

ANGLIAN POTTERS NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2024



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Chairman's Letter



We had a good day at Mundford on 19th May, when we held our Annual General Meeting, and had an excellent demonstration of her work by Viv Burns, our Membership Secretary. If you weren't able to make it, I urge you to take a look at her Instagram account, where there

is a superb time-lapse video of her making and decorating a large piece of work. See also page 32.

As we have just held the AGM, and discussed a number of changes, this letter is rather longer than usual!

The AGM heard reports from the various officers which have been collected in an Annual Report, sent to everyone with this Newsletter. Three of our committee members have relinquished their roles this year. Ian Vance stood down as Exhibitions Organiser, Trudy Staines as Events Organiser, and Sheila Madder as Selected Members Secretary. Trudy has organised our day events for the last

nine years, and Ian has been looking after Exhibitions for even longer, ever since Victor 'volunteered' him at an AGM. Sheila has been looking after the Selected Members for the last three years, with, unfortunately, very little feedback and commitment from the selected membership.

In recognition of their long dedication to Anglian Potters, the meeting agreed to offer Ian and Trudy Honorary Membership. We also offered the same to Richard Cranwell, who, although not a committee member, has done, and continues to do, so much for AP, co-ordinating the clay stores, helping with the organisation of exhibitions, and negotiating and managing our recent discount relationship with Potclays. Richard took on the clay stores within weeks of joining!

I would like to thank all the retiring committee, and all those who are continuing with their roles, for the hard work and the gift of their time. The same goes for everyone who helps out. Anglian Potters is entirely run by volunteer effort and wouldn't be so successful without the members who get involved.

We have new volunteers who were elected at the AGM. Andrea Morton has joined the committee to look after exhibitions, Rose Brettingham will look after day events, and Jason Root has joined to look after the website and IT. Jason has been supporting this for the last year and has agreed to let me off the hook at last! They will each be supported by the retiring officers to help with the handover. Please treat them gently (at least to start with)! Ian is going to return to the committee to look after publicity, so we aren't losing his expertise.

We haven't found a replacement officer to represent Selected Members, and as at previous AGMs, there was considerable debate about the relevance and usefulness of this category of membership. We were fortunate to have Alan Foxley with us, as he was involved in the original setting up of East Anglian Potters Association (EAPA) and the selection process, shortly after the foundation in 1983. Alan also looked after this on the committee for some time. The original intent of Selected Members was to put on shows once or twice a year for Selected Members only and to demonstrate a certain level of quality of work to galleries and the like, in the days before there were any ceramics shows like Art in Clay and Potfest, to give confidence to gallery owners that the largely professional members of EAPA should be taken seriously. This rationale worked for a long time, and there was a register of information about each Selected Member which was taken to galleries to promote their work. However, what was true 40 years ago has lost relevance in today's marketplace, where galleries seek out their own makers and there are now lots of opportunities to show and sell at fairs; most of the information about makers has moved online and shows exclusively for Selected Members have become less and less frequent. So the question is, do we still need Selected Membership? All of our Selected Members are skilled practitioners,

though not necessarily professional. Becoming a Selected Member allows a member to demonstrate a level of competence – however, you have only to visit one of our open exhibitions to see that high-quality work is produced by everyone. Selected Membership has provided Anglian Potters with a broad knowledge base, and those willing to give advice on many skill-based areas give their contact details in the Newsletter, but you don't need to be a Selected Member to offer help.

The general feeling at the meeting was that identifying members through some 'selection' process isn't necessary any more. This was supported by a number of Selected Members who were present. There was a proposal to abolish Selected Membership straight away, which was withdrawn, but we did conclude that we would not seek any new Selected Members, and use the time until the next AGM to explore alternative ways of identifying members who are willing and able to provide the support expected from Selected Members to AP as a whole. This is underlined by the fact that, despite repeated requests, no one from the current Selected Membership has been willing to take over the role that Sheila has worked hard at for the last three years, which suggests there is little interest in continuing.

I hope this doesn't sound like internal strife! We had a very sensible debate about it (as in previous years), and I think the time has come to make a change. Perhaps interested members can suggest alternative ways for us to recognise good makers, and those who contribute to the rest of the membership by sharing their expertise and knowledge? Please let me know your thoughts.

One of the other things we discussed was the falling attendance at our demonstration day events following the resumption of activities after Covid, and also the reduced numbers applying to exhibit in our Open Exhibitions. The exhibitions have been very successful this year, despite having fewer exhibitors. Some of the newer members at the AGM did comment that they weren't sure how to get involved, or whether their work was good enough. We always say, 'just get involved', but that is, perhaps, too easy. If there are any recently joined members who have been involved with the shows this year and feel up to helping others understand how welcoming and easy it is to get involved, please let us know. It would help Andrea in her new role as organiser!

The other significant resolution was a proposal from our Treasurer to increase subscriptions for 2025/6. The last time there was an increase was for 2015/16, so 10 years ago. Inflation has had a significant effect on our costs since then, and we reported a small deficit this year as a result. The proposal was to increase Single Membership to £35, and Joint and Corporate Membership to £60. There would be similar percentage increases in the half-year fees. The meeting voted in favour. Subscriptions for 2024/5, which are due now, remain at £30 and £50, so there is no immediate change.

Cover Photograph

Dishes made by Beaver Scouts with clay donated by Potclays. See page 26.

Photograph: Liz Deeks

AP has 578 members as of mid-May, and about 20% get involved in demo days or exhibitions at any one time. Are we providing what you want as members? Just because we have always done things in a particular way doesn't mean we need to keep doing it. What would get you more involved? Please do contact me, or any of the committee members, to let us have your feedback and ideas.

~John Masterton

Editor's Notes



'Trust me, I'm a potter,' might not be something we hear every day, but if you ever have a pottery-related query, who do ask? Another potter, of course. That's one of the loveliest things about our community: other potters' willingness to share their knowledge – their

generosity in passing on what they have learned, often through bitter experience, and, indeed, nuggets of know-how from other potters before them, stretching our hive-mind back for generations. What a wonderful tradition to be part of. This magazine is all about sharing our knowledge and experiences with each other. In this issue, for instance, you will find Andy Wright, in part two of his series on paper clay, going into some wonderful detail about how he creates his fantastical sculptures. There are articles about how to exhibit in our shows, building a salt kiln and selling online. There is even a permanent fixture in the Newsletter, the Ceramic Helpline on page 43 listing the contact details of some of our most experienced members who are happy to be contacted for advice about their various specialisms.

Along these lines I thought it might be fun and useful to introduce a new feature: 'Ask a Potter' – much like in 'Last Words' in *New Scientist*, if any of you are familiar with that publication. Do write in with your burning pottery-related questions, which I will then publish and ask for responses from the readership. Any member can write in with their answer, and in a future issue, I will publish the best, funniest or most unusual responses for our edification and entertainment.

Louise Bowett has had a good idea for a feature where members send in a photo of their favourite pot, saying why they love it, perhaps including how they acquired it, details about the making or maker, if known, or something quirky, like, 'If the pot were a person, what sort of person would it be?' So do send me your personal favourites. Similarly, it would be fun to have photos or descriptions of your most useful tool or a pottery tip. I am also hoping to publish your lockdown insights next issue, so do keep all those submissions coming in.

Happy potting!

~Julia Bruce

Forthcoming Demos

We are so often busy over the summer with holidays, shows, open studios and the like, it's nice once autumn comes around to have the opportunity to sit back and admire the skills of fellow potters, learn new techniques and catch up with other members at our Mundford demonstrations. This autumn we have two fantastic events lined up, so do put the dates in your diaries.

Sunday 6th October 2024

Anthony Dix

Tony Dix makes wheel-thrown and altered soda-fired pots.

Sunday 3rd November 2024

Paul Smith

Paul Smith makes bold, semi-abstract figurative sculptures.

Demonstrations take place at:

Mundford Village Hall, Norfolk, IP26 5D. Mundford is at the junction of the A134 and A1065, north of Thetford.

Events start at 10am with a welcome coffee and usually wind up around 4pm. Volunteers from 9am to help set out the chairs, etc. and tidy up afterwards are always welcome.

Remember we have a pot luck lunch and there is always cake. Do also bring an example of your current work for the display table for us all to admire.

You will receive an email when bookings are open, usually about five weeks prior to the event.

If you have any questions, please contact events organiser Rose Brettingham via email: rose.brettingham.ceramics@gmail.com

The Editor also welcomes volunteers to write up demonstrations for the Newsletter, so if you fancy doing this, please contact Julia at anglianpotters@gmail.com.



Lidded jar – Tony Dix

Photo: Tony Dix

Public Liability Insurance

Just a reminder that 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. This can be cheaply and easily arranged through the Craft Potters Association, which offers Public and Product Liability Insurance (PPLI) for active CPA members for £25/annum. This covers members exhibiting at events or holding in-studio workshops up to £5,000,000. Associate Membership of the CPA, which includes four issues of *Ceramic Review* a year, costs £30/annum. For details of membership, *Ceramic Review* and insurance, see: ceramicreview.com.

Memories of Lucie Rie



Coffee pot, milk jug and coffee cups – Lucie Rie and Hans Coper c. 1960. Stoneware with manganese glaze and sgraffito decoration

Photo: Sebastian Blackie

Recently I joined the Wysing Arts Centre ceramic workshop group, who are members of Anglian Potters. As a result, I read with interest Liz Chipchase's piece on Lucie Rie in the AP summer newsletter. As the numbers of people who actually knew Lucie are dwindling, I thought members might be interested in a few anecdotes of our friendship.

I first met Lucie in 1970 when as a student at Farnham we visited Lucie's studio and flat in Bayswater. Lucie noticed me looking intently at a Hans Coper pot in her living room and asked me what I thought. I was flattered that such a famous artist seemed genuinely interested in the views of a scruffy youth. She told me years later that she wrote down my reply and sent it to Hans. Later that term she visited Farnham and gave me a tutorial. I do not remember any specific things I learnt from this, or subsequent encounters, but found her sustained interest in me and my work immensely encouraging. She behaved as if we were on the same creative journey. On my penultimate visit, just before Lucie's long career as a potter was terminated by a stroke, I told Lucie I felt as if I was only just beginning to understand clay she replied: 'I feel exactly the same.'

In the catalogue of Lucie's Kettle's Yard exhibition Edmond de Waal refers to Lucie's 'daunting rudeness'. I found her precise, concise and subtle (like her pots), but never rude. I once told her about my excitement at rock climbing for the first time. She told me her Alpine instructor had said she was a talented climber and asked me if I was roped. When I said 'of course' she replied: 'then you were not really climbing.' Her response to my divorce was similarly uncompromising: 'You did not love her enough.'

