

ANGLIAN POTTERS NEWSLETTER



WINTER 2025

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Chairman's Letter



Summer has come to an end, and with it most of the main ceramics shows. I hope that everyone who has participated in or visited one of the shows had a successful and enjoyable time. We visited Potfest at Haughley Park this year, rather than exhibiting, and enjoyed seeing lots of AP members on show and looking around. It all looked very good, as usual. We even bought a new plate!

A week or so before Potfest we finished this year's Potters' Camp at Stoke Farm. I think everyone who was there had a good time – the atmosphere was great, and there were lots of smiles and laughter. I think we fired well in excess of 700 pots in the main kilns, and who knows how many raku pots. Raku is very enjoyable, but continues to be a bit of a trial in an environment with so many people about, and variable wind directions! We had a “wash-up” session in early September, looking at the feedback from participants, and sorting out the raku

firings was a one of the main “learning” things that came up. It worked very well at the weekend workshop earlier in the year, but that was with a much smaller number of people, and with nothing else going on. We have a few ideas about how to organise raku at Camp for next year, so everyone can enjoy it.

Members of the steering group for Stoke Farm have all been involved for at least the last five years, and would really like some new people to join in, particularly for organising camp 2026. The planned dates are from Wednesday 29th July to Sunday 2nd August, with setting up on the 27th and 28th. We have already started organising the toilets and marquees for next year, but work will start in earnest early in the new year. So, if you have enjoyed your time at Camp, or at some other AP activity, now is the time to get more involved! Let us know if you can help.

Other activities continue, although a new selling event at NT Ickworth House planned for the 4th and 5th of October was cancelled, thanks to storm Amy. Fifty mile per hour winds and an estate full of trees don't go together, unfortunately. We hope to arrange a new date for this event. The Christmas exhibition at All Saints' Church in Cambridge will be going ahead from mid-November. Andrea is working hard at looking for more venues and events we can participate in.

Hope to see more of you at Mundford for the next demo day in November.

~John Masterton

Editor's Notes



There is a distinct sustainability flavour to this issue of the Newsletter. You may have heard the buzz around the launch of Valentine Clays' new LoStone low-firing stoneware, designed to vitrify at 1160°C (cone 3) thereby reducing firing costs and kiln and maintenance bills. Something definitely to be welcomed. But there is downside, the range is decidedly more expensive than many other stock stoneware clays. Check out the article on page 22 for details and a discount for Anglian Potters. If you try the new clay, do write in and let us know how you find it.

The Great Pottery Throwdown consultant Kevin Millward was due to give us a demonstration at Mundford this month, but unfortunately had to cancel. We hope we might be able to rebook him, but in the meantime I have an interview with him on page 29 where he talks about sustainability in his practice and his new book *Ceramics: A Green Approach*. In it he discusses the environmental impact of ceramics and what steps we as individual potters can take to ameliorate that impact. You will also find a review of the book on page 31.

On page 20 there is an article from ex-Anglian Potter Sharon McGeady, whom many of you may remember. Sharon moved up to Shetland several years ago and through her ceramics, is currently exploring peat, the landscape it creates, and the environmental impact of its exploitation past and present.

The Romans in first-century AD London are unlikely to have given environmental issues much thought. At that time they were exploiting the resources of what is now Highgate Wood: clay, wood and water to produce vast amounts of distinctive functional ware for the capital. These Romano-British potters built at least ten kilns in the area over a period of about 100 years. The site was first excavated in the 1960s and today local archaeology and heritage organisations have teamed up with Highgate open access pottery studio, Turning Earth, to reconstruct one of the kilns, process the wild clay, make Roman style pots and fire them. You can read all about the project on page 26 in an article by Anglian Potter Shem Morgan from Turning Earth.

Keeping with the industrial theme, Susan Cupitt tells us the story of Peterborough's self-firing bricks on page 25. From past and ancient potters to brand-new ones. On page 15 art student Ed Forrester-Flowers recounts how he has overcome significant resistance from his university to teach himself and his fellow students ceramics. Can anyone help or encourage Ed in his endeavours? Do get in touch with him if you can.

If you attended camp, you may have heard Crispin Kelly's talk about a new ceramics centre and museum in Ipswich called Clay 1a. He reveals more about that on page 16. As well as an article on the history of Cromartie Kilns in this issue there are also features on Potters' Camp, a recent salt and soda firing at Shotley, Anglian Potters shows at Clare and Walberswick, and Louise Bell's demonstration at Mundford back in April.

I hope you all find something to enjoy!

~Julia Bruce

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 £30/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 £35/annum. For details of membership, *Ceramic Review* and insurance, see: craftpotters.com.

Cover Photograph

Serene head wall-mounted planter by Helen Humphreys. Salt-glazed at Shotley, October 2025.

See page 13

Photograph: Julia Bruce

AP Demo Days and other events

We have three demonstration days at Mundford scheduled for 2026 showcasing the work and practice of four talented potters, so do get these dates in your diaries!

25th January 2026 – Jaroslav Hrustalenko

Jaroslav is a British-based artist with over twenty-two years of international experience in teaching, designing and making. His inspirations include musical harmonies, tango dance moves and anthropology, to name just a few. Over his years of research and practice, Jaroslav has made and published a number of striking technical inventions that enable entirely new ways of working with clay and creative interpretation of our abundant cultural heritage. <https://www.hrustalenko.co.uk/>



Photo: Jaroslav Hrustalenko

22nd February 2026 – Rob & Debbie Rivett

Working together – Rob throws and Debbie decorates – the duo creates modern porcelain pieces inspired by nature and organic forms. These are decorated with beautiful, coloured slips that combine painting and sgraffito techniques.

<https://www.robandeddebbierivett.co.uk/>



Photo: Rob & Debbie Rivett

22nd March 2026 – Karen Slade

Karen trained as an illustrator at Brighton and in 1988, as soon as she graduated, started taking part in re-enacting Tudor life at Kentwell Hall. Then in 1996 she began making encaustic Medieval tiles. As well as demonstrating this process as part of a re-enactment, Karen has been working on her own 120-tile panel based on Medieval and Victorian tiles and the geology and fossils near Charnwood, Leicestershire. www.companyofartisans.co.uk



Photo: Karen Slade

Anglian Potters Christmas Exhibition 15th November – 7th December 2025

Our annual Christmas Show will take place as usual at All Saints' Church, Jesus Lane, Cambridge. This is a popular show and one of our main exhibitions of the year.

~Rose Brettingham

Ferini Art Gallery Exhibition Opportunity

Spring Up at Ferini Art Gallery 2026 will run over five weeks from 3rd April, Good Friday to 4th May, May Day. Co-curators Ruth and Sylvie invite enquiries and expressions of interest from the membership.

We will be setting up on Tuesday 31st March, and take down in the morning of Tuesday 5th May.

The Ferini Art Gallery is a bright and airy gallery that turns over its ground floor to us. Anglian Potters have been presenting colourful shows of all styles of ceramics there for over ten years. The Gallery is in Pakefield, just a step from the coastal promenade. Please email us on ruthgillett@outlook.com for full information.



Photo: Julia Bruce

Plates on display at the Ferini Art Gallery

Clay in Clare



Photo: Julia Bruce

Building on the success of Clay in Clare 2024, this year's event featured sixteen Anglian Potters showing and selling their work in the wonderful setting of The Old Goods Shed in Clare Castle Country Park. The work on display ranged from extremely fine slip-cast or thrown porcelain to quirky hand-built pieces.

Both visitor numbers (more than 700 visitors over the four-day period) and sales (over £7000 in takings) were higher than last year. Many visitors commented on the high standard of work and the professional feel of the event. It was interesting that some visitors had travelled quite a way in order to attend the event and for many it was the first time that they had been to Clare.

The organisers of the event, Sue Eyre and Diana Kazemi, are looking forward to organising Clay in Clare 2026!

~Diana Kazemi



Photo: Sue Eyre

Anglian Potters in Walberswick



Photos: Andrew Eastaugh

Lots of pots and a demo or two to enjoy at this year's event.

It was another lovely sunny weekend at Walberswick this year. Approximately twenty Anglian Potters set up and sold their beautiful work on 26th and 27th July.

