it will be difficult.

We will always try and accommodate Campers with known bee and wasp allergies in the best place, but please note that wasp nests may be present even on the field.

Last year some people found Airbnb accommodation locally. There are reasonably priced hotels in Needham Market and Stowmarket if you want a bit more comfort.

Car Parking

If you are car or caravan sharing, please let us know so that we have an idea of how many cars need to be accommodated on site. Note that cars will have to be parked away from both tents and caravans or campervans.

Food

There will be tea and coffee making facilities in the static caravan and a communal supply of milk plus tap water.

We are planning to provide a simple communal meal each evening for all, as we did last year. We are intending to have one team for each night to cook a meal, and we will need volunteers to help with preparation and cleaning up. If you have any experience cooking for up to 80 people and would like to help, please will you contact us as soon as possible. Experience isn't needed just to help out!

The fridges in the static caravan will be needed to store food for the evening meals – there will be no space available for Campers' items.

You will need to provide your own breakfast and lunch each day. There are no facilities to heat food, but hot water will be available. We suggest you bring sealable plastic containers or cold boxes to keep by your tent and enough labelled cold packs to rotate them regularly. There are a lot of ants about! There will be ample freezer space for ice packs to keep your food fresh.

There are supermarkets 20 mins away in Stowmarket and last year people got together and did supermarket runs as required.

Toilets and Showers

We have 4 showers and toilets on site plus a posh hired portable toilet block nearby in the farmyard. There will also be a new earth toilet in a secluded spot, behind the Quince trees.

Finding the Camp

The camp is held at Stoke Farm Orchards, in the village of Battisford Tye, near Stowmarket. Post code IP14 2NA. The approach to the farm is down a lane, almost opposite Battisford Free church, off Straight Road. There will be signs at the entrance. The roads are fairly narrow country lanes, so if you are towing a caravan, please plan your route! A plan of the access to our site is posted on the AP Website, <https://www.anglianpotters.org.uk/potters-camp-2024/>.

When You Arrive

On arrival, there will be someone to meet and welcome you. You will be asked to book in and you will be shown where you can sign up for the various firings and activities taking place. If this is your first Potters Camp you will be offered a familiarisation tour of the site once you have sorted out your accommodation. After booking in, find a place to pitch your tent, or where directed for caravans, unload your car and then park as directed.

There will be a get-together to brief everyone at **1pm** in the main marquee. Please arrive early enough to attend this, so you can find out what's happening, meet key people and the other campers. If you haven't pitched your tent by then, please leave it and join in!

What to Wear

Hopefully it will be sunny but it can be cold at night, and it may rain during the camp. Please bring stout shoes / boots. If you want to help stoking one of the kilns then you will also need long sleeves and trousers. Please check the labels for "keep away from fire" warnings! Be careful of long hair too for similar reasons. For glazing please bring your usual apron, overalls, etc. If you are going to sleep under canvas it is advisable to bring blankets as well as a sleeping bag. You will be warmer if you place a blanket between you and your airbed, as the air in the airbed can get very cold at night and the blanket helps to insulate you from it.

What Pots to Bring

If you want to participate in the firings you will need to bring a selection of **bisque-fired** pieces to camp with you. We suggest around **20-30** small to medium pieces. Leave plenty of time before camp to make what you need!

Think about which firings you are making work for and tailor your choice of clays and treatment (e.g. burnishing) accordingly.

Make sure you use stoneware or porcelain clays only. If in doubt, Earthstone Original (ES5), B17C, Special Fleck and Royale porcelain (available from our clay dumps) all work well in all our kilns.

Smaller, upright pieces with a stable base stand much more chance of getting into a group pack **Please... no large, wide or exceptionally tall pieces**. Platters, plates, wide bowls and awkward shapes will get left out of the kilns.

Please double check that you do not bring earthenware clays (red or white earthenware) or low fire porcelain or bone china or home-dug natural clays (these are likely to have a low firing temperature). They slump badly in the kiln, damaging other pots and the kiln. No black stoneware either, please, as it can have a detrimental effect on pots nearby in the kiln.