My last visit was with Danish ceramic designer and colleague at Farnham, Anita Hoy. It felt as if Lucie's stroke had stolen what has been described as her 'acerbic sweetness'. Anita, in an effort to revive Lucie's memory, asked if she remembered Nigel Wood, who had recently analysed some of her glazes for a Craft Council exhibition. When Lucie shook her head, Anita persisted by telling her that Nigel was so talented as a student that he knew more about glazes than the Farnham staff. In a flash of her former self, Lucie replied, 'that would not be difficult.' By that time, I hope I had rectified the issue. I had been made head of the ceramic course at Farnham, with the help of a reference from Lucie, and was employing Nigel to teach ceramic theory.

I recently contacted Nigel, who had contributed to the Kettle's Yard catalogue, to ask him about Lucie's copper red glaze. He believes this was created by the large amounts of gum arabic Lucie included in her glazes producing localised reduction in an electric kiln. He marvelled that Lucie survived so long, given the fumes from the kiln and gas burner used to dry her pots through the raw glazing process, in addition to her dry mixing toxic, carcinogenic and radioactive materials.

One of the pleasures of working at Wysing is meeting other artists whose interests in ceramics are so varied. Another recent member is a chemist who has researched using a similar strategy of 'internal reduction' to produce reduced stoneware glazes, such as celadons and chuns, in electric kilns. Lucie once told me that she had glaze tests in every firing. We never stop learning.

~Sebastian Blackie

Anglian Potters at the Undercroft, Norwich

Our spring show at the Undercroft was very well attended, and we had over 45 potters displaying their work. Here are just a few examples.

Photo: Nicki Darrell



Pat Todd (Left). Laura Harvey (Right)



Andrea Morton



June Gentle (Back). Sarah Cannell (Front)



Claire Pirie



Ian George



Zena Toozie



Diana Ng



Charlotte Collier-Hunter



Richard Innes



Mary Wyatt



Jennie Durrant



Nicki Darrell



Louise Gridley



Maere Lowings



Jo Arnold



Dawn Isaac

Anglian Potters at RHS Hyde Hall

Photo: Ian Vance



Ian Vance

Once again our intrepid band of potters climbed the hill at the famous Royal Horticultural Society show garden at Hyde Hall near Chelmsford in Essex and prepared to show their wares to the visiting crowds . . . and crowds there were over the Bank Holiday Weekend at the beginning of May.

We have held an exhibition at this garden for about twenty years at this time of year. It was originally held in a marquee hidden in the bushes behind the old thatched restaurant, but then the RHS built a new, architecturally distinguished restaurant and exhibition hall close to the main attractions of the site – the dry garden, the pond, and the herbaceous borders. Anglian Potters were the first to use the newly built hall, which is in a splendid location with a lot of light and a big, airy, atmosphere. It IS, however, at the top of the hill, and so we have to manage taking our vehicles up through the garden and back down to the car park before opening time and then having to walk back up again. It seems to have become steeper over the years!

Peter Morris

Twenty-two of our members exhibited, with two pairs sharing a space for two days each over the four days, so there were twenty sets of work on show at any one time. As usual, this looked very good with visitors commenting on the wide variety and high quality of the work.

On the opening Friday it poured with rain all day, but despite this there were still 1,100 visitors recorded at the entrance who eventually made their way to us looking like proper gardeners in their wet-weather gear. Saturday and Sunday were very fine, and walking in the garden before opening time when it was quiet was a true pleasure. Also, of course, a lot more visitors showed up – about 3,500 on each day. That is a lot of footfall, and the exhibition hall was crowded for much of the time. The Bank Holiday Monday was, in accordance with tradition, wet again, but cleared up in time for us to take down the show.



Peter Deans

Sales were good over the four days, exceeding in total the takings from our major exhibition at The Undercroft Gallery in Norwich where we had forty-five exhibitors and were there for two weeks. However, looking at the footfall it turns out that more people were present at Hyde Hall in the shorter time.

Many thanks are due to the members who put on a good show and provided a very sociable weekend. We are also grateful to the RHS and their staff for the opportunity, and for the effort they put in to make it all work. We have been invited back for next year, so put it in your diaries either to exhibit or to visit.

~Ian Vance

Photos: Carolyn Postgate



Photos: Carolyn Postgate



Karen Marshall



Richard Cramwell



Phyl Lenry



Above: Laura Harvey



Above: Jenny Owen



Louise Gridley



Below: Ian Pipe



Wayne Clark – Demonstration Day

Photos: Trudy Staines



Wayne Clark kindly travelled from North Wales to visit us on 3rd March 2024. Wayne teaches full time at Wrexham College of Art and this was the first demo he has undertaken to groups such as ours.

First of all, Wayne talked us through his background. He left school with a GCSE in art and undertook an arts foundation course at Wrexham College of Art. Wayne always thought he would focus on fine art; however, during his foundation course he started to work with clay. He then did a degree at Harrow, part of the University of Westminster, which has the largest kiln site in Europe.

Wayne's big break came during his degree show. Paul Rice, who collects 20th century ceramics, saw his work, and after the show Wayne found a message from Paul that another student had tucked away asking him to get in touch. This led to Wayne exhibiting at the Rice Gallery alongside several notable potters. When Paul asked him how much he wanted for a piece of work, Wayne said £10. 'What?' Paul exclaimed. The piece ended up selling for £95! A large plate went to a private collector in New York, and in all Wayne sold six works.

At about this time Wayne applied for a job at Wrexham College. He was successful and has been there for the last 29 years. In 2016, along with his wife, he started Ceramic Wales. Originally sited in the old hospital buildings of Wrexham College, it is now established at beautiful Bodrhyddan Hall in Denbighshire. Last year there were 180 applicants for 88 spaces.

Wayne talked about the clay he uses. He likes Valentine's crank body, but he was also taught to make his own clay and sometimes he adds other components, such as beach sand, which will pull colour from the clay. He also uses Earthstone ES50 as well as Valentine's pizza oven clay, which is good for hand building, and Valentine's crank white for tankards.

Wood firing is something Wayne has always been drawn to, and he finally managed to build a wood kiln in 2008. Getting a wood kiln to temperature is a hard slog and a firing takes two to four days. He built his latest wood kiln in lockdown and gets his students to help him fire it. It has a 20-hour firing, getting up to 1320°C and using about two tonnes of wood in the process.

In part two, Wayne showed us some of his approaches to throwing and construction. He likes to keep his work looking fresh and does not want to overwork it while at the wheel. To demonstrate, he threw a storage jar (left) and showed us his method for picking it off the wheel. This causes some distortion, but Wayne explained how this was one way to give the work character.



Picking up a pot off the wheel

Other techniques he uses include leaving chunks at the bottom of his pieces which are designed to catch the glaze, and the application of slip, which he makes himself. The vitreous slip (see recipe at the end) is applied thickly with his hands, in a manner he equates to icing a cake. He might sometimes then use a brush to smooth over sharp marks and edges.



Wayne talked about taking risks as you work and not overthinking things. He keeps his tools simple, just a wire and a piece of metal with a sponge. Another tool he favours is a blowtorch to dry pieces as he works on them.

Applying slip

Wayne has developed a lot of saws for creating texture made by stretching wires and springs onto old saws to cut through the clay. Wayne also uses a clay extruder called the clay bully which he uses mainly for handles.



Texture saws

The next demonstration was throwing a plate. Wayne centred the clay dry using his hand to move the clay into the middle. He punches the clay out from the middle or uses a sculptor's mallet to bash it downwards and outwards. He keeps the bat dry so that he can peel the plate off.

For the rim he moves his hand slowly, modelling it as he works round, and then taking off moisture with a blowtorch before leaving it on the bat to dry. He then places a bat on top and stands on it to flatten it before peeling the plate off the original bat and putting slip on it.



Creating a plate



Wayne recently collaborated with Wendy Lawrence and worked at RIBA to build a wall of a tessellated structures. Each had a mould and they developed it individually. The installation was shown at Tate Modern. At Potfest they were given a tonne of clay to build big pots. This is where Wayne came up with the idea of making clay seats. Solid tools and coffee tables are a recent development in his repertoire. Wayne demonstrated the construction of a seat using some pre-prepared components. The seat is made upside down and then flipped. In this instance he used a cargo net to create the seat texture, which was then joined to the larger components. Wayne manipulated a variety of shapes, evolving the piece as it was constructed with no fixed idea of form.

~Fiona Edwards



Creating a seat



Wayne's glaze and slip 'in situ'!

Wayne's Glaze and Slip Recipes

Vitreous Slip

Nepheline syenite 500
Ball clay 300
China clay 200

Orange Shino Glaze

Nepheline syenite 60
Ball clay 40
China clay 200

White Shino Glaze

Nepheline syenite 75
Ball clay 15
China clay 10





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Clay in Clare



Two Anglian Potters members, Sue Eyre and Diana Kazemi, have organised a ceramics show in Clare, Suffolk, where they both live.

Eleven potters will be taking part in the show from 12th–15th September in the Old Goods Shed, Clare Country Park. In recent years, lottery funding was obtained to transform the Old Goods Shed into a wonderful exhibition space which is now the venue for a number of different art events. Although Clare is the smallest town in Suffolk, it is increasingly becoming an artistic hub.

Should this show be successful, Sue and Diana hope that 'Clay in Clare' will become an annual event. Please do spread the word about it.

Any AP members who might be interested in participating in future years should contact Sue or Diana (contact@sueeyreceramics.co.uk or dianakazemi@hotmail.com).

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Exhibiting Your Work With Anglian Potters

Photo: Nicki Darrell



Anglian Potters Spring Exhibition, Undercroft, Norwich, 2024

Anglian Potters holds two major open exhibitions per year, in spring at the Undercroft, Norwich, and in November for Christmas at All Saints' Church, Cambridge. These are opportunities for ALL members to show their work and offer it for sale to the public. Exhibitors are not selected, which means that everybody who applies will be accepted, on a first come, first served basis. Work will only be refused if it is considered unsafe (e.g. sharp glaze spikes) or impossible to display (e.g. it will fall over easily). For these exhibitions, we use the display 'furniture' held by the organisation, which is brought out of storage and delivered by professional movers on the first day of setting up.

Anglian Potters manages marketing and publicity for these exhibitions. This includes magazine articles, radio interviews, posters around town, social media posts and, most importantly, our external mailing list of around 1,500 interested people. The posters and information are also sent to exhibitors for dissemination via their own contacts, as well as to the AP membership at large. For the first time since the pandemic, the recent exhibition at the Undercroft in Norwich held a 'Private View'. This was an opportunity for friends, family and keen collectors to come along the evening before the exhibition opened and was a huge success with sales of over £2,200. The 2023 Christmas Exhibition was our most profitable to date, with sales of over £18,000 over the three-week running of the show.

Anglian Potters' Spring Exhibition

Undercroft Gallery, Norwich, NR2 1ND.

Proposed dates – 27th March – 13th April 2025.