Some new members joined us, which was fantastic and provided new interest for the many members of the public who come and buy, some every year, together with old (but not ancient) faves like Rob Rutterford and Co.

If you're interested in joining us next summer, please contact Andrew Eastaugh: aeastaugh@icloud.com

This year, Andrew sold his own pots for charity: The Olive Harvest Breakfast Club.

~Claire Pirie



The Olive Harvest Trust was founded about twelve years ago. It was started by a group of volunteers who regularly went to the West Bank villages near Nablus to help with the olive harvest. The charity was started to raise funds to provide equipment like musical instruments and computers, but also pieces of structure such as sun awnings or increasing security equipment. We work through local contact with teachers and community leaders. We want to fund a breakfast club for the youngest children in one of the schools in Madama. The kitty surplus from the tombola was £120. I raised £777. So £900 in total was donated, which was fabulous. If you'd like to donate, please have a look at the website <https://oliveharvesttrust.org>

~Andrew Eastaugh

Potters' Camp 2025

The kiln and weather gods smiled benevolently on seventy Anglian Potters at this year's Potters' Camp. Now in its fourth year at the new Stoke Farm site, Camp is really starting to feel established, with three permanent gas kilns, a wood kiln and a soda kiln, along this year with an experimental wood kiln, the temporary dragon kiln built on site during camp, and raku kilns. Thanks to the brilliant preparation and organisation of Nicki and the Stoke Farm working group and helpers, everything ran really smoothly, and with demonstrations, workshops, competitions, firings and fantastic catering there was never a dull moment, with something for everyone to enjoy. Here is a selection of photos to give a flavour of it all.

Photos: Ruth Bouman, Mel Beighton, Julia Bruce



Peta's legendary paella.

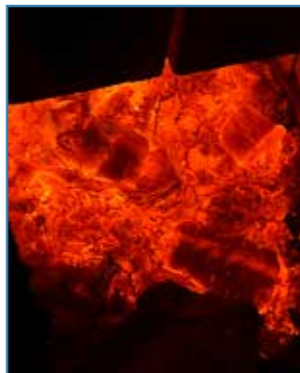
Giant bowl throwing with Frank.



Camp is a very busy place! Glazing day.



Below and left: The spectacular dragon kiln – a collaborative build that was fired on the last night.



Into the eye of the dragon!



The Class of 2025.



Just some of the wonderfully creative entries for the annual making competition. Theme – children's games.



Kilns, kilns and more kilns.



Pots, pots and more pots.

Tracey's Mugs

Photos: Julia Bruce



Ann, Liz, Marie and Martin enjoying some new camp mugs made by Tracey Parsons.

"I'm really liking these new mugs," a fellow camper said to me, cradling a cup of tea as we watched the progress of the soda kiln. "Me too," chimed in another. "Good weight. Nice handles. There are several of them floating around. Who made them?" We scrutinised the maker's mark. "Looks like Tracey Parsons," I opined, but they are not her usual style. We should ask her." So I tracked her down. "Are these lovely mugs yours?" I asked. She looked surprised. "Yes, why? I know they are a bit of a departure for me. Do you like them?" I told her how lots of us liked them – a lot! She was thrilled to bits. "I hadn't done any making in such a long time," she explained. "Then I went to Wayne Clark's demo at Mundford, and was really taken by the freedom of his work. I was inspired to have a go, not worry about weight and finesse, and these mugs are the result. It was great to be making again." And that's the thing about our demos. They really ARE inspiring. It's fantastic to watch other potters practise their craft, marvel at their talent, learn from them and be inspired ourselves. Tracey doesn't sell her work so decided to donate the mugs to camp. Here they are along with a platter and plant pot she made also following Wayne's methods. What will you be inspired by next at our demos?



Above: Much-admired camp mugs.

Left and below: Large platter and plant pot in speckled clay with vitreous slip and celadon glaze. Gas fired.



Photos: Tracey Parsons

Tracey used a speckled clay and consciously let the clay "do its own thing" when she was throwing. After roughly forming the platters very dry on the wheel, she followed Wayne's technique of standing on them to flatten them out. She decorated the platters and plant pots with vitreous slip in a very free style and finished them off with a celadon glaze. She used a green glaze for the mugs. The pots were then gas fired.

Trudy's Pesto Sauce

One of the culinary highlights of Camp was Trudy's pesto sauce. Many campers asked for the recipe, so Trudy has very kindly provided it here.

(Enough for 4-5 servings)



Photos: Trudy Staines

- 100g pine nuts (for camp I used cashew nuts)
- Large bunch of basil (use the stalks also if they are fresh and not woody)
- 100g Parmesan (Italian hard cheese) grated
- 4 cloves of garlic
- 300ml extra-virgin olive oil

Chop the garlic and add to the food processor along with the grated cheese and nuts and blitz.

Add the basil and blitz some more.

Finally add the extra-virgin olive oil and give it a quick final whizz. Not too long as the process can alter the flavour of the oil. Add more oil if it's too thick.

Cook pasta as per the packet instructions, drain, and reserve some of the liquid to add back to the pasta if it's becoming too sticky.

Add the pesto to the pasta and stir over a very low heat until combined. This should be done quickly so as not to overcook the pasta.

The sauce can be kept in the fridge for up to seven days, but it never lasts that long in our house!

~Trudy Staines



Hands like hers

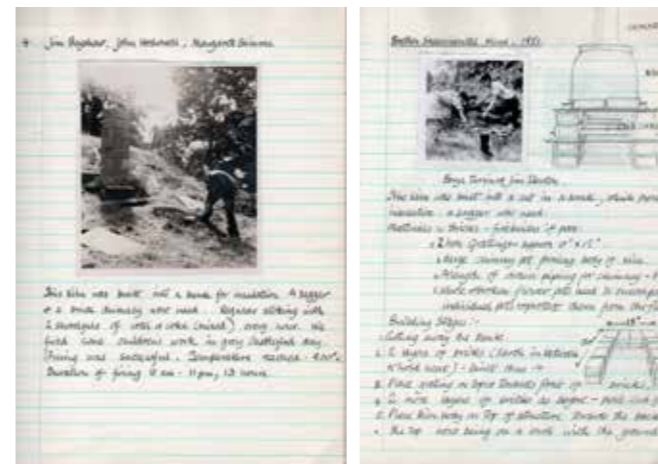


Photos: Lucie Brooks Butler

Lucie as a small child with her grandmother, Margaret Simms.

When my mother and I began sorting through my grandmother's things after she had passed away, the task felt heavier than we expected. Every object carried its own small weight of memory. We found ourselves slowing down, turning each piece over in our hands, unsure what to keep and what to let go. Then, I stumbled across a box under the bed. As I opened this mystery box, I unearthed the treasure we had hoped to find. Her stories, poems, drawings and, standing out among the rest, a journal.

As I read through her notes, I felt as though I was discovering what kind of artist she was and what connects us. She is the reason I am an artist, the reason I've always felt confident enough to pursue a life in the arts. It began when I was small. My mother and grandma always encouraged me to draw, to explore different forms of art. When I was a child, Grandma would sit with me at the kitchen table while the others played outside, teaching me about proportion, about how faces and flowers share a kind of symmetry.



Pages from Margaret's Bretton Hall journal, including drawings, photographs and a description of a kiln she helped build and fire.

Her journal dated back to her years at Bretton Hall, then a teacher-training college specialising in the arts. It was a place where she explored her love for nature, art and music, and began to understand what it meant to be a potter. Like many women of her time, she went on to build a beautiful family and a successful teaching career, but those early creative years clearly shaped her life. Through her drawings and photographs of pottery, I could see her exploring themes of womanhood within her designs, and amongst these were illustrations of different types of kilns she had helped build and records of experimental firings.



Margaret's pencil drawings of platter designs from 1951.

Fast forward seventy-five years, and I found myself following a similar path, exploring what it means to be a woman in the arts. Having recently fallen in love with clay, I left the studio and headed to Potters' Camp at Stoke Farm. The weekend brought together a community of makers who shared techniques, experiments and late-night conversations as fires were lit. As I set off with her diaries in my bag, I didn't know what to expect. The nerves were there, but so was the excitement of learning. From the first day, it was clear this was something different, a community-run gathering built entirely by potters, for potters.