You also need to consider how you will glaze your work, including wadding bases and lids for the wood and soda kilns. If you want to glaze very close to the bottom of your pots you should provide a bisque-fired 'biscuit' or 'glaze catcher' slightly larger than the diameter of the base to protect your work and the kiln shelves. Work should be marked with your initials or Potters Mark to avoid confusion and it is also a good idea to number your pieces so you can keep track of which glaze combinations you use on which piece. Basic glazing tools will be available but it's a good idea to bring your own apron, gloves, brushes, sponges, towel and glazing tongs. Bring a notebook, so you can keep a record of what you have done.

Glazing

Camp glazes will be applied during defined periods for two reasons: (1) in order to minimize the confusion in the marquee, and (2) to ensure interior glazes are properly dry before further slips or glazes are applied. See the timetable (on the last page) for an approximate schedule. Please don't arrive late and then be disappointed if you miss out on a firing because you missed the glaze session.

Firings

Soda (approx 1280°C)

Stoneware or porcelain only please. These clay bodies all work well: B17C, special fleck, ES5, Royale – all available from the AP clay stores. Also the specialist vapour firing bodies eg Peter Meanley. Please avoid very dark or black clays. Smaller pots stand more chance of getting in the firing as they are easier to pack. There will be room for a few tall pieces at the top.

You will need to apply a liner glaze to the insides of your pots where the soda doesn't reach. Traditionally this is a shino glaze. You can make and apply this at home if you want or on Wednesday afternoon (1st day of camp).

Camp Shino recipe: 33% FFF, 33% nepheline syenite, 33% AT Ball Clay (the iron in AT ball clay gives the shino its orange colours)

Alternatively tenmoku, celadon or wood ash glazes can be used to good effect on the insides of your pots.

The outside of salt/soda pieces can be decorated in a number of possible ways which will be explained again during the camp but are worth familiarizing yourself with in advance. Slips can be applied by dipping or pouring as with normal glazes. They can also be sprayed using the spray gun provided. Decoration can then be painted or sponged on top.

We will need people to help mix up and spray in soda when the kiln gets up to temperature.

Gas Reduction (approx 1280°C - Cone 10)

Reduction stoneware will take place in two small and one large gas kilns. We plan to pack the kilns on Thursday. For the last two years, we have managed to fire the smaller kilns twice, by packing on Thursday afternoon, and firing in the evening. Any good stoneware or porcelain body will be suitable although whiter bodies may give brighter colours.

Glazes particularly good in reduction will be supplied although any reduction stoneware glaze maturing at 1280°C may be used. If you wish to use your own glazes please bring bisque-fired biscuits for your pot to rest on in the kiln. If you wish to make up glazes to match those used at the camp, please look on the camp page on the website for a list.

We have a number of people who are experienced in firing these kilns who will be supervising the firing process and are prepared to teach other people how to fire a gas reduction kiln. So we will be looking for people keen to learn and be involved with this firing. You will be able to sign up to help fire these kilns when you arrive at camp. However, you must be prepared to commit a considerable amount of time on the day of firing if you really want to be involved.

Smoke firings (approx 800°C)

Smoke firings will be undertaken using oil drums and sawdust giving greys and blacks. Various materials will be added to the drums in order to develop colour, these include copper carbonate (pinks and reds), salt and vegetable matter. Work should be burnished

and bisque fired. Wax can be added after the smoke firing to add extra sheen but unless the pot is burnished well to begin with, the results tend to be rather dull. Choose a clay with both fine particles for burnishing and grog for thermal shock resistance. Earthstone Smooth Texture works well as do mixtures of grogged white clays and porcelain. Rounded forms generally produce the best effects and there is scope for firing large pieces. A reduced bisque temperature may help to preserve the burnished surface.

Wood Kiln Firing

There will be a range of shinos, glazes, washes, wood and soda ash available. There will also be opportunities to help wad pots and do a shift stoking the kiln.

'Experimental' wood kiln firing

We built a small wood kiln at Camp last year, and plan to try another firing. This is much smaller than the main wood kiln, of a size for back gardens, and is a good opportunity to learn about the firing process. Glazes are the same as the main wood kiln. There is not a lot of packing space in this kiln.

Raku

Raku firing will be different this year. The compact nature of the site has meant that Raku firing has been difficult and disruptive at the last two camps, so we are trying a different approach. Instead of all day, every day firings, there will be a Raku masterclass on one day, and we have planned further demonstrations on the Saturday.