Setting up – 24, 25 & 26th March

Taking down – 13th April

Cost – £20.00 plus 33.3% of your sales

Number of exhibitors – approx 60

Contact – Andrea Morton, andrea@usefulpots.co.uk

Anglian Potters' Christmas Exhibition

All Saints' Church, Jesus Lane, Cambridge, CB5 8BP.

16th November – 8th December 2024.

Setting up – 13, 14 & 15th November

Taking down – 9th December

Cost – £20.00 plus 33.3% of your sales

Number of Exhibitors – approx 60

Contact – Andrea Morton, andrea@usefulpots.co.uk

How do the Spring and Christmas exhibitions work?

About 8–10 weeks before each event, all members are sent an email inviting them to participate. Please check your spam folders if you don't remember seeing these emails. The invitation to participate (ITP) will include an entry form and instructions to pay the entry fee. Anglian Potters also charges 33.3% commission on all sales – an amount set to ensure that exhibitions roughly break even.

Those who express an interest will receive a signing-in sheet for listing their pots and prices, which they must complete in advance and bring with their pots. Items can be anything from jewellery to tableware to abstract art. Exhibitors are invited to submit UP TO 25 pieces of work, each labelled with their AP membership number, the pot number and price. The ITP also contains a section where an exhibitor can indicate their availability to assist in setting up, taking down and invigilating. Once the list of exhibitors is determined a further form will be emailed to establish specific dates of availability. There is an expectation that all exhibitors help with setup, takedown and invigilation, which consists of at least two days over the course of the exhibition.

Pricing is notoriously difficult! Ultimately, it is up to each potter to decide how much they are happy to sell their work for. Some price low, some higher. There is no right or wrong, no magic formula, and no direct correlation between price and number of sales. Some people even suggest pricing higher to make work more likely to sell. If you would like advice on this, please contact the exhibition team.

Selecting your pots (with curation in mind)

Some people make work specifically for the exhibition, others will be selecting from what they've already made, and some will just about have enough pieces to send in. Any of these approaches is fine – we want to welcome those who are new to clay as well as more experienced members. If you do have pots to choose from, or are making work for the exhibition, it is worth bearing in mind how curation works. The curators' aim is to display everyone's work to the best advantage while at the same time making the overall effect of the exhibition as attractive as possible. The display stands are made up of booths, shelf/table space and freestanding plinths.



Tables, shelves, booths and plinths

Liz Chipchase and Tracey Parsons, who have been curating for the last few years, have found that booths work particularly well for one or two potters' work, where those potters have a 'body of work', that is similar and comes in a range of sizes. When a piece of work sells, it



Photo: Nicki Darrell

Two different potters' work displayed within a booth

leaves a space that ideally requires a replacement pot in the same style, so they also look out for potters who have additional 'stock' ready to replace sold pots.

Large or dramatic pieces are likely to be displayed individually on plinths. We often lack pieces that are big enough to work on a plinth, so consider bringing one or two striking, stand-alone pots.



Photos: Ian Vance

Large pots on plinths adding drama at Hyde Hall

Each exhibitor should have at least five pieces of work on display at the beginning of an exhibition and we aim to show as much work as possible without overcrowding.

If your work is more varied and in multiple styles, it is less likely to make a coherent display and therefore less likely to work well in a booth. In this instance it will be arranged on a shelf/table space. Depending on the number of exhibitors, the space available in those areas can be limited, which can mean that those with a varied set of pots may find fewer of their pots on display, at least at the beginning of the exhibition. As pots sell and are replaced by others, the display naturally becomes less 'designed' and there is the opportunity for more pots to come out onto display.

Overall, bear in mind that you are likely to see more of your work on display if it sits together in a theme, has a range of sizes, and you have spares in the same theme. However, if you have 25 identical pieces, only three to five of them are likely to be shown at any one time. Finally, Tracey and Liz stress that this is their curation approach – we will be bringing in new curators over time and approaches may vary!

Pots must be delivered to the venue as early as possible during the first two days of setting up (Tracey and Liz would say ideally on the first day, so the curators know what they are working with). Curation has to begin with wall-mounted pieces before any other work can be arranged on the stands. If wall pieces are an important part of your display, we recommend you deliver them on the first day or early on the second day of setting up. It may not be possible to hang wall pieces that arrive later until other pieces have been sold freeing up appropriate space.

You are welcome to arrange for someone else to bring in your pots. If you don't know many local potters, please contact the team well in advance as we may be able to find someone willing to help. On arrival, you will be asked



Curating wall-hanging pieces

to unpack your pots and have them checked in by another person who will complete and sign your signing-in sheet. A 'stockroom' is created in which each exhibitor has their own space. You can leave your boxes and packaging for the duration of the exhibition but make sure they are clearly marked with your name.

As soon as the stands have been delivered, the setup team of volunteers assembles them, touching up with paint where necessary, and adds the lighting, and as soon as the stands are ready, the curators start to arrange the display. This is a great job, but generally time-pressured and quite stressful. Everyone would do this in a different way, so additional opinions can be counterproductive at this point. A balance is needed between enough people to carry pots where they need to go, but not too many suggestions about how to arrange them! As curation progresses, fewer and fewer helpers are needed so you may find you don't need to stay to the end of the day. During the exhibition banners and signs go outside to advertise the show to passers-by. Three invigilators are on duty every day to manage the checkout and wrapping process, restock the displays, and discreetly deter potential thieves by being a presence throughout the exhibition space. Those new to the process will always be working alongside a more experienced member, so no need to worry about not knowing what to do. The venues can be cold, and invigilating is not as active as setup/takedown, so dress accordingly!

Those on the rota to help with take down will work as part of a team to take pots still on display back to the stock area, disassembling the stands, and packing and tidying up. Potters must collect their remaining pots or arrange for someone else to do so before take down has been completed and have them marked them off on their sending in sheets.

Shortly after the exhibition, potters will be paid for their sales directly into their bank accounts.

Other exhibitions

There are also several smaller exhibitions held throughout the year where Anglian Potters are invited to participate:

Ferini Art Gallery, Pakefield, Lowestoft, NR33 0JL

4th Oct – 3rd Nov 2024 and April/May 2025.

Cost: £20 up front publicity and printing contribution plus 33.3% commission on sales.

Approx 25 exhibitors supply 17 items; all work is displayed.

Exhibitors are requested to supply catalogue-ready photos of some show items and an artist's statement 3–4 weeks ahead of the show, as the gallery prints a catalogue.

Work is to be delivered on set-up morning, the Tuesday before show opening, and unsold items are to be collected at the end of the show. No invigilation required.

Contact: Ruth Gillett – ruthgillett@outlook.com – in the first instance, to discuss if your work is suitable.

RHS Hyde Hall, Rettenden, Essex, CM3 8ET.

2nd – 5th May 2025

Cost – 24% of your sales

Number of exhibitors – 20.

Tables (6 foot) and chairs are provided, but exhibitors are required to bring everything else – tablecloth, packaging, small plinths, etc., and 'man' their table each day for the duration of the event.

Contact: Andrea Morton – andrea@usefulpots.co.uk

Walberswick Village Hall, IP18 6UP.

Last weekend in July each year (27 & 28th July 2024)

No pitch fee or sales commission, BUT, participants are asked to provide 5–6 pots for a tombola which covers the cost of hiring the hall.

Number of exhibitors – 14 tables inside, 14 gazebos outside (these need to be provided by the exhibitor).

Contact: Andrew Eastaugh – aeastaugh@icloud.com

We are investigating the possibility of holding events at:

Saltgate Arts Centre, Beccles, August Bank Holiday

weekend 2024; **Ickworth Hall**, October mid-term

weekend 2024; **The Minories**, Colchester, February 2025.

If you are aware of a possible venue please contact Andrea Morton: andrea@usefulpots.co.uk

Any new members who might be considering exhibiting would do well to come along to the setting up days or the exhibition itself, to meet people and take part in the process. You would be very welcome and it's a great way to get to know other members and talk about your work. If you are not confident about work being suitable to display at a selling exhibition, please contact any of the exhibitions team and/or send photographs which can be directed to a person or place to help and advise.

Do you have experience or an interest in assisting with the organisation or curation of the exhibitions? Please contact Andrea Morton: andrea@usefulpots.co.uk

Old Chapel Studio Gallery, Ramsey Heights



On a beautiful Saturday morning in April I headed over to a newly opened exhibition space to see its inaugural exhibition. Long-time Anglian Potter Stephen Murfitt and his wife Terry Beard, a 2D artist who works in paint, collage and print, were showing their work in their recently completed Old Chapel Studio Gallery, which is attached to their home in Ramsey Heights in the north-west of Cambridgeshire. I'd visited their house when they exhibited their work as part of Cambridge Open Studios, but this was the first time that I had experienced their new gallery.



Stephen Murfitt and Terry Beard

I was unable to attend the private view the previous evening but I had the advantage of being able to see the work in the daylight without people standing in front of it! Excellent work it was too: An ample display of Stephen's monumental and impressive raku pieces, complemented by Terry's semi-abstract wall pieces, looked so 'right' in the space. Stephen and Terry were the perfect hosts, providing refreshments and a friendly welcome whilst allowing me the opportunity to explore the work in a relaxed way. I spent a very enjoyable hour admiring the pots and pictures.

The spacious and airy gallery space



The couple have done a wonderful job of creating the gallery in a purpose-built extension on the side of their shared studio space. The location is very peaceful; the gallery is situated down a quiet country lane, where red kites often circle overhead. As indicated by its name, the site was originally a chapel and the names of its sponsors are carved into the bricks of its exterior. They are now an interior feature of the gallery. The exhibition space consists of a good sized room with a fresh and uncluttered exhibition area and a doorway leading into the artists' main work area, containing further exhibits as well as work in progress. Pots are displayed on plain white plinths of differing heights, emphasising the attributes of the various forms.

Stephen has a separate firing and glazing room, as well as an outdoor area for raku firing, though this would not normally be open to gallery visitors for safety reasons.

It will be exciting to see how the Old Chapel Studio Gallery develops. For Stephen and Terry, it's the perfect showcase for their work. However, they are open-minded about how it will develop and they may decide to host selected artists' work there. It's early days and very much a case of 'watch this space'.



By the time this report is published the first exhibition will have ended. See www.stephenmurfitt-ceramics.com for gallery updates. Visitors to the Old Chapel Studio Gallery are welcome, by appointment: tel. 01487 711478 or email murfittstephen@gmail.com

~Jeremy Peake

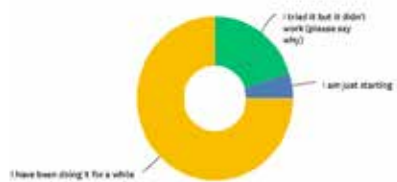
Online Shop Survey

I had twenty responses to my online selling survey and I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who responded. I could only ask a limited number of questions using the free survey tool but I hope you will find the results interesting. The numbers against each response are the number people who gave that answer. Where they were able to choose multiple options the numbers will add up to more than the twenty that completed the survey.