Days were filled with workshops on throwing large bowls, pulling handles, experimenting with firing techniques and raku, and watching Andy construct a series of barrel kilns. I learned how to stoke the fire, feeding it slowly and evenly, watching the heat build and the flames shift colour. The evenings were full of laughter, delicious community dinners, throwing challenges and tutorials. Knowledge was shared freely, tools passed between strangers, and everyone mucked in.

It felt like the kind of experience any potter would dream of to expand their skills and understanding. I left wanting to tell everyone how brilliant it had been, yet part of me wanted to keep it a secret, protect how special those few days had felt, to hold on to that rare mix of generosity, learning, and belonging.

Feeding the fire and watching the colour shift inside the kiln, I began to understand what my grandmother had written about



all those years ago, how the process demands patience, and how the fire still humbles us. A masterclass in every sense. But reflecting on the experience now, I realise what I've learned this summer runs deeper, that making can be both honed by and inherited from those around you, passed hand to hand.

~Lucie Brooks Butler

Andy's barrel firing at Potters' Camp 2025.

Louise Bell Demonstration Day - Mundford 06.04.25



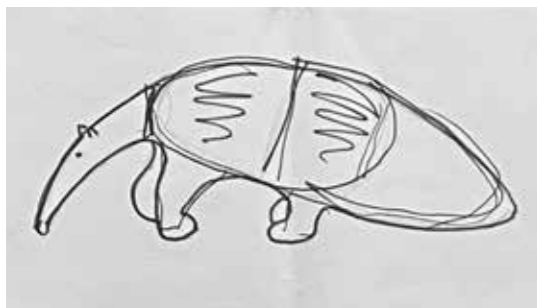
Before showing us how she creates one of her wonderfully characterful animal models, Louise told us a little about her background. She began her ceramics career as many people do: attending evening classes. Three years later, when her children were a little older, she went on to do a BTEC diploma at City Lit in London, a course that would lead her to become a teacher for the next eighteen years. Following redundancy in 2016 she then went on to do an MA in craft at Brighton University. It was during this time she undertook a research project involving new fathers and their experiences, and from those interviews she began to create work inspired by the form of a baby's rattle.



Bola necklace – a rattle on a long chain that hangs down to the belly so the baby can hear it in the womb.

After finishing her MA, Louise began the process of setting up her own studio, a daunting prospect as we can all imagine, transitioning from a maker into a business.

Initially, Louise continued the theme of childhood and the toys associated with it. Inspired by watching her grandchildren play with her old spinning tops she began to think about the history and meaning behind these simple, yet highly impactful, aspects of early development. She thought especially about how these tops might have first been made, crafted from nuts, acorns and wood, all carrying deep associations with the land and folklore surrounding English culture. From rituals and divination to gambling these tops carry a heritage that fascinated her and went on to inspire the aesthetics of her work.



Louise demonstrated how she makes an anteater. It all starts with a rough sketch.

The goal was for her pieces to look as though they had been unearthed, pulled from the ground like ancient artefacts. To this end she has developed glazes and slips that she layers liberally to add texture and finally finishes with a sparkly lithium glaze which creates a unique surface patina on her work.

Louise also takes inspiration from ancient symbols from across the world; paddle dolls from Egypt, wheeled animals from India, figures of sacred cows and Trojan horses from Greece and the many repeated uses of bees in decorations from myriad cultures around the world. All these aspects feature in her work and help add to the underlying themes of connection to the land, growth and development and shared heritage that she explores in her pieces.

Demonstrating how to model an anteater

Louise then went on to demonstrate her process. To begin with, she looks at lots of photos in order to get the essence of the animal, then does basic drawings to get the shape and size, accentuating certain features such as the long nose and bushy tail. A sketch of the piece is then made to the size that she wants, breaking it down into smaller shapes, and she uses this as a guide during the making process by holding up the different parts of the sculpture against the drawn image.



Louise showing us her design drawn to actual size with the measurements annotated. She can then check the size of the actual piece against the original drawing and measurements.

The main body is made of two pinch pots of the same weight/size joined together by scoring and slipping and adding an extra coil around the join.

This egg-shaped form is then manipulated by using a wooden paddle to make it more elongated.



Joining two pinch pots and paddling the form to elongate the shape.

The head of the anteater is made by rolling a short, wide sausage of clay, inserting a wooden dowel through the middle and then rolling it like a rolling pin.

The snout is formed from a rough shape, and then using another dowel to hollow out one end. The legs are small clay sausages. Depending on their size, these might need to be hollowed out. The tail is another, smaller, pinch pot.



Making the head and the snout.



All the different components ready to be put together.

To attach the tail to the body, Louise roughly places them together and marks out where the join will be. She cuts off excess clay from the body, using this opportunity to check the inside of the form. Then she scores and slips the tail to the body, again using a coil around the join to make it stronger. The head and snout are attached in the same way as the tail, measuring up against the body and then cutting a hole.



Attaching the head and snout

Louise again uses a wooden paddle to bash the body into the desired shape, which is then left to set up/dry a little before refining the shape further and attaching the rest of the limbs. The legs need to be cut at an angle to fit around the curve of the body. Then, using a small cookie cutter, Louise makes holes in the body where the legs will go.



Left: After making holes in the body with a cookie cutter, Louise adds the legs, moulding them to fit.

Right: The final product. A finished anteater painted with underglaze and high fired.

The eyes and ears are made with small pieces of clay and attached. Once firmed up, the surface is then smoothed and refined. Louise then uses different tools to draw into the surface and uses a slip to inlay. This is left to dry before scraping back. When the slip has dried, more texture is added by scratching through it.



Adding more texture and scraping back the slip.



Adding more texture and scraping back the slip.



The final form ready for drying and bisque firing.

Once it has been bisqued Louise adds underglaze. The piece is then fired to 1220°C.

I think a lot of attendees went away inspired to have a go at some of Louise's techniques. Huge thanks to Louise for a great demonstration.

~Rose Brettingham



Photo: Louise Bell

Photos: Rose Brettingham and Trudy Staines



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Salt and soda firing at Shotley

Over twenty people took part in the salt and soda firings at Shotley at the beginning of October. The atmosphere was very relaxed and everyone mucked in, which made it even more enjoyable. We were incredibly lucky with the weather, especially as so many events ended up being cancelled over the weekend. I hope everyone got something out of the kilns that they were pleased with.



Photos: Nicki Darrell

Left: Opening the soda kiln.

Below: Newbie salt glazers Ellie Loveday and Zoe Blair assisting Stephen Cheek with the salting.



Photo: Julia Bruce



Photo: Sussan Culpitt

Thanks are due, as always, to Jerry Finlayson for doing some excellent repairs to the burners, being such a generous host and putting up with us taking over his home and kitchen on the Tuesday. We really do appreciate it, Jerry!

On the minus side, the lava flow of molten brick that threatened to block up the front firebox of the salt kiln will have to be dealt with before we can fire it again. I hope to organise a small work party to tackle this in the spring. It will probably involve taking out the bag wall on that side and chipping out as much of the lava flow as we can to get the firebox back to its original size, then packing the chamber walls with bits of brick/kiln shelving/kiln cement. If anyone is up for helping to do this, and is agile enough to get inside the kiln, please let me know...

~Nicki Darrell

Wysing Art Centre's Ceramic Studio



Photo: Claire Haigh

Wysing's annual summer open studios event, 5th July 2025.

We have had an amazing summer here at Wysing Art Centre's Ceramic Studio, welcoming new members, inviting the public in during our annual open studios event and running our ceramics courses. The studio continues to be a real hub within the organisation, fostering collaboration and creativity. Those who join our ceramic studio also join the wider Wysing community of artists and arts industry professionals who work here on our eleven-acre rural site.

Studio member Callum says: "After only being here for a short time, I already feel very welcome at Wysing. Having a ceramics membership gives me access to everything I need, and I love walking through the meadows and woodland in between throwing pots. It's my little oasis of calm in an otherwise busy life!"