Paper Kiln

Once again, Richard Innes is planning to lead the construction of a paper kiln, to be fired on Saturday evening. Bring rubber gloves if you want to help!

Workshops

We hope to organise more workshops and demonstrations than last year. We are also on the lookout for any Campers who have a particular technique they could showcase for others. Please contact us if you would like to offer. A timetable will be published before camp, and you can sign up after the briefing meeting.

Entertainment

We will be making our own entertainment. If you play, bring an instrument! Out of consideration for our neighbours, music will need to be acoustic only. Saturday night starts with a feast, and we are planning another attempt at building a paper kiln during camp, culminating in a focus around a firing on Saturday evening. Hope the weather is better than last year!

Enquiries

If you want to ask questions, please email camp@anglianpotters.org.uk, which is seen by the whole Camp Steering Group.

Other Activities

Some of these activities already appear on the camp time table on the last page but others will take place as and when the schedule allows. You will be alerted via the notice board just inside the main marquee.

Hand building

Also for our hand builders we will set up an area where they can sit and construct. This has proved to be a popular area in previous years, often in the evening after we have all eaten. Each year someone comes up with a new and interesting project for everyone to try. What will it be this year?

Tools and Technical Support

Every year tools and technical support are needed when firing the kilns and taking part in other activities. Stephen Cheek or John Masterton can be contacted if you need help in finding or fixing something, you need a tool or a bit of kit.

Clay

For many potters the time at the camp is a great opportunity to collect some clay from the store at Stoke Farm. Please arrange with Rebecca or Dom before you come to camp.

Health & Safety

As in previous years Dr Ruth Bowman will be coming to camp to act as our onsite medic. She will have a comprehensive first aid kit with her but it will also be sensible for you to bring a small first aid kit which should include a few plasters, antiseptic cream, such as Savlon, and something for insect bites, such as anthisan cream, so we don't have to bother her for minor problems. Dr Ruth will be at camp for emergencies, so please inform her in confidence of any problems you might have. If you need any regular medication, please remember to bring enough with you.

The Camp site is adjacent to an orchard which will attract bees and wasps, especially in August. Most of the tents will be pitched in the orchard itself. If you are allergic to bee and wasp stings, please think carefully about whether or not you should attend. If you decide to come, please bring suitable medication, epi pens etc. The Camp site is on a field, and so is uneven. There are steps up to both the static caravan and toilets/showers. Please talk to us if this is likely to be a problem for you.

There is building work going on adjacent to the site, so the access route has been altered, as well as the site for caravans, campervans and large tents. A plan showing the route through the farm has been posted on the AP website. **The building site must be avoided!**

We want everyone to have a safe and enjoyable time at camp. Please take responsibility for your own safety and that of others around you. If you are trying anything for the first time or feel unsure about it, then please ask for help and advice from the people leading that activity. All activities are undertaken at your own risk.

Rubbish

Everyone will be provided with a bin liners. There will be large council bins for rubbish and glass. If you want to recycle anything, please take it home with you, as the council don't provide us with recycling bins.

Camp Timetable

This is an outline, and will be refined when demonstrations are confirmed, before and during camp!

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Wednesday	Arrival and pitch tents Familiarisation for new campers	1pm - briefing meeting Inside shino glazing for soda and wood Introduction to gas reduction and wood firing glazing Throwing and hand-building	Eat together Hand building Throwing
Thursday	Soda exterior slips and glazes Wood and gas reduction glazing Raku demonstration and firing Throwing and hand-building all day	Pack soda kiln Pack gas kilns Demonstrations Wood kiln packing	Pack soda kiln Gas reduction first firing Eat together Throwing games
Friday	Fire soda kiln Fire wood kiln Repack small gas kilns Fire large gas kiln Fire experimental wood kiln Throwing and handbuilding all day	Fire soda kiln Fire gas reduction kilns Raku firing sessions Pizza prep Paper kiln building	Pizzas
Saturday	Barrel firing Paper kiln building Throwing and hand-building all day	Demonstration by Frank Paper kiln firing Feast preparation	Feast Paper kiln firing
Sunday	Take down marquees Clean up site Left-over lunch	Open kilns Take down tents Departure by 4.00 pm	