Q1 How long have you been selling online?

Been doing it for a while*	15
Tried it but it didn't work	4
Just started	1

* As long as 10 years in one case



Q2 What proportion of your sales are online?

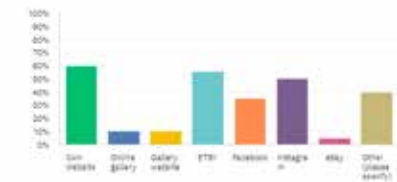
None	4
A few	9
Some	2
About half	2
Most	1
All	2



Q3 What platforms have you tried?

Own website	12
Online gallery	2
Gallery website	2
Etsy	11
Facebook	7
Instagram	10
eBay	1
Other*	8

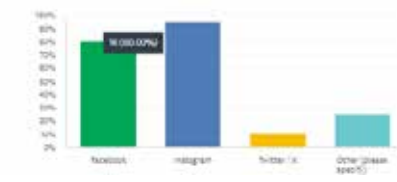
* Folksy, Big Cartel, JewelStreet, Numonday, craft sites, email



Q4 How do you promote your shop?

Instagram	19
Facebook	16
Twitter/X	2
Other*	5

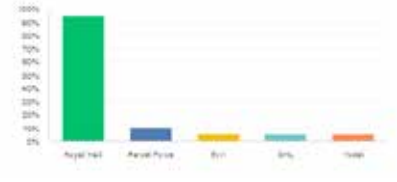
* Craft events, business cards, Pinterest, when selling



Q5 Which are your preferred couriers?

Royal Mail	18
ParcelForce	2
Evri	1
DHL	1
Yodel	1
Other*	1

*Parcel Monkey or Parcel2Go to find cheapest

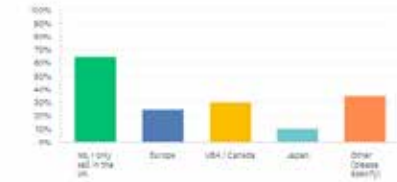


Q6 Do you sell overseas?

UK only	13
Europe	5
USA/Canada	6
Japan	2
Other*	2

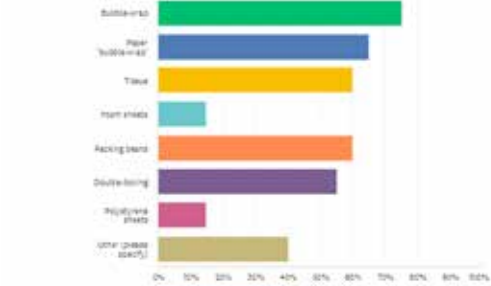
* Australia, Singapore

Two people said they were selling in Europe until Brexit made it difficult or impossible.



Q7 What packing materials do you use?

Bubble wrap	15
Paper 'bubble wrap'	13
Tissue	12
Foam sheets	3
Packing beans	12
Double-boxing	11
Polystyrene sheets	3
Corrugated card	1
Honeycomb paper	1
Recycled materials from goods received	3



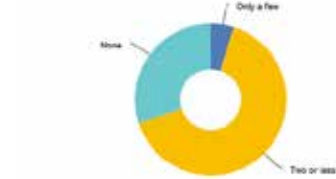
Q8 Have you had any breakages?

Only a few	1
Two or less	13
None	6

‘One to Australia and a couple in the UK early on in my packaging career.’

‘Both times to the same destination, heavy handed postman!’

‘As far as I know no mail service or courier company offers or includes insurance for ceramics or glass, so breakages have to be written off and customers reimbursed.’



Q9 What is the average price range of your sales?

Less than £20	2
£20 to £39	7
£40 to £59	6
£60 to £79	2
£80 to £99	1
£100+	2

Conclusions

Although it hasn't worked for everyone there are a significant number of you who find online selling worthwhile.

Despite some early mistakes experienced by some respondents, good packaging has ensured very few breakages. Respondents are mainly selling work in the £20–£60 range but seem confident to post much higher value items too. Most stick to the UK but by no means all, despite Brexit, which has made European sales more challenging. Royal Mail is the favoured courier. For most, online sales are in addition to other outlets. Those who sell largely or entirely online do so via their own websites (4) or Etsy (1) with sales largely in the £20–£39 range.

Galleries expect prices to be consistent across all outlets which means their commission is available to you if you are selling through both galleries and online. Postage and packing costs can sometimes be charged for in addition. Whilst UK customers may expect to pay £5–£10 for postage, overseas customers seem willing to pay considerably more. Largely, then, the saved commission pays for your time. It takes a fair effort to take several good pictures of each item, record dimensions and weights, upload that data with a description and then package and dispatch items promptly. You have to be ready to ship work at short notice so some potters find it better to limit sales to specific periods when they are less busy or when sales are more likely. For some it can fit with a natural cycle of make, glaze, fire, sell. Social media is an important tool in generating interest and getting noticed, alongside doing shows and exhibitions. Driving traffic to your shop is a job in itself and can be part of the making and selling cycle: building anticipation, releasing work to the shop with a bit of fanfare and then shipping it all. This can help with managing the stock, which must be kept separate from work going to shows.

Before, I worried about distance-selling rules, breakages and people buying pots like they buy clothes: expecting to buy more than they keep. Under UK law (www.gov.uk/online-and-distance-selling-for-businesses) customers have 14 days to return an item without giving a reason, up to 12 months if you don't inform of this right. However, the survey and conversations I've had suggest that if you describe the work well and pack it carefully these are not major problems. In fact, one person described sending a pot to America, the customer saying it hadn't arrived and so having to send another free of charge. Annoying, but the customer was happy and became a regular.

Selling online clearly isn't an easy option – those who gave up cited the admin and publicity hassles as reasons – but it works for some and I am hoping it might work for me. I think I would start with items that are lower priced (under £40) and fairly robust and grow from there. I won't be trying sites such as Etsy or Folksy because you still have to work hard to get noticed, but have less control over how your work appears and, importantly, over payments and returns. Two other selling options also came from my research: wholesale and restaurants. Prices are lower but overheads are potentially reduced. Perhaps someone can research these for a future newsletter!

~Ian George

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Anglian24

My Burning Desire

Photos: Liz Mellen



Liz introduces salt during the kiln's first firing

For several years now I have been joining an AP team at Shotley to learn about salt and soda firing. I started off knowing very little about the process, but the group offered so much technical support. Although not all of my work was a success, I was encouraged by the results and fascinated by the array of effects other people were getting. The unpredictability of firing with salt vapour also offered a counterpart to my other, more measured work.

Such was the draw, I decided to research and build myself a kiln for salt. I use the phrase 'build myself' loosely as, not being experienced in building things, I needed help. Probably the hardest part of the project was settling on the design. Every potter I spoke to had a different opinion, and some of them were quite strong! Potters talk about their kilns with warm pride, in the same way others talk about their pets. It wouldn't do to criticise someone's kiln design to their face but out of earshot was entirely different! Eventually I decided to adapt a kiln plan I found in a book, making it just a bit smaller and turned a deaf ear to all the speculation.



The kiln's maiden firing

The next part of the process was easier: finding a few capable builders. There are folk who love building kilns without ever feeling the need to put anything in one.

My husband and a friend, who is a gas engineer, stepped forward. A neighbour helped with welding. The build team was completed with another potter, Karl Greene, with whom I share the kiln loads and firings.

I decided to buy heavy bricks for the base and use light bricks for the sides, having been given enough light bricks for free. Because of all the business of life it took me about 18 months to complete the build. We worked in scorching sun, rain and sleet. I was a little daunted as the costs rose. Continuing to fire work at Shotley during this time helped to maintain my enthusiasm. Now completed, the kiln has an internal capacity of 0.63m³, with options for using both gas and wood.



Bowls from the second firing

As I write we have now completed two successful firings. First time around, we fired mainly with gas with some wood. In fact, we put handfuls of damp salt onto planks to get it into the kiln. Second time around we increased the amount of wood and we hope to continue to decrease the gas as we learn better how to build up the temperature using wood. I had not expected the gentle stoking as the heat builds to be so beguiling.

On the first occasion our expectations were pretty low, so we were exhilarated to get out several good pieces. On the second firing we also got out some nice pieces. However our successes and failures were not straightforward. What worked well the first time didn't necessarily work well the second time around, regardless of detailed note taking. The results were, to some extent, enigmatic. Perhaps the element of mystery is a fundamental part of firing this way. My kiln has taken on a goddess-like status; though placated with salt, she still works in her own way.

~Liz Mellen



Pots from the second firing

A New Studio in Suffolk

2023 was a hectic year, but at last I feel settled in Suffolk and have a new pottery studio in which to explore a range of new ideas for my ceramics.

This episode of my life, which was previously spent in local government, began six years ago in Somerset, where my wife and I had just waved our grown-up children off on their own adventures and we decided we should have one of our own. We sold up, paid off the mortgage and bought a house in Brittany, France, with a built-in basement for a studio. I fitted it out with a wheel and a kiln and spent four years making and selling ceramics and running beginners 'play with clay' workshops. However, Brexit and Covid combined to make living and working in France difficult. Our son needed support and travelling back and forth got ever harder, so we returned to the UK.

Family connections meant that making a new home in Suffolk seem the obvious choice. We couldn't afford to buy again but found a rental to take us and our two rescue dogs, and all that remained was to find a new studio. Fortunately, my brother suggested adapting the car port under his house in Kettleburgh, near Framlingham.



The car port

So an exciting new project began. First we had to get quotes from local and trusted builders to include a fireproof enclosure for the kiln, a sink and sink-trap, space for the wheel and plenty of shelving. I intended to reuse and recycle as many materials as I could and had brought as much as possible back from France.

The builder was quick and efficient, constructing timber walls at either end with double doors to access both front and back of the house. Worksurfaces, an insulated ceiling, a second-hand sink and shelves all went in with no problems, and old bookshelves slotted in nicely.



Double doors at each end



The kiln in its fireproof enclosure

Electrics were more of a challenge, however. The circuits had to be upgraded to include the power for the kiln, extra lighting, and plugs for the wheel and pottery tools, and it was important to make sure that nothing I did would create issues for the main electricity supply to the house. I was keen to make sure I could accurately reimburse my brother for the considerable amount of power I would be using, so I also had a mini-meter installed to record electricity consumption.



Clay trap under the sink

There was already a cold-water feed to the carport, but we were building on a small budget and to reduce costs I chose not to have hot water – a mistake I will rectify next year when funds allow. The plumber also installed a sink-trap, which I designed myself from plastic boxes. The internet is a wonderful source of information for potters! The day we brought in the kiln and wheel, and I arranged my books and tools on the shelving, felt momentous. After all the planning it seemed I was all ready to start making ceramics again, just in time for Christmas. After a brief celebration I threw my first pots in my new space.