We still have space for a few more members. If you're interested in joining our ceramic studio, get in touch with us to arrange a visit by emailing info@wysingartcentre.org, or if you're ready to apply, you can do this online: <https://tinyurl.com/wysing-ceramics-apply>. You can find out more about the ceramic studio membership on our website: <https://www.wysingartcentre.org/opportunities/ceramics-studio>

~Gabby Gilmore



Photo: Wysing Arts Centre

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Perseverance - A student perspective on modern ceramics



“We Don’t Do Ceramics.” This is the phrase that was said to me rather bluntly twelve months ago at Norwich University of the Arts at the beginning of my degree course. While I was disappointed at the time, the phrase actually launched my ongoing adventure into the world of clay.

Due to academic restrictions before starting university, my artistic background comprised mostly of printing and painting. This made university a really exciting prospect, full of resources and opportunities, and while I didn’t know I wanted to work with ceramics from the beginning, once the idea was there, I couldn’t resist the medium. It was explained later that the university had got rid of most of its ceramic equipment in the mid-2000s, due to a lack of interest in the discipline and a growing interest in modern techniques, like metal casting, 3D printing, and so on. This meant no glazes, no wheels and no kilns. Now, personally, I take issue with this, firmly believing there is a responsibility for a university of the arts to support their students in all forms of art, not just what is popular at the time. If we allow ourselves to ignore media that aren’t trending, how long will it be before ancient forms of art are lost?

Wanting to make sure this didn’t happen, I began by working on small handcrafted pieces with very simple forms including pots, cups and trinket dishes. I printed “WE DON’T DO CERAMICS” across every single one, hoping the contradiction would convey my point – not only *can* we do ceramics, we *should*.

Then began the real challenge. I wanted to elevate my pieces and tackle thrown forms, but I couldn’t afford a wheel on my part-time income, so I decided to build one myself. After a lot of testing and researching, considering kick wheels and various other DIY methods, I built my wheel out of a ceiling fan. I tore out the light fixtures, removed the fan blades, rewired the electrics so they were inverted, and fitted the system into a bucket before attaching an MDF plate to the top on which I could throw clay. This whole process took about a month, and I had to teach myself a lot along the way. For example I had never really worked with wiring until now. While the wheel isn’t perfect, I really felt it got my point across to the

university, I was going to throw ceramics with or without them. I quickly learnt it would be without them. I was informed that because the ceiling fan inside my wheel was not being used for its original purpose, I would not be allowed to use the wheel on university grounds.

Photos: Edward Forrester-Flowers



Ed’s converted ceiling fan wheel

This was yet another disheartening roadblock, but I packed up my gear and set up my studio at home, determined to push onwards. The wheel allowed me to create different and more complex forms than previously, and because the wheel isn’t perfectly centred most of my pieces have an uneven rim, which to me reflects the self-taught and built nature of my work, so I have decided to lean into it, making it a feature of my pieces, alongside the text, which I had now evolved into: “I CAN DO CERAMICS”.



“I CAN DO CERAMICS” pots thrown on Ed’s wheel.

One year in, my experience as a ceramics student in a university that doesn’t offer ceramics has been fascinating. While there have been barriers along the way, I am proud of the solutions I have developed to get around the issues. And encouragement has still been there from tutors, including one tutor setting up a link with City of Norwich School allowing me to fire pieces, and pushing for a return of ceramics as I have. Not only that, but the interest in ceramics is making a return. Two fellow students joined me at the end of the year for a small workshop at my “home studio”, and we have already agreed on another one in year two.

This journey has been one of perseverance, not just my own but of ceramics as a medium, as it refuses to be left in the past. Looking forward, the future for student ceramics is challenging but bright, and I know I won’t be alone, as myself and other students learn: We



Fellow students practise throwing at Ed’s unofficial ceramics workshop.

Finally, I would like to put out a small plea. While I am very proud of the self-taught nature of my work, any advice or support from the wonderful Anglian Potters community would be greatly appreciated. Or if you’re another student in a similar position, it would be great to hear from you. You can reach me at edforrester1@gmail.com. Also, if you’d like to follow along with my journey, I’ll be sharing my work on Instagram: @forrest_and_flowers_art.

~Edward Forrester-Flowers

Clay 1a

At Potters' Camp this year, Crispin Kelly came to talk to us about a new and exciting initiative taking place on the waterfront in Ipswich called Clay 1a. Below, Crispin describes his vision for this new museum and centre for all things clay.

Many thanks for the warm welcome I received from you at your summer camp at Stowmarket. That was a wonderful experience, confirming, if it was ever needed, what open, friendly and adventurous people potters are!

I am writing to introduce a new museum/visitor attraction on the waterfront in Ipswich, which is due to open in the spring of 2028. We are converting Waterfront House, a building originally constructed as a grain store by the Paul family 125 years ago, which was then subsequently converted into an office building in the 1980s.

The project is being funded through the Ipswich Ceramic Foundation.



The entrance foyer and shop.

We look forward to keeping you posted and seeing what we might do together.



~Crispin Kelly



The new atrium.

The overarching theme of the museum is celebrating how the everyday can be extraordinary, explored through the things we have at home made of clay. So we have four main themes to use as springboards for our adventures: the kitchen cabinet (cooking and sharing), the mantelpiece (mementoes and knick-knacks), the bathroom (hygiene and sanitation) and the cabinet of curiosities (our treasures).



The idea is to create an immersive experience for visitors in the new space.

This is not about displays in vitrines, but immersive experiences for the visitor, using sound and touch as well as sight. Amongst the treasures, we will be telling the creative lives of three makers of the last century. The first is Anne Stokes, who started out making tableware for her family and art historian friends, but then grew more confident and made life-sized crocodiles, swans and peacocks, all in terracotta. Then there is Gordon Baldwin, who made enigmatic vessels, worked and reworked with engobes. And then Carol McNicholl, one of the new ceramicists graduating from the Royal College of Art in the 70s with an anarchic approach to usefulness.

Exploration will be through a luscious abundance of what they made, and also soundtracks for Anne's forest works and lights in her crocodile; Carol's bicycle, her clothes and her moulds; and Gordon's poetry and drawings as well as work he made with his wife and her paintings.



Loose Clay – a space where you can get your hands dirty.

On the top floor we have Loose Clay where we will be inviting our visitors to get their hands dirty with clay experiences and art projects open to all comers. This is surely a theme we can work with you all to enrich. We plan art events, artist-led workshops and community engagement, and welcome your ideas as we get closer to our scheduled opening in 2028.



Tea Time

And on the first floor overlooking the marina, there is Tea Time: here's where you can come and have a cup of tea and a slice of cake, using the Museum's own collection of ceramics made by artists and ceramicists who have been supporting our mission: making the everyday extraordinary – and above you are the hopper heads from the building's previous life as a grain store.

Other attractions will be a learning centre focused on children and their introduction to clay and its culture; as well as a space for special exhibitions which will change two or three times a year. And YES there will of course be a shop on the ground floor for special ceramics!



Photos and visualisations: Clay 1a



Waterfront House as it is now.



A visualisation of what it will look like as Clay 1a in 2028.

Perhaps our most dramatic move architecturally is to create an atrium rising up through the middle of the building, bringing light into the middle of the plan, as well as joining up the second and third floors overlooking the marina and creating an immersive experience that rinses away our preoccupations and readies us for the rest of the museum.

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Festive Doo Dah

★ Saturday 29th November 2025 - 10.00am to 6.00pm ★
★ Sunday 30th November 2025 - 10.00am to 4.00pm ★

Festive what? Doo Dah! It's a Christmas pop-up art event, showcasing ceramics, basketry, mosaics, sculpture, drawings and mixed media, plus lots of other stuff and nonsense.

Come and join Janet Bates, Ann Bellamy, Denise Brown, Fiona Guernsey, Sue Kirk, Blair Loveday Ceramics & Kathryn Parsons at their Fenland Festive Doo Dah!

And where is it? Grange Farm, Whittlesey Road, Benwick, PE15 0XU.

Sat Nav will bring you to the top of the drive and then follow the festive signage.
what3 words: Pesky.diverts.puppets.
If you're desperate, call our mobile 07949 442772

From bottle kilns to global creativity: Cromartie Hobbycraft



Images: Cromartie Hobbycraft

In the heart of Stoke-on-Trent, where the skyline was once shaped by the smoking silhouettes of bottle kilns and the air was thick with the scent of clay and fire, a legacy was born that continues to thrive nearly eight decades later. That legacy is Cromartie Kilns. Known today as Cromartie Hobbycraft, the company has grown from the fiery heart of The Potteries into a global name in ceramics and creative crafts.