Photos: Peter Grogan



The completed studio

Then disaster struck. There was a cold snap and a severe frost lasting several days. Working in the unheated studio, with its bare concrete floor, was difficult and I was already regretting the lack of hot water. One morning, my brother awoke to hear the sound of rushing water and going into the pottery found that the tap had burst away from the sink. Icy cold water was hitting the ceiling and the entire studio had been flooded. My porcelain creations from the day before had melted away and my books were soaked. For a while I feared the worst, as there was nothing in the budget for repairs, but fortunately there was no permanent damage, all the electrics were fine and even some of the books dried out. I installed a dehumidifier and waited patiently while everything dried out.

During the winter I have to remember to turn off the water when I leave the pottery at night.

In France I was a member of the local artisans group and part of a co-operative called 'Boutique de Createurs' in the local village. There were about 30 of us producing a range of crafts, and it meant I could learn French while working two days a month running the shop. I decided that it would be a good idea to join a similar group in Suffolk and quickly found the Anglian Potters at Potfest in Haughley Park. The standard of the work on display was exceptional and learning from other potters is always the best way to develop new skills.



The broken element

As 2024 began I was back at the wheel and optimistic that I could settle to some new work, when there was a further disaster. My kiln was now five years old and had survived a number of moves between storage facilities and the new studio. When the electrician had tested it, all was well, but when I set it up for the first firing the power cut out. An examination revealed a broken element. Cursing my luck and draining the bank account I ordered a replacement part and an

engineer to come and fit it. It was at no small expense but worth it to get the job done by a professional.

As the weather warms up, I am now throwing pots and have discovered some glazing combinations that reflect the beautiful Suffolk countryside around me, focusing on coastal landscapes of sea and sand, the marshes and the beautiful skies and sunsets.



My pots in my brother's bookshop

Working with my brother, who runs the second-hand bookshop in Framlingham, I have set up my first point of sale, displaying ceramics in the shop surrounded by bookshelves crammed with treasures.

I am looking forward to the next few years developing my skills and making and selling ceramics in the beautiful county of Suffolk.

~Peter Grogan

Kinfest

Every Christmas, Anglian Potters exhibiting at our All Saints show in Cambridge donate decorations for our Christmas tree, which are then sold for charity. In 2023, our chosen charity was Kinfest. Kinfest trustees Anna Clough, Vicki O'Leary, Robert Pitman, Mathew Bushell, Neil Stow and Janellen Redington tell us a bit more about Kinfest and how they used our donation.

I am writing to let you how very grateful we are, as the Trustees of the Kinfest Charity, for the very generous donation you have given us. We really do appreciate your support. We rely solely on the generosity and kindness of people like yourselves without whom we would be unable to provide the support that is greatly needed by the 'forgotten' families of the Care system.

I would just like to give you a little history and insight into what we aspire to do. Kinfest was 'born' in 2010 becoming a registered charity in 2017.

Most people think that when a child is removed from a family they go into foster care and are looked after by strangers; this isn't always the case. Kinship care is where children are looked after by the wider family or friends. There are estimated to be over 200,000 kinship carers in the UK. Kinship carers regularly don't get the financial, practical, and emotional help that would be offered to regular foster carers and find themselves out of their depth navigating the social and legal systems; they may be expected to give up work, move house and pay for equipment for the children brought into their care. Quite often kinship carers end up out of pocket with their lives having been turned upside down. They can feel isolated from their friends and feel that they no longer 'fit' into their old place in society. Often unable to go out

or away with friends as they used to, they can suffer from lack of social interaction making them feel even more isolated.

We as trustees are all ordinary people, who for one reason or another have found ourselves, often later in life, taking on the responsibility of becoming 'parents' again and raising our grandchildren, nieces

and nephews, or children of friends who are no longer able to be cared for by their biological parents. Kinfest's aim is to help alleviate the isolation felt by kinship children and their carers and 'sharers'. We do this by providing opportunities for them to share recreational time together so that we can all support each other and create many memories together as a 'family' unit. We aim to help promote bonds within the wider family, as well as meeting and becoming part of a wider social support network all over the country. One way we can do this is by organising annual holidays. In May there is a 'Mini



Kinfest' holiday away for four days, a summer Kinfest holiday in August for seven days, and a Kinfest Xmas party. In September all over the country local groups arrange a 'Big Kinfest Picnic' where Kinfest pays for teas, coffees and ice creams. Throughout the year there are other *ad hoc* events, such as cake stalls and other fundraisers.

Kinfest Holidays are in discounted caravans and take place all over the country, giving the opportunity to all families who may not want or be able to travel too far; places such as the Isle of Wight, Cornwall, Camber Sands, Skegness and Dorset, to name but a few. We start the holiday with a 'meet and greet' – a great way to meet new families and introduce ourselves. We organise day trips to local attractions and activities for the days and evenings, such as treasure hunts, talent shows and 'smores' evenings. Sports events are often run by our 'Champions' and 'Junior Champions' – people who give up any time they have to help, Junior Champions being the older children who wish to help and give back to Kinfest what they have been given in the past.

At the yearly Kinfest Christmas party we provide a three-course meal, a disco, a visit from Santa himself with presents for every child, and the Junior Champions offer their services for face painting and tattooing, raffles and treasure hunts. For a lot of children this is a rare opportunity to just run around freely and for the adults to



relax and enjoy the company of old and new friends.

Kinfest's aim is to alleviate the isolation felt by kinship families, adults and children alike, and during all our events, adults get the opportunity to relax, to feel comfortable in the presence of others who are in the same situation and experiencing the same issues, and to gain knowledge and support from like-minded people. Children get the chance to be themselves, to feel 'normal' not having to explain why they live with Grandma and Grandad. My grandchildren so look forward to what they call their 'Kinfest Family' holidays every year. Friendships formed are often long-lasting, with pen pals, or should I say phone pals, staying connected.

Your donation went to support a trip to Mini Kinfest, Dorset, at the end of May. On the first day welcome packs were given with the itinerary and a memory/keepsake 'log' for Mini Kinfest 2024 with the AP logo on one side. Tuesday was an on-site day with arts and crafts, air clay, painting, drawing, diamond art, large garden games, nail painting, face painting and hair braiding. Wednesday was the long-awaited main attraction that the Anglian Potters donation so kindly contributed to: Paultons Park. The children were so excited they could hardly contain themselves. It was a truly amazing, memorable day, as you can see from the photos, with some very tired children and adults at the end of the day! Thursday was a visit to Upton Park with a quiz in the evening. No one wanted to go home on Friday after a wonderful four days. Here are just a few comments:

'What an amazing week we have had. Thank you all so much, we have enjoyed it so, so much. Can't wait till the next one!'

'So many happy memories built, and friends made.'

'Thank you to everyone involved with making these holidays happen.'

'Thank you, had the best day when we went to Paultons Park.'

So thank you again, Anglian Potters, on behalf of Kinfest and our Kinfest families, for your support, for believing in our mission and for helping us to make a positive impact on people's lives. I hope the photos give you an idea of what we were able to give to these sometimes isolated, forgotten and struggling families, with your help.

~Anna Clough and the Trustees of Kinfest



Potclays Donation – What We Did With It



The clay donation in Richard's garage

Green man by the Jenny Owen Maylandsea Community Art Group



Photo: Above, Richard Cranwell, Left, Jenny Owen

In August 2023 the first Potfest in Suffolk was held at Haughley Park. The event coincided with the Anglian Potters 40th Anniversary Celebration.

Maxine and Mark Winkle of Potclays, Stoke on Trent, were also attracted to the event and wanted to mark the Anglian Potters 40th Anniversary with the donation of a tonne (80 bags) of a selection of their clays. This was intended to support AP members who are involved in promoting community, educational and charitable projects. Maxine and Mark wanted to spread the word about the benefits, opportunities and creative activities that come from working with clay. Anglian Potters chairman, John Masterton, and Clay Store Co-Ordinator, Richard Cranwell, met with Maxine and Mark at Potfest, Haughley Park to receive the donation.

In January this year we learned, with great sadness, that Mark Winkle, Potclays' works manager had passed away suddenly, at home. The news was a huge shock not only for his family but also for his 'work family' and all those who knew him. Maxine, his wife, carries on at Potclays. I have no doubt that Mark would have been delighted to know that the clay donation he and Maxine made to Anglian Potters was put to such good use for the benefit so many people.

The donated clay was used by the following AP members:

Lizzie Croucher, Colchester, Essex. Lizzie applied for some of the donated clay for use at the Community Workshop she runs in Colchester (see below). She is also involved with a shop called 'Love Local' featuring a range of artists and makers products, which has space for workshops too. Lizzie runs workshops as an independent artist and also does one-to-one potters' wheel tuition from her home studio. She also makes pieces for a local pottery-painting workshop.



Photo: Lizzie Croucher



Beaver Scouts' work

Interested parties from the Anglian Potters membership were asked to apply for clay from this donation if they were supporting the kind of community projects for which it was given. This has highlighted the amazing variety of excellent work being done in the community by Anglian Potters volunteers.

A number of members applied for clay and in October and November 2023 their requested clay was delivered to them. Each one was asked to send back photographs of the clay being used in their various community projects.



Caitlin Howells, Reepham, Norfolk. Caitlin is involved with a 'not for profit' smallholding project in Reepham, Norfolk, called, 'Field of Joy,' working with various groups including young asylum seekers, adults with learning disabilities and autism plus children and teens not in school. Their work aims to, 'forge friendships and connections with each other and nature'. The donated clay enabled Caitlin and other local potters to introduce these groups to ceramics.



Photo: Jenny Owen

Maylandsea Art Group

Jenny Owen, Maylandsea Art Group, South Woodham Ferrers, Essex. Jenny teaches hand building and throwing at a community art class where there were over 30 keen artist members including at least ten very committed throwers. Jenny says, "The donated white special stoneware and crank clays were put to good use for a range of projects. A group of 12 very happy potters have learned new techniques and skills in both hand building and throwing."

Matthew Gilbert, Ramsey, Cambridgeshire' works with a community pottery group called, 'Pottery in the Garden'. At the time he received the donated clay, Matthew had about 45 students and the group had just trialled a 'Future Potters' group and a class with the 'Local Church Craft Group'. The donated clay was used for three classes run as 'Pottery in the Museum'.

Mark Judd-Cooper, Greenfield Pottery, Spalding, Lincolnshire. We delivered the donated clay to Mark at Peterborough City College in November last year. He says, 'We have been running ceramic workshops with Macmillan Cancer Care and the Latvian community at a centre in Peterborough since the start of the year. We started with simple projects and built up their confidence. The participants have created items for themselves in different workshops which will continue until the end of the year. These we transport to our studio, where we fire and glaze them. We are approaching half way through and are planning for the group to visit us at our studio to give them the opportunity to have a go on the wheel and try out some other techniques and glazing. The participants are starting to open up about their health conditions, as they relax making their items. They are starting to build their own social support network.'

Greenfield Pottery Group



*Photos: Above, Elaine Humpleby
Below, Mark Judd-Cooper*

Liz Deeks, Hitchin, Hertfordshire. Liz used the donated clay to work with her local Beaver Scouts group. At the workshop each Beaver Scout worked on rolled out clay. Liz told me, ‘They used various tools to make sgraffito designs and then painted the slabs with different underglazes. To turn these into dishes the Beaver Scouts learned how to press down on the slab with the top of a wooden fence post into a deep sponge. They all loved the activity and have asked to work with clay again.’ Liz will be using more of the donated clay on 7th July at an ‘Art in the Square’ event during the Hitchin Festival where members of the public will get the opportunity to come and ‘play’ with clay.



Photo: Liz Deeks

Beaver Scouts at work

Elaine Humpleby. Elaine is a co-founder of the Network of East Anglian Art Teachers. The group was established to support art teachers in the region. Earlier this year Elaine, supported by the Artist/Teacher Team at the Sainsbury Centre, Norwich, provided two six-hour workshops over two days at the Sainsbury Centre, introducing teachers to ‘The Joy of Clay’. She utilised the donated clay from Potclays for this event. The finished pottery was then displayed in the glass cabinets at the entrance to the Sainsbury Centre (see below).



Photo: Elaine Humpleby



Photo: Elaine Humpleby

Elaine has also run free workshops at The Undercroft Gallery in Norwich. A sgraffito workshop using tiles of clay on 17th February this year was attended by 18 people and a mug decorating workshop (see above) on 18th February was attended by 22 people. Both workshops used Potclays donated clay.

Richard Cranwell, Cambridgeshire. Richard works with a charity based in Huntingdon called ‘Dreamdrops’. Among its many activities ‘Dreamdrops’ supports autistic children and their families with a variety of activities. Many of these children struggle with relationships and communication and concentrating on a specific activity helps enormously with the development of their social skills. Richard offered to use some of the donated clay run a ‘Clay Day’ for some of these families and there was an overwhelming response. It has taken a long time to organise but the first two ‘Clay Day’ sessions will now go ahead on the 30th June when two groups of 9 young people between the ages of 8 and 12 will get a chance to be ‘hands on’ with clay.



Photo: Sarah Cannell

Sarah Cannell, The Raveningham Centre, Norfolk. Sarah runs clay workshops at Raveningham. She has also run a new weekly after school clay club for Sir John Leman High School in Beccles. The school has a large kiln and various brush-on glazes but had no technical assistant or teacher to run a class so Sarah stepped in to help. There was little or no money to support the clay club so the donated clay helped to kickstart the project (see above).

~Richard Cranwell

1000 Vessels



Photos: Sarah Cannell

2016 was not a good year for our family. I was spending a lot of time in Addenbrookes Hospital caring for my seven-year-old son during his lengthy cancer treatment. To help pass the time, I started drawing tiny pots. I wasn’t sure why, as I am predominantly a landscape painter but they made me feel calm, and so I filled a number of sketchbooks with drawings of pots and surface designs. When my son finished treatment in 2019 we all struggled with PTSD and I started exploring clay as a therapeutic practice.

In 2021 I set myself the challenge of creating 1000 Vessels as a way of teaching myself to throw and follow a creative journey.

I am now celebrating getting half-way through. My 500th pot (*right*) came out of the kiln just a few weeks ago. The photographs offer a glimpse of the vessels created so far. The yellow bowl (*below*) has a drawing of my son at the side of a lake in France in 2019, four months after the end of his 3.5 year treatment for leukaemia. We had to stay within an hour’s drive of a hospital for the duration of his treatment with a bag packed in the car to go directly to hospital if he got a temperature – this happened frequently – but being able to drive to France and explore the lakes was an incredibly freeing experience, and this vessel is hugely significant to me.



My son is 15 now, and thankfully fit and healthy and in remission. Fingers crossed we can put it all behind us and he can move forward and live a full, happy life.



Since I started the project I have set up a community pottery, run workshops at UEA, sold work through Cecilia Colman Gallery, Primavera Gallery, Mandells Gallery, and V K Gallery, received a DYCP grant from Arts Council England and joined Anglian Potters. Work from the 1000 Vessel Project is currently being shown at the Cecilia Colman Gallery in London.

I am still loving throwing but have also developed a series of slab-built tea caddy shapes and vases. All my works feature my love of landscape with underglaze pencil drawings; often they have a pop of bright colour and collaged underglaze transfers as a nod to the 18th-century Lowestoft Porcelain which I am obsessed with.

I am an established artist, painter, ceramicist and print-maker. I studied at Falmouth College of Art, St Martin’s and Curwen Print Centre. I run workshops from my studio at Raveningham Sculpture Trail in South Norfolk.

~Sarah Cannell

@sarahcannellartist - #1000vesselproject on Instagram

Casa Julfa

Photos: Nathalie Hammond



Favourite pots L to R – wild clay, obvara – white earthenware, raw milk – white earthenware, obvara – terracotta, obvara – white earthenware, raw milk

Tucked away in a corner of the medieval town of Montmorillon, France, lies Casa Julfa; a creative sanctuary for makers within the walls of a 17th-century townhouse. The Casa is owned and operated by Corinne and Diego, who gift those staying with more than a decade of research and collaboration with indigenous artisans of Corinne's native Armenia and Diego's Mexico. Residency opportunities offer explorations into writing, textiles and clay but, more importantly, the residencies offer a carving of space for one's creativity at a much slower pace of life.



Casa Julfa – a pottery haven in rural France

I have been fortunate enough to discover and experience the magic Casa Julfa has to offer for two consecutive summers, with plans for a third. The Casa to me is a space where I can truly immerse myself in all things clay, away from the distractions of daily life.



Beautiful light inside the studio

My everyday ceramic work focuses around functional stoneware pieces fired in an electric kiln, but at the residency the clay offerings are that of local white earthenware, terracotta and responsibly-foraged wild clay with firing as a half-day wood firing. This slight change of my usual materials opened up a door which allowed me to experiment much more with sculptural forms and with the promise of wood firing, forms just for the fun of it and what the clay was wanting to become.

My last visit also added to this freedom and took me down the path of responsibly sourcing and processing wild clay. Corinne led a day workshop on the wood firing land, passing on the knowledge of how to recognise, harvest and process found clay. They are fortunate enough to have permission to use the clay on the land where the wood firings happen, but we also took a tour of the town to identify places where clay could be found in less rural settings, e.g. banks alongside the road. From this, I processed the clay into slips to use in the wood firing as an additional form of organic decoration.



Wild slip test tiles with their source clays

The wood firing is fast by firing standards (around 4/5 hours) as the desired temperature is that of earthenware; 1000°C. No pyrometer is used, instead you are taught to read the fire and colour of the flames. Once the pots reach this temperature (or thereabouts) the pots are removed from the kiln in a raku-like fashion to be decorated using a variety of techniques. These were some of my favourites:

- Reduction box for smoke penetration – a box filled with combustible materials, in this case dried grass from the wood firing land. The effect created is partially or fully black pieces.
- Raw Milk – sourced from the local market in the town square. The raw milk is poured into a wide container to allow pieces to sit within approximately 1.5 inches of milk. The result is a wonderful caramelised brown where the piece has been submerged in the liquid.
- Fermented wheat solution, aka obvara, a yeast/flour solution allowed to ferment over a number of days.



White earthenware and terracotta with obvara decoration

Obvara was my favourite technique. The solution consists of either dried yeast or old dough/starter, flour, sugar and warm water. The mixture is left for a minimum of one hour but can be left for a few days if the weather isn't particularly warm. The preparation involves a lot of whisking, right up to dunking the pot itself – I did find a quick whisk just before dunking the pot created a particularly nice outcome. To use, a pot is removed from the wood firing around 700–800°C and dunked into the obvara, which is then poured out and the pot plunged into water to cool it down. I found the effects were not as successful if the pots were placed in the solution at a higher or lower temperature than this, either burning or not fully fusing to the piece itself. It was also imperative to move efficiently to not 'overcook' the decoration, which can also be done by submerging the piece in the solution for too long. Each pot yields completely different results due to the sheer amount of variables at play. I have used the obvara technique on two separate firings and the results were not even remotely similar, although pots within a single firing were. In the first year there was particularly warm weather so the solution was left out in the sun ahead of being used, but the second year there was a lot of cold weather and rain ahead of the firing so the solution was kept inside. It would be impossible to guess if this were the reason for the difference as the fire, flames, weather, clay, timing, yeast, etc. were all different, but that is part of the beauty of the results.

I have a dedicated shelf in my studio (see photo opposite page, top) where I have held onto my favourite wood-fired pieces over the last couple of years. The pots which adorn it are predominantly decorated using obvara and raw milk, partially due to the fact that this firing process is the only one I have been able to do whilst I am at the residency and I am not sure if I would want to replicate it here back home as that location and its firing process seem intertwined for me now.

The Casa has provided me a space to reconnect with the experimentation side of clay, which was missing from my practice. I have been able to deep-dive into the full process of creating a pot from sourcing and processing the clay, creating the piece and then tending to the kiln which fires it. It is a welcome break from the production work I'm used to doing and has reminded me to include these spaces for experimentation and play in my normal studio practice.



The wood kiln

~Nathalie Hammond

Vivienne Burns – Demonstration

Photos: Trudy Staines



On 19th of May, a beautiful sunny day, we met for our AGM, and having completed the committee's agenda, proceeded to have our usual lovely spread before Vivienne Burns's demonstration. We learned that Viv has a background in teaching and it is since her days at college doing her BED that she started exploring and experimenting with clay and its possibilities.

At that point she had access to all sorts of different clays, materials and tools, but her interest soon focused on slipcast forms, often consisting of multiple vessels positioned in groups, with an organic design wrapping around the various pieces and bringing coherence to her work. This theme of a continuous design around forms is still used in her current work.

A major London exhibition of Matisse's collage work inspired Viv to use torn and cut pieces of paper to make pictures for an exhibition at Halesworth Gallery. She then applied these techniques to clay using different pieces of torn paper as resist for slip and coloured engobes, or newsprint paper covered in coloured slip to use as 'transfers' in an abstract way.

Viv spent the first years after retirement trying out new ideas and techniques and experimented using thick slip in a squeeze bottle laying different squeezed coils on top of each other, in much the same way as a 3D printer would. Inspired by nature, she is fascinated by ammonites and other fossils and has an extensive collection of shells. She has made work inspired by these using porcelain and gritty clay.

In November 2019 she spent a month in Paros, Greece, in a self-directed art retreat during which she sketched and painted. She became involved in a collaboration between a group of artists and a local vineyard observing plants and landscapes. In order to translate drawings and paintings into ceramic form Viv discovered underglazes and has used them in her work ever since.