The Fireman Who Mastered the Flames

Long before modern temperature controls and digital displays, the beating heart of every pottery works was the fireman – the craftsman responsible for controlling the immense coal-fired bottle kilns that dominated The Potteries' skyline. Their job was one of patience, instinct and precision. A kiln could hold thousands of pieces, and one misjudged firing could spell disaster. Among these masters of fire was Norman Bosson, a man whose skill and reputation made him one of the best-known firemen in the region. Norman's deep understanding of flame, airflow and temperature earned him respect across Stoke-on-Trent, where his careful hands ensured that countless pottery firings emerged flawless.

A New Era Ignites: The Birth of Cromartie Kilns

In 1946, working from Cromartie House on Cromartie Street, Stoke-on-Trent, Norman began building something truly ground breaking – electric kilns. Drawing on his years of experience with traditional brick kilns, Norman engineered a new way to fire pottery: cleaner, safer, and far more precise. These early electric kilns represented a revolution in ceramics production, offering consistent results and new creative possibilities for potters. From these first designs, Cromartie Kilns was born, soon becoming synonymous with quality and innovation. UK potters embraced Cromartie's reliable electric kilns, and the brand's reputation spread worldwide.

The Move to Park Hall Road

As demand for Cromartie Kilns grew, Norman relocated the business to Park Hall Road, also in Stoke-on-Trent – the very site that remains Cromartie's home to this day. When the company first moved there, the location was shared by several small businesses. But over the years, as Cromartie flourished, it steadily expanded to occupy the entire site – a testament to its ongoing success and enduring reputation for excellence.

A Family Tradition Burns Bright

Cromartie's story is not just one of innovation, but of family legacy. Norman was later joined by his son, Tim Bosson, who, coming from an auto-electrical background, brought a fresh

Simon, Mark, Amanda, Tim, Luke and Lucy: guardians of tradition and innovation at Cromartie Hobbycraft

wave of technical expertise. He became a kiln service engineer, ensuring Cromartie remained at the forefront of kiln design, and performance. His arrival marked the start of the company's next chapter, blending traditional craftsmanship with modern technology to serve an ever-widening ceramics community.

The Creative Touch – Amanda and Cromartie Hobbycraft

In the early 1990s, Tim's wife, Amanda Bosson, added a new creative dimension to the family business. She recognised a growing interest in home pottery and studio ceramics and introduced a line of pottery glazes to cater to hobby potters and artists. This shift in focus inspired a new era of creativity, and in 1994, the company officially changed its name from Cromartie Kilns to Cromartie Hobbycraft, reflecting its growing influence in both professional and leisure ceramics. Working closely with American partners such as Gare Inc., Amanda helped bring the Paint Your Own Pottery (PYOP) movement to the UK. Through her dedication and partnership-building, Cromartie became one of the largest and most respected suppliers in the industry, helping to establish hundreds of pottery painting studios across Britain.

The Next Generation: Innovation with Luke Bosson

Carrying the family legacy forward, third generation Luke Bosson introduced new energy and ideas expanding Cromartie's product range to include a wide variety of activity crafts, making Cromartie a key supplier to major UK holiday resorts and leisure destinations. Today, the company provides these venues – as well as hundreds of private studios and attractions across the UK and beyond – with PYOP equipment, bisque, glazes and craft kits.

Still Family-owned, Still Leading the Way

2026 marks Cromartie's 80th year in business. Even after eight decades, the company remains proudly family-owned and operated, led by Tim, Amanda and Luke. From Norman's first hand-built electric kiln in 1946 to the thriving creative business that stands today, the Bosson family's passion for ceramics, innovation and craftsmanship shines through all they do.

Fired by Tradition, Inspired by Creativity

Today, Cromartie Hobbycraft is a leading supplier of pottery equipment, clays, glazes, kilns and creative craft materials, serving professional potters, hobbyists, schools, studios, and leisure industries worldwide. What began with one man's mastery of fire has become an international brand dedicated to helping people of all ages create, explore and discover the magic of ceramics. Eighty years on, the same family that built those first kilns in the heart of The Potteries still keeps the flame alive: a testament to heritage, craftsmanship and creativity that has stood the test of time. *~Simon Stone*



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Peat: A fuel for living

Photos: Sharon McGeady



Sharon holding a tushkar, a traditional peat cutter, alongside a cut peat bank.

Many years ago I began my clay journey with Anglian Potters and was fortunate enough to study at the “University of Potters’ Camp, Shotley Campus”. These were days of pioneering pottery, wild and beautiful. In the heat of the Suffolk summer we built kilns, threw pots at midnight, chainsawed willow for the wood kiln at 2 am, made exotic musical instruments from extruded clay, mixed glazes, dipped and poured

magic, fired the soda kiln on old doors and engine oil, sang under the stars, danced, ate amazing food and made lifelong friends.

Fifteen years ago I left East Anglia behind and moved north to Shetland where I have since been producing ceramics as one of my full-time jobs. I am also crofting, rearing sheep and living a life where the environment can be challenging at times, but where the view is always stunning.

The changing climate affects all of us, wherever we live, and we must all be mindful of our impact on the world. This is particularly true of potters who rely on mined resources and use energy to fire kilns. In Suffolk water is an issue, here in Shetland it is peat.

This year I was fortunate enough to be offered a VACMA (Visual Arts and Crafts Makers Award) to explore the importance of our peatlands here in Shetland and to capture a point in time where we are on the cusp of huge change.

I would like to thank Shetland Arts, Creative Scotland and VACMA for their support in enabling me to dedicate time to creating something which I believe sheds light on a hugely important issue.



Hand-cut peat stacked to dry. Peat cutting, or casting, is done in the spring. The gaps between the slabs allow the air to circulate.

I live in a beautiful place where worlds collide. The life of the traditional crofter has, for centuries, aligned with the seasons and the weather. Lambing, casting peats, sowing oats, clipping sheep, fishing and hay making have sustained individuals and communities throughout the isles. The arrival of oil set Shetland apart and brought prosperity for some, as well as other environmental impacts. Recently the Scottish government’s decision to build 103 huge wind turbines on environmentally sensitive peatland areas has split communities with some seeing this as progress and others as tragedy.

Those few folk who still cut their peat banks by hand for fuel, one peat at a time, by the sweat of their labour, stand by and wonder as huge machines pour thousands of tonnes of concrete into virgin peat to make ‘green’ energy. Substations and cables take this resource hundreds of miles away to the south. In my mind there needed to be a conversation and for me clay was the way to initiate this.

For generations the peat-fired stove was at the heart of the home. It heated the living space, boiled water, brewed tea, cooked bannocks and soup, dried mutton and fish, warmed sick lambs and was the centre of life. Here fiddle music played, stories were shared, ganseys knitted, kishies woven and babies welcomed. The resting chair was where old folk snoozed at the end of the day. Peat was the fuel for the living. When the fire went out, life was extinguished and homes became damp and slowly turned to rubble.



Since Neolithic times, grazing sheep have shaped the landscape of the Shetland Isles.

I began to prepare for the work I intended to make and became deeply aware of my time in the peat hill. I listened attentively to the bird calls and noted when the turricks (arctic terns) returned to their nesting sites on the shore. I pictured the never-ending movement of deep water round the isles and heard the music in the roar of the waves. I breathed to the meditative rhythm of my tushkar (peat cutting tool) slicing through the peat and to the whisper of the wind in the heather. I recorded through photographs and sketches the shadows on the hillside, how the isle of Yell slowly disappeared into the fog or how the light glistened on the horizon. The patterns made



Unfired vessels reflecting the colours of the landscape and incorporating grasses and moss. These will all burn away in the 1260°C firing.

when building the peat wall so that it didn’t tumble brought joy. I compared colours, took in smells, made rubbings of the vegetation to note the different textures within the layers. I cast my mind inwards and listened humbly to the voices of the ancient peoples who worked so hard to keep their families alive during famine or unbelievable cold, rain or snow. Softening my hard edges and becoming pliable and malleable to new perceptions enabled me to respond to the fragile landscape so my awareness became sharper, clearer and cleaner.

Peat does not just sustain people, it is a whole ecology. Wild things nestle, nest and creep. Sheep shape this land as they graze the poor vegetation. Mothers, grandmothers and great grandmothers following nose to tail along ancient routes, their paths meandering through the hill.

I have made four vessels to date and there will be more. They portray the precarious nature of peat, the cracks of erosion by rain and wind, the thinness of the top vegetation, its deep colour and the texture of its form.

Each vessel is creatively braver than the one before. Each one has more depth of understanding about the richness of this wonderful resource we have been given. I am a hand builder. The clay is stretched, beaten, torn and layered, then dusted with dried red clay, sand, vegetation and peat mould. In our



Finished bowls made of black and red clays and decorated with slips. Inside are fragments of sphagnum moss – the plant that over millennia forms peat – sheep’s wool and other artefacts.

peat bank there is a seam of sand which was reputed to be from the 1500s when a tsunami hit our shores so I have used locally collected wild clay to represent this. Thin vegetable matter is considerable in the top layer of our bank so I have incorporated our own hay, dead heather, found animal bones and used bird egg shells in the clay. Throughout the hill lie layers of volcanic debris, so pumice, granite, feldspars and mica have been included in the lower parts of the vessels. These first vessels were made using a former so although each piece is different there is a rhythm and uniformity of process mimicking the formation of our lands. Slips and inclusions add drama. Peat is usually wet and reflects the light so peat ash is used within the vessels to make a simple glaze. Within the finished bowls I have placed sphagnum moss, dried grasses, animal bones and volcanic pebbles to show the richness of life in the peatlands. In my vessels I used Scarva grogged black and red clays for the main body of the work which gives a rich dark colour.

I am in the process of finding opportunities to show the vessels which will be accompanied by my writings, photos and observations from the hill.



Bowls resting near the peat shed, nestling among sheep’s wool, animal bones and dried plants.

At present the vessels are resting near the peat shed. Visitors to the pottery are drawn to them and thus the conversation begins, just as I hoped it would. How can we use nature’s resources respectfully and sustainably? What does “green” actually mean, and what is our own responsibility in the debate? What have I learnt? As part of my process I discovered new ways with clay but these pieces also required my heart. Creating meaningful work is not hollow or superficial, it requires the maker and artist to take a deep dive into a world where we are open, receptive and appreciative to sound, smell, feeling, touch and taste. In this instance I connected with tradition, heritage, environment, even how the land was formed. The vessels record a moment in time, but this process will go on and on. The practice of listening and close observation has changed my work irrevocably.

I urge us all to continue to challenge and stretch ourselves, reach for new horizons, and take opportunities when they arise. Become sensitive and yielding to new ideas and concepts in how we see the world. Live adventurously!

~Sharon McGeady

Introducing LoStone - New stoneware from Valentine Clays



Is Valentine Clays' new LoStone range set to revolutionise stoneware firing?

There is a lot of talk in the pottery community these days about sustainability. We are becoming more and more aware of the environmental consequences of what we do in all aspects of our lives. Unfortunately, pottery, with its utilisation of extracted materials and consumption of energy and water doesn't have a neutral impact on the world. We rightly argue that what we produce is far more sustainable than any plastic equivalents, but we should also all be looking at ways we can minimise our impact. One way to do this is to fire at lower temperatures, but most stoneware clays require high temperatures to vitrify.

There aren't a lot of options out there if you want the qualities of stoneware, but at a lower firing temperature. You can experiment with mixing earthenware and stoneware, for instance, but that requires a lot of time and effort, and results are variable.

This issue is something that clay manufacturers are also aware of, and is why Stoke-on-Trent-based Valentine Clays have invested decades of research and development into creating LoStone, their pioneering new stoneware clay that works at substantially lower firing temperatures. Vitrified LoStone falls between the lower end of the stoneware firing range and the upper end of the earthenware range.

Valentine Clays say that this represents a major milestone in the company's 46-year history, and that their new product enables potters to fire up their imagination, without having to power up their kilns.

This is how Hannah Ault, the CEO of Valentine Clays, describes their new product: "LoStone is the UK's first low-fire stoneware. We've redefined what's possible to give makers everything they love about stoneware, including strength, stability and surface, but with a reduction in the cost of firing and kiln maintenance. It means a new generation of potters can now work with and enjoy the dynamic qualities of this enduring clay, without the energy demands."

She observes that for many smaller pottery businesses using stoneware has not been an option. "Requiring intense firing, it has been literally too hot to handle, with many potters' kilns not having the capability to heat up to the required temperatures. and for those that do, the additional energy costs are a burden," she says.

This is where their new LoStone range comes in. With a firing range of 1060°C–1220°C, and fully vitrifying at 1160°C (cone 3), as opposed to around 1240°C (cone 7) for most stoneware clays, energy costs are much reduced.

LoStone is regarded as a more sustainable option compared to traditional stoneware clays, as it requires 60 to 100°C less heat to achieve vitrification. It's important to note that several factors influence energy consumption during kiln firings, such as the density of the kiln load and the condition of the heating elements. However, consistent testing at Valentine Clays' electric lab kilns under similar loading conditions and across various temperatures has demonstrated a 16% reduction in energy consumption at 1160°C compared to firing at 1260°C. Firing at 1160°C the kiln elements and structure will be put under less load and Valentine's anticipate that kiln maintenance costs will be significantly lowered. It is estimated that a kiln fired at 1150°C will have double the life of elements fired at 1200°C and around three times the life of elements fired at 1260°C.

LoStone clay matures more quickly than both earthenware and stoneware clay firing ranges. Even at a temperature of 1000°C, LoStone clay exhibits a water absorption rate of only 15%, which is quite favourable compared to certain earthenware clays fired at 1100°C.

With such low temperatures, potters are also going to have to think about the glazes they use with these clays. Valentine Clays have tested glazes from Botz, Scarva and PotteryCrafts and report these have performed well. They suggest considering glazes in the following ranges:

Cone 5–6 (1200–1220°C): Stoneware glazes
Cone 1–4 (1140–1180°C): Mid-fire glazes
Cone 04–01 (1060–1120°C): Earthenware glazes

For best results and to achieve a vitrified finish, Valentine's recommend that LoStone clays be fired to cone 3.

So, that's the technical stuff, but how does the clay look? It comes in a range of six colours inspired by all the elements that go in to making pottery: earth, air, fire and water. The different colours are also mixable. They are: Frost (white), Dune (buff), Shale (dark grey), Sea-Mist (pale grey-blue), Drift (pale speckled) and Ember (warm red). The prices vary with Dune being the cheapest at £12.80 + VAT for a single 10kg bag (note, *not* 12.5kg) and Sea-Mist, Shale and Ember the most expensive at £16.50 + VAT. These are undoubtedly premium prices, but Valentine Clays maintain this is more than offset by the savings made in firing and maintenance costs.

Unsurprisingly, interest in these new clays has been intense, but as they are so new, at the time of writing, there weren't any reviews available about how the clay behaves or feels when being thrown, or what results people have had when firing it.

Valentine Clays are kindly offering Anglian Potters a discount, so do try out the new range, and please consider dropping the Newsletter Editor a line with your thoughts on how you find it, and we can publish some reviews. To get the discount, email sales@valentineclays.co.uk with your order and a screenshot or photo of your membership page on our website.

To find out more about LoStone visit: <https://bit.ly/4potfMN>

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Firing Range – 1060°C -1220°C, Fully vitrified at 1160°C

For years stoneware has required high firing temperatures but at Valentine Clays we have re-defined what was once thought impossible.

LoStone offers the stability and surface that makes value while avoiding the cost of high temperature firing.

For those using low temperature kilns in home studios, schools or shared spaces, LoStone makes stoneware accessible for the first time.

At Valentine Clays we believe innovation in clay can shape more than pots, *it can shape a better future.*

Six natural colourways* inspired by earth, air, fire and water.



*The colours shown are a digital print representation and may not exactly match the actual product colours due to variations in printing processes.