Wanting to make black marks to enhance her decorating, Viv first tried painting black lines onto her patterns but wasn't satisfied with the look, so started using black clay (PF680) and sgraffito to create the black detail through the coloured or white slip applied on the black clay. This creates a very neat

line, with added movement in the depth and width of the sgraffito (*bottom left*).

Viv fires to 1160°C, using an off-the-shelf mid-temperature clear glaze to achieve her beautiful smooth surfaces. She makes her own slips with equal parts ball clay and China clay with the addition of stains in different percentages, according to the intensity of colour she is looking for. She also likes Amaco Velvet underglazes, and in some cases uses Spectrum underglazes. She told us she normally works on more than one vessel at a time, keeping the 'waiting' ones under plastic to ensure the correct level of dryness for sgraffito, and to avoid unsightly and unwanted burrs.

Her decoration methods include using underglazes directly and freely on the naked or slipped clay, or using slip which is painted onto pieces of newspaper (*below*). Once it has dried to a dull sheen the slip can be transferred onto clay using a variety of different tools to make lines, shapes or textures onto the slab surface.



Viv demonstrated both how she works on slabs before they are joined to make her desired shape, and how she decorates sculptural forms already constructed by using various bits of foam arranged to support the shape without marking the surface as she works on it (*below*). She has a series of lino printing images she uses too, but also told us she makes her own stencils using cartridge paper which she oils (with normal cooking oil) to make



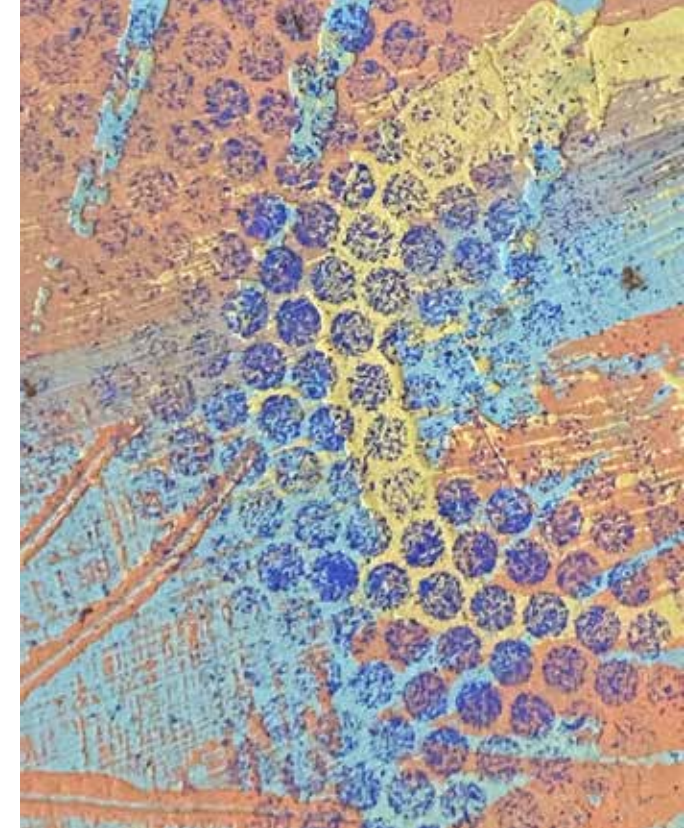
them more resistant and strong and then cuts with a craft knife to her own designs. She uses these either to apply colour (the photo below left is an example of a stencil she cut out of one such paper. Notice towards the bottom of the photo how she keeps both positive and negative images to use in different ways/places), or texture, as in the photo below right that shows the result of a thick slip applied on the stencils.



Sometimes she makes less permanent stencils cutting newsprint paper instead – and by blue-tacking two pieces of paper together she makes two identical ones, which she then uses with three or four layers of slip to create a more 3D effect which will pleasingly catch colour when using a more watered-down underglaze. At times, white slip is applied with a flat lacquer brush and free brushstrokes through stencils on a base of white slip to create a white-on-white relief (*above right*).



Viv also collects all sorts of materials that she can use as stencils, such as the waste metallic plastic used for sequin production and netting, etc. One curious way she has found to create interesting patterns and colour variation is grating the 'pastels' (that she makes by drying her coloured slips into coils and cutting them to shape) onto a wet layer of base slip (*above*). This leaves a more mottled, pleasing effect than simply brushing. After applying both slip or grated coloured crayons, she pressed these down lightly with a sheet of newsprint to ensure they adhere properly to the clay.



Textures created using stencils, slips and slip 'pastels'

Viv told us that as her sgraffito tools tend to wear out and get blunt very easily, she prefers to buy cheap ones more often rather than invest in expensive stuff. Her favourite tool for sgraffito is a little loop tool.

Her present forms are large, totally closed shapes, and in order to make sure they dry evenly and moisture has an easy escape route, she moves the whole pot to the edge of the table to stamp it with her mark and cuts a hole into the base.

Viv also brought with her to show us her amazing and very interesting collection of sketchbooks (*below*), which she has been making for years and which inform some of the decorations she then experiments with on clay.



It is obvious from her work and the care she showed us during the demo that Viv is not only very skilled in her making, catching the clay at just the right consistency to achieve her imposing forms without any unwanted marks, but also incredibly talented in her decorative practice, using colour, pattern and mark-making in subtle and creative ways, mixing and matching organic, botanic and landscape forms with more abstract and evocative images, and extracting the best qualities from the materials she chooses to use.

A very informative and inspiring demonstration indeed, so thanks so much to Viv for sharing her process with us and for her generosity in answering all our questions.

~Robi Bateman

How I Use My Paper Clay . . . The Wright Way Part Two: Figures and Boats

Figures are, for some, quite a daunting proposition. Now, without getting into too much trouble with all the different genders these days, I will say that the figures in my machines are always male, well they're adorned with a lot of whiskers, large moustaches and longish hair. Why? When I make the head, I do not have to spend hours getting the eyes, nose, mouth or any other features to look right. My characters have long scruffy hair that more than covers any ears. A blob of clay seems to suffice for a nose which is surrounded by the tatty hair, beard and large moustache. The photo shows a rather large blob for the nose so this was cut down and a new moustache stuck on. Much better. This is the benefit of paper clay because you can join onto dry clay without a worry. A stove-pipe hat that is much higher than a normal design sits on the head at eye level, thus negating any real detail in the eyes. I look ahead and work out whether the figure will be difficult to glaze in situ. If it is, I often make the figure in two parts i.e. lower body, legs, etc. and upper body i.e. jacket and head with hat.



I begin by making a long tube of clay and bending it to form the legs, as in the diagram above. The coat is a piece of clay wrapped around itself to form a rough cylinder shape and glued onto the legs if required. The neck area is squeezed in a bit and a collar attached. The arms are similar to the legs, except where they join the body the tube is belled out to make a good join especially when smoothed over with a potter's knife. Hands are cut out of a piece of thin, flat clay and bent to shape whilst boots are hand-modelled with added details, such as toe caps and holes for eyelets, and a cut across them to represent laces. Thus, after the bisque firing each piece can be removed for glazing and stuck back in place using a generous dab of glaze up the trouser legs or sleeves, or all the parts can be slipped together in the first place.



I don't worry about trapping air in the limbs when I bend them because the paper clay seems to breathe OK, but if you're worried, some unobtrusive air holes won't hurt. There, my secret is out.

Making boats

The photos hopefully explain my method of boatbuilding rather than writing a book on the subject. It's simple enough. I cut out a sturdy one-piece stem, keel and stern post (the front upright, the thick bit of wood that runs along the bottom and an upright lump of wood that goes on the back that holds the rudder). Ribs are glued on, at intervals, with paper clay slip. Once the structure is firm, I turn it upside down, supported where necessary, and start the planking. To get the right shape planks, I keep cutting a strip of paper down until it aligns nicely with the keel which is where the first plank is attached using paper clay slip. I cut the corresponding plank for the other side at the same time and use the slip to glue them onto the ribs. My boats look old, so I am not worried about getting each plank perfect. Because I'm using paper clay the planks are about 1.5–2 mm thick so they bend into shape easily.



To get a lovely wood effect I use my ash glaze: wood ash, soaked in a bucket of water for a few months, any floating bits taken off then it's ready to use. I fire at 1260°C. The more it is stirred the darker the colour. It's simple, cheap and effective.

That's about it. A short potted history on the art of coarse pottery . . . the Wright way. There are far more qualified people around than me and other methods to try, but it's the way I do my pottery. It seems to work, but the most important thing for me is that I enjoy it. I was once told, when making a penny farthing bike in clay (including clay spokes), that it couldn't be done. I can tell you now that it can . . . with paper clay!



~Andy Wright

Remembering Members Lost – Marianne Toogood



We were very sorry to hear of the passing of Marianne Toogood on the 15th February 2024. Marianne was an active member at the early days of Potters' Camp, producing lovely pots, especially raku, and will be remembered for her sunny disposition and sense of fun. Several members have shared their memories of her below.

"Marianne came to camp for several years, and despite her disability produced some lovely pots. She was a cheerful presence about the site. I particularly remember some of her raku work, which was beautiful."

~Susan Cupitt

"Jerry's Shotley campsite was a challenge at the best of times with a climb uphill from the barn to the wood kiln on uneven ground. Marianne, despite her mobility issues, enjoyed her time there, often declining help. She used her chair to transport pots to glaze with a smile and enjoyed all the fun of camp with everyone. Lots of happy memories."

~Liz Lewis



Marianne at camp

"I only ever met Marianne at camp, but recall what a delight she always was to talk to."

~Liz Chipchase

"I remember Marianne as a cheery soul despite the difficulties she was experiencing on the terrain. With support she was able to fully participate in all that camp has to offer."

~Ray Auker

"I was a nervous first timer on the first evening of the week-long Deborah Baynes throwing course. I picked a seat on the sofa next to Marianne, she was so warm and welcoming, a Baynes frequent flyer. The next people to come in the room thought we had known each other for years. It was always uplifting to catch up with her at camps and demo days.

I asked once why she put so much work into the pots she made for camp's experimental firings. She said she didn't know how many pots she was going to be able to make, so she wasn't going to make a bad one.

Warmly accepting of people, striving for better pots, Marianne embodied the key character traits of the Anglian Potters organisation."

~Ruth Gillett



Green raku bowl and beaker with brilliant copper inner

Red earthenware slab-built jug with yellow slip and sgraffito

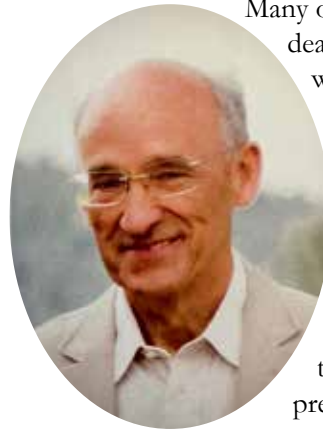


Majolica bowl with sprayed-on oxides



Marianne was a talented potter who demonstrated a wide repertoire, from throwing to handbuilding and tile-making, earthenware majolica to stoneware, slipware to porcelain, and salt and soda glazing to raku, something with which she had a particular affinity. Son Pete recalls: "She was a wonderful person and an accomplished potter. When my brother Frank and I registered her passing we were asked if she had a job or profession; we had her registered as a 'Potter' on her death certificate." Something Marianne would have heartily approved of.