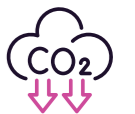
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Those we have lost - Rosemarie Cooke



Rosemarie Cooke, who died in July, had been making ceramic representations of animals and people for more than fifty years. She was born on the Channel Island of Guernsey in 1945, five weeks before it was liberated from German control. Rosemarie excelled at school and displayed a broad range of talents in both science and the arts. When we first met in 1965 at Reading University, she was undertaking a science degree course, but really wanted to be a dress

designer and wore distinctive clothes, many of which she had made herself. Even then, she had an obvious innate ability to think and create in three dimensions.

We married in 1967 and moved to East Anglia in 1968 as I had secured a job in nature conservation at a government research centre near Huntingdon. Unfortunately, suitable and attractive jobs for Rosemarie were non-existent, and she settled down to become a supporting wife and mother, with David being born in 1970 and Steven in 1971. Around that time, she started attending pottery evening classes and quickly began to master hand-building. She continued with evening classes for many years because she liked the company and the trip to the pub afterwards. By teaming up with friends, who had facilities for making and firing ceramics, she was able to expand her production – people were buying her creations and commissioning pieces. In the early 1980s, we moved to a larger home with outbuildings in which she had a studio and gallery. In the late 1980s, she joined East Anglian Potters Association, which later became Anglian Potters. She was Member 200, and David was Member 201. She was made a Selected Member a few years later, and served for a period as Treasurer. David inherited her creative genes and benefited from having access to clay at a very young age. He has been a full-time sculptor since leaving college in the early 1990s, and now also works in media such as bronze, steel and wood. In 2023, they both featured in the exhibition and accompanying booklet “Anglian Potters celebrates 40 years with 40 potters” curated and compiled by Carolyn Postgate.

Rosemarie individually built animals, birds and human figures in a variety of stoneware clays. These were then biscuit-fired and glazed thinly or finished with various stains and oxides before the final firing. On the AP website, she is quoted as saying, “I enjoy the challenge of manipulating the clay into the desired form, be it a dodo standing precariously on two legs or a large, squat toad resting firmly on its belly. Texture is of great importance in my work.”

Animals curled up with their legs in the air, such as hedgehogs, badgers or this armadillo, proved popular.

Animals curled up with their legs in the air, such as hedgehogs, badgers or this armadillo, proved popular.

Rosemarie’s technique with something like a toad was to start with two thumb pots joined together. A standing form would be constructed from the ground up, often with wooden sticks loosely inside each leg that would be removed as the body began to form. She enjoyed making people, often based on old photos of country folk. Gradually, human figures faded into the background as she realised that buyers were more interested in animals – and the return per hour of effort in making figures was not very good. She did, however, readily accept commissions, which were usually intended as birthday or retirement presents and often took the form of fishermen or sportsmen. Rosemarie also had a good line in commissions for retiring naturalists, sometimes making life-like examples of species that might have been rarely or never modelled before.

Guernsey lady knitting. Rosemarie had been asked to provide a suitable piece for a charity auction on the island, and this piece was based on an old engraving. With commissions, she usually made two and the client had the better one. In this case, we kept the “second”.



Dürer's rhino. The famously imaginative image of an Indian rhino provided Rosemarie with a rich subject for exotic texturing.



As she didn’t use moulds and only very occasionally sprigs, her output was very low compared with a production thrower, but over the course of a career of more than fifty years she will have made and sold thousands of pieces. I helped boost production over a period of twenty or thirty years by throwing small, simple pots that she adorned with mice, small birds and ceramic vegetation. She sold many pieces through AP shows, and always had a few galleries that she kept supplied.

Some people amassed collections of dozens of her pieces, often augmented by commissioning species they did not already have. Her creations occasionally turn up in places such as eBay, antique fairs and shops selling collectibles. Some knowledgeable sellers recognise her work and know about her relationship with David. That is her ceramic legacy.

~Arnold Cooke

Anglian Potter friends share their memories of Rosemarie

Rosemarie was one of those stalwarts of Anglian Potters whose work contributed something unique and individual to our exhibitions. I became familiar with her work after joining AP and curating shows in Ely and Cambridge. I was taken by the animal forms that Rosemarie observed and modelled so skilfully. She managed to capture the essence of the character of these creatures in clay, demonstrating a deep level of understanding of ceramic materials as a creative medium. Recently I had the opportunity to get to know Rosemarie more personally through our meeting on the AP Sunday Zoom sessions where she spoke unassumingly about her work and shared her knowledge of making and firing.

~Ray Auker

Rosemarie and I were friends for years – I think we both joined East Anglian Potters Association around the same time (my number is 102, hers 200). During the years when she served as Treasurer, I was Exhibitions Organiser. I remember well the sessions after each show at All Saints’ Church in Cambridge in the winter, or Ely Cathedral in the summer, when Rosemarie, Arnold and I would get together to go through the sales sheets, work out how much each potter was due to receive for their sales, then laboriously fill out cheques (remember those?) for each payment. Rosemarie always kept a cool head, even when the inevitable muddles occurred.

I thought her work was brilliant – it was always a “hot cake” seller at AP shows, very popular with our regular patrons. On one occasion Rosemarie had exhibited a mother seal with her pup. In those days I used to come in to the shows every other day or two to check on sales: imagine my surprise to find the mother seal without its pup! The pup had been bought (for the price meant for the two together) on the previous day. Of course we had no way of knowing who had made the purchase, so were unable to reunite mother and pup. Moral of this tale: always label your two-part work very clearly!

I was glad to have been able to call in on Rosemarie and Arnold (and be treated to a slice of her amazing cake – she was a wonderful baker) when I visited all corners of East Anglia in search



Some of Rosemarie's favourites from a 2023 firing: grebes, an owl and a dormouse, with a rarer tree frog.

of pots to exhibit in the “Anglian Potters celebrates 40 years with 40 potters” exhibition in 2023. Although we didn’t meet very often in the last few years, I feel very privileged to have called Rosemarie my friend, and she will be much missed.

~Carolyn Postgate

I was very sad to hear of the death of Rosemarie, but SO very glad, however, that I had a long conversation with her and Arnold at a demonstration day earlier this year. I had not seen her for quite some time. We chatted about her illness and our commonality of the Channel Islands, her being a Guernsey girl and our seventeen years living on Jersey. She will be missed along with her ceramic menagerie. A lovely lady.

~Liz & Graham Smith

Like so many potters, Rosemarie delighted in other people’s success and in my case it wasn’t always to do with ceramics. I met Rosemarie back in the early days of the Association and have enjoyed seeing her work grow in excellence over the years, admiring her eye for detail and her skill in reproducing individual characteristics of her wild creatures and the research put into everything she made.

Rosemarie was always welcoming, friendly and efficient. I was “on the desk” with her at least once and members will know that being the leader can be stressful. On one of those days I bought one of her smaller pieces: a wren in a basket. Perfect, I thought, for a key container with such a reliable guardian.

I shall miss Rosemarie’s warmth and intelligence. Her ceramic pieces will be in many valued collections.

~Penny Johnson



Photo: Penny Johnson

Bricks that burn



Photo: Jean Flannery

Chimneys of the brickworks at Stewartby in the 1950s.

Many of us will know that bricks are manufactured in the Peterborough area, but did you know there was a time when a little way down the road there was a company making “self-firing” bricks.

The clay from which bricks were traditionally made is called the Oxford Clay Formation, specifically the Peterborough Member, and it outcrops from Dorset through central England, via Oxford, Marston Vale and Peterborough up to Lincolnshire and beyond. In 1881 a company set up by the Stewart family in the Marston Vale area just south of Bedford discovered that the seam of clay just below this had interesting properties.

It was oily and bituminous, just moist enough to be pressed immediately into shape and needing little drying (hence cost-saving) and with the correct lime content to prevent the bricks from cracking.

What is more, the clay had another property which resulted in a spectacular reduction in the cost of firing: its oiliness came from organic material, probably marine algae, laid down 150 million years ago when the area was under water and transformed by heat and pressure into bitumen. This organic carbon combusted within the bricks at 400°C, and they continued to fire themselves up to 950°C with only a very small addition of coal dust.

The Stewart mine (later part of the London Brick Company) massively increased its profit. At one point it had a workforce of 2,000, with over 30 enormously high chimneys, and was manufacturing 500 million bricks a year. The company even built a model village now known as Stewartby.