Remembering Members Lost – Pete Spital



Many of you will be aware of the death of AP member, Pete Spital, who passed away suddenly in January of this year. During the following weeks there was a poignant exchange of emails and photographs amongst some of us who knew him.

Pete was very much a part of Potters Camp throughout the years at Jerry's, a stalwart presence both at Camp and in the preparations leading up to it. He did all the electrical work in the kiln area and helped with the installation of the unique and fondly remembered camp toilets and showers.

"Pete was my first contact at Potters Camp, since he was in charge of organising us all as we came in to land for the week. Always bright and full of energy."

~Carol Allison

"He made me so welcome on my first Potters Camp."

~Lois Thirkettle

"To my mind Pete, like many of Potters Camp followers, was a pyromaniac, which also extended to the pizza oven he built to feed the 70+ potters on a Friday evening. But more than that he was always on hand to offer help and advice on all sorts of activities involved at camp. Erecting tents or re-erecting in some cases. It was Pete who formulated all the information that was sent to all those signed up for Camp, what was required in terms of preparation, what pots to bring and what they might need and what firings and workshops and demonstrations were to take place. He even acted as attendant for parking cars and caravans. Pete was one of those people that made the camp at Shotley a very special event. No wonder we will miss and remember him as someone we shared our life with."

~Ray Auker



Pizza preparation at Camp

The photographs people shared brought back some great memories for me. I was never involved in the pizza preparation as I was always busy with one of the firing teams, but caught glimpses and delicious smells as I boiled up soda solution on Jerry's stove, and we certainly enjoyed the results after a long hot day of firing. Pete was meticulous about his pizza preparation.

"I was banned from the kitchen as I did not chop veg in the correct manner. All his camping equipment was neat and ordered with salt in stainless steel container, etc. (Maldon of course)."

~Liz Lewis



Building the bottle kiln

"Pizza Night would never have happened without him. He was also a Treasurer's dream, promptly sending in an expenses form consisting of a carefully crafted list of all the ingredients he had purchased to make the pizzas and with all the receipts enclosed in alphabetical order. I seem to remember that he also took on some early attempts at Health and Safety at the camp, which was a pretty daunting job! Good to see Susan's excellent picture of Pete in the group at work on the bottle kiln, sunshine and potters at work, happy days indeed."

~Liz Chipchase

Pete's arch former for the salt kiln

When the old salt kiln at camp finally collapsed, a small group of us, led by Jerry and John, took on the task of dismantling the old kiln and building a new one, largely with recycled materials. Pete was an active and enthusiastic contributor to this project, roaring up on his motorbike for one working party with his saddlebags filled with his home-made pizzas. He was responsible for a wonderfully over-engineered arch former and supervised the construction of the arch from on top of the kiln frame. After winter storms brought down a large tree across the glaze shed and toilets he directed its removal whilst perched high above the action on the tines of Jerry's forklift.



Pete and the salt kiln arch

Pete was a person with many and varied interests, some of which we only became aware of after his death. I learned from Jerry that he was a competent maker of traditional leather shoes and designed and made his own footwear. He was an active member of his local astronomical society, and was also an enthusiastic amateur archaeologist. Peter Cuthbertson came across him on his narrow-boat (another one of his passions) on the South Oxford Canal a couple of years ago. He was a good correspondent: "He was always so good at sending a special email to me and Sharon as outliers with camp details." ~Ruth Bowman.

"We kept in touch by email and Christmas letters. In fact I had a long email on New Year's Eve from him. He had stopped making pots and had a new passion with wool. He had researched in depth the process from wool to garments."

~Liz Lewis

One of Pete's pots



From the north of Shetland Sharon McGeady sent this message.

"I am so very sad at hearing this news. I have been thinking about Pete all day, and remembering all the madness of potters camp, of the joy of just quietly eating breakfasts with like minded folk . . . proper coffee, talk of clay, plans for the day, and of amazing pizza when you are hot and exhausted after a day's firing. Isn't that interesting . . . when I thought about Pete, I thought about sharing meals. He sent a lovely email at Christmas and we discussed sheep, as you do. Being Pete, he was very particular about recording the details, such as the length of wool and its quality for spinning. He also sent some wonderful photos of the memorable day the soda kiln shelves collapsed!!! Not my finest hour! . . . I'll have a quiet moment on our hill to remember him."

~Sharon McGeady

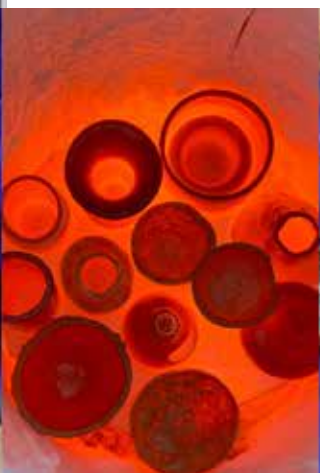


Pete and Liz celebrating the firing of the bottle kiln

Liz Lewis attended his funeral in Shaftsbury in March and has been bequeathed his Leach style kick wheel, pizza paddles and dough recipe for camp. We intend to make our pizza evening at camp this year a tribute to him.

~Nicki Darrell





THINK POTTERY

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Book Review

Photo: Jeremy Peake



By My Hands: A Potter's Apprenticeship

by Florian Gadsby

If you mention the name Florian Gadsby to potters you are likely to get varying reactions. Some, particularly those who eschew social media, will be unaware of his work. Others, however, become very enthusiastic and tell you that they have been following him online for years and have enjoyed

his innumerable posts and videos about pottery making and his life as a potter. They may well tell you that they were inspired to try their hand at making pottery as a result. In case you happen to be in the first camp, he is a former apprentice of Lisa Hammond's who started posting his thrown work on Instagram, initially for his family and friends, and swiftly became an international ceramics sensation with around four million followers on a number of web platforms. There's no doubt that he's charted new territory for potters and brought a better awareness of the craft to a huge number of people. Anyone who teaches pottery classes these days will be aware of the insatiable demand for places on courses and I'm convinced that he has, directly or indirectly, encouraged thousands of new people to take up ceramics.

Florian Gadsby's online output is calm, technically oriented, highly descriptive and beautifully shot, and this autobiography reflects his attention to factual and technical detail. It is very well illustrated with numerous photographs and drawings. It's also written in a way that non-potters will not find overwhelming, though experienced potters will learn from it too. He starts with his first encounters with clay at a Waldorf Steiner school as a child and he describes his gradually increasing interest in ceramics. Eventually, he was 'consumed with pottery' and found himself a short work placement in the Leach pottery. He had difficulty, as people can do, in finding a suitable college to study throwing but then he found his way onto the renowned ceramics course at Thomastown Pottery in Ireland, run at that time by Gus Mabelson. From there he went to work as apprentice to Lisa Hammond MBE at Maze Hill Pottery in Greenwich, followed by a further stint at Ken Matsuzaki's pottery in Mashiko, Japan. These experiences contrasted enormously, as described at much length and detail in the book, but they all involved hard work, long hours and total dedication to the craft. When he left Japan he was 25 and he went on to set up his own studio, where he is now based, in north London.

In the final chapter the autobiographical content gives way to an illustrated, in-depth description of the making of a mug. It's an unusual way to end a book, though the forming of the raw material into a refined, finished article does echo the path of a potter's development. It works rather well and it's a nice touch.

I picked up my copy at a Toppings & Company book signing event in Ely last September. The author gave a very thorough account of his life and influences and gave thoughtful answers to people's questions. Held in the Church of St Peter-in-Ely, with Mr Gadsby in the pulpit and the audience sitting in the pews, it might have been said that he was preaching to the converted. Judging by the number of people who left clutching copies of *By My Hands* I'd say that was a fair assessment.

~Jeremy Peake

By My Hands, A Potter's Apprenticeship Florian Gadsby.
Particular Books. Hardback | 400pp | £30 | 16cm x 3.5cm x 24cm | ISBN: 978-0-241-59581-7

Camp Progress

Excitement is building for Potters' Camp 2024, running from 31 July – 4 August at our dedicated site at Stoke Farm, Suffolk. More details on the website. Over the last weeks and months a dedicated team of volunteers, led by Nicki Darrell, has been hard at work mowing, digging, building and repairing to ensure everything will be up to scratch. Thanks all, and let's hope the sun shines this gloriously in August!



Photos: Nicki Darrell



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Other 2024 Local Events

Photo: Nicki Darrell



Dame Magdalene Odundo

This showcase features both established pieces and new creations spanning Odundo's illustrious 30-year career

On until 29 September 2024 –
Houghton Hall, New Houghton,
King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE31 6UE

Potfest Suffolk

Haughley Park

9–11 August 2024, 10–4.30

Now in its second year, Potfest Suffolk will feature 90 potters over three days in lovely Haughley Park.

Clay in Clare

Old Goods Shed, Clare Country Park
12–15 Sept 2024

See page 13.

Wymondham Art Centre

5–17 November 2024

This is a lovely Christmas show located in a converted chapel and featuring around 15 Anglian Potters.

Kiln Cambridge Christmas Show

22–24 November 2024

30+ potters, including several AP members, showcasing a wide range of styles.

AP Clay Stores

Clay from Valentine, Staffs: an inexpensive source of clay for members.

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Please contact members listed below to confirm availability and arrange pickup during office hours. Ideally, pay by card or cheque. We do not accept cash. Please quote your AP membership number as this is required to reference your purchase. **Please note change to firing temps for porcelain.**

Essex: Chris & Barbara Bullock

Kingswood, Dedham Road,
Ardleigh CO7 7QB

Please note we have cancelled our landline. You can contact us on:
07412 953399

mother.hen@e-chickens.com

Norfolk: Diana Ng

The New House (3rd house on the right), Smee Lane (via Church Road),
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Suffolk: Rebecca & Dominic Upson

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Diary Dates

Potters' Camp

Stoke Farm, Battisford Tye,
Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 2NA
31 July–4 August

Tony Dix – Demonstration

Mundford 6 October 2024

Paul Smith – Demonstration

Mundford 3 November 2024

AP Christmas Show

All Saints' Church, Cambridge
16 November–8 December

Membership Fees

Single £30 – half year* £17

Joint £50 for two people at the same address – half year* £27

Institution £50 for a college or workshop – half year* £27 (details from the Membership Secretary)

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

*Half year rates only for new members

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