But there were problems. Because of the combustible material in the clay the fumes given off during firing were very unpleasant, with a high level of sulphur dioxide. Despite higher and higher chimneys, the smell of rotting cabbages could be pretty intolerable. In 2008 the Stewartby mine closed, as modern regulations made the level of pollution unacceptable.

~Susan Cupitt

Reconstructing and firing a Roman kiln

Photo: Kerry Grant @london_ceramics



The reconstruction kiln with pots ready to be loaded.

For potters, natural spaces have always had a certain allure. Potters are no strangers to being forced to follow the rhythm of the clay and allow the natural cycles to take effect. There is a lot of waiting involved in pottery, for kilns to cool, for the pots to rest to be trimmed, for studio technicians to refill buckets of glazes. But something that we have nearly completely removed is the wait for available clay. It's something that's taken for granted, the fact that these materials form over hundreds of thousands of years, then lie waiting to be processed, roughly moulded and tossed into a fire to be changed forever into ceramic. Amazing still, is the process of creating lasting thought in physical form, in a new, durable state, able to outlive us and be used thousands of years into the future. There is a presence to clay in its natural form that holds so much history and creative potential. It has been with us since our earliest humble origins and continues to bring us new questions and to reveal its secrets.

To be a little more modern, when the Roman Empire developed Londinium around two thousand years ago, a small ceramics site was set up in the rolling hills around five miles north-west of its centre in what is now Highgate Wood. The potters at the time, perhaps just as enamoured with natural spaces as we are, found a thriving woodland here with streams, hornbeams, oaks and, most importantly, rich clay deposits, and established what would, for the next hundred years, be a hugely significant Roman pottery manufacturing site in London.

Highgate Clay, geologically part of the Eocene London Clay known as the Claygate Member, has some incredible properties for a wild clay body, being both iron rich, like most earthenware, but also high in silica, like stoneware, making it a sort of natural hybrid. It is highly plastic and can be thrown incredibly thin and yet, when bone dry, is very durable. These characteristics were perfect for contemporary Roman firing techniques. The kilns consisted of one large, rounded chamber with all the pots tumble stacked inside each other and rim to rim, with the roof of the kiln resting across the top of the pile of bone-dry pottery, so durability and robustness at this

stage was essential. One of the trends at the time was for dark coloured ware, which was made possible by reducing the oxygen in the kiln's atmosphere turning iron-rich clays into deep greys and blacks.

Another useful characteristic of the Highgate clay is its rate of vitrification, the stage at which most of the silica in a clay body melts to form durable ceramic, resulting in the noticeable high-pitched "ping" of pots when struck. Most clay bodies have additives to make the clays work to specific firing temperatures and match perfectly with the temperatures of glazes. To find a wild clay that not only naturally vitrifies at the low temperature of 800°C but can hold its form without bloating, bubbling or melting to a puddle all the way up to 1260°C (cone 8) is an incredibly rare find. Having such a wide range and tolerance for the heatwork means the clay lends itself well to updraught wood-firing kilns with no modern heat detecting equipment.

The experience of firing a wood-fuelled kiln is something quite primal and involves consideration of many different factors. Wood-fire potters not only control the temperature rise, but also separately consider the flames and heatwork, along with the amount of oxygen and airflow. There is something almost melodic to the process, with these factors acting as an ensemble, working in harmony in a slow but steady song.

The prolific Roman potters of Highgate Wood made ten "updraught" kilns between 50 CE and 160 CE. All these kilns consisted of a longer-than-average firebox (a consequence, we believe, of the type of local coppiced wood that was used), a central chamber with a plinth and firebars to allow heat and flame through, and a roof erected over the carefully arranged pots at each firing with a small opening at the top of the kiln for an exit flue. This is a very simple design, and in a lot of ways quite inefficient; most of the energy from the fire goes out of the back of the kiln. This is in contrast to a downdraught kiln where the heat is encouraged to do a second pass of the pots in the chamber. Although used at the time around Asia, the technology of downdraught kilns wouldn't be introduced to Britain until much later.

It is incredibly fortunate that Highgate Wood managed to remain one of the few untouched natural spaces in London and consequently this rich history has been preserved and can be gleaned from geological and archaeological evidence. Following the discovery and archaeological investigation of the kilns in the 1960s it was only a matter of time before initiatives to better understand the site through practical archaeology would be established. In the 1970s and 2010s reconstructions of the kilns were made and fired with

Roman potsberds from the site.



Photo and background image: www.sarahtruetvetree.co.uk

varying degrees of success and in 2018 the Friends of Highgate Roman Kiln was established to build on this learning and take the experimental archaeology further. Another stroke of luck followed when a new branch of Turning Earth, an open access pottery studio, opened in 2022 just across the road from the site. With this influx of curious minds and expertise the project started to take shape in a way not previously possible.

A new replica Roman kiln was built in Highgate Wood in 2024 using largely historically accurate construction techniques and materials. For instance wattle and daub using 1 part clay, 3 parts earth, 1/2 part straw and 1/2 part sand, wooden internal posts to secure the kiln and following the blueprints based closely on the original kilns for construction of the firebox. There may have been some cheating in the form of a small digger when it came to excavating the firebox trench, but if the Romans had had one, we are sure they would have used it. With leadership from Graham Taylor from Potted History, volunteers built a full-scale replica kiln. At the same time, the team at Turning Earth set about making replica Highgate-ware pots from the wild clay to fill the kiln.

Courses on processing wild clay from the woods began a deep dive into understanding the geology and structure of the clay. The pots that were originally made in these woods were mostly functional ware: storage vessels and cookware along with, most notably, the "poppy-head beaker". Making the pots was informed by the close inspection and handling of original pottery fragments found at this site to replicate the minute details of rolled rims, decorating techniques and throwing style. All this helped us to better understand and emulate the making of the pottery in the woods with its unique wild clay.

There have now been three firings of the kiln, affectionately named "Mooki" in memory of a local potter who was heavily involved in the project. The latest firing happened in September 2025, with over 100 potters making 400 Highgate clay pots and sculptures for this year's firing alone. This has been the most successful firing to date in terms of reduction, vitrification, quantity of pots and overall engagement with the project. The pots themselves are reduced to an almost pewter-like appearance, deep blacks and greys vitrified to the point of being watertight. What is more, the research gained from this range of experience and the overwhelming passion from everyone involved to build, fill and fire the Roman replica kiln thrice over has been truly amazing.

Something that often gets overlooked in the archaeological records regarding pottery is the anonymous but strong community that forms around the process. Even in a setting when the production of pottery was

more of a utilitarian necessity, the beauty, artistry and passion that has gone, and always will go, into producing pottery, firing kilns and sharing skills and knowledge is undeniably present and is reflected in the pots themselves. This Roman Kiln Project will continue to contribute to the research of the Highgate site and its unique clay, and spread to passionate potters far and wide.

~Shem Morgan



*Above: Loading and sealing the kiln.
Left: First glimpse of the fired pots.
Far Left: "Mooki" in mid-fire.
Below: Blackened, almost metallic, heavily reduced pots. There were casualties with cracks and distortions, but many pots survived intact.*

Photos: www.sarahtruetvetree.co.uk



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Kevin Millward



Kevin Millward is an internationally renowned ceramicist who has been potting for over forty years and has trained potters from all over the world. He has worked at studios such as Cooper's Pottery, the Gladstone Pottery Museum and alongside David Leach. He taught ceramics at Buckinghamshire New University and the University of Westminster and has more recently been series consultant to

Channel 4's *The Great Pottery Throwdown*. Here he talks about his new book: *A Green Approach to Ceramics*.

Never before in the history of ceramics has the impact of art and industry on the environment been under such scrutiny. My involvement with ceramics started over 55 years ago at art school, followed by working in studios making functional and garden ware and three years in industry as a technical advisor. The increase in the number of people taking up ceramics as a hobby has never been greater. There is also a new phenomenon, "the experimenter". Someone who just wants to have a go or as one person attending a pottery class was heard to say: "pottery is an itch I need to scratch".

In my new book I aim to educate those involved with ceramics about its environmental impact and of the sourcing, preparation, transportation, and the quantity of water and fuel used to bring clay colours and glazes to your suppliers' shelves.

In the past, most creative potters trained through various forms of arts education or worked in a studio, learning from the experience of potters who had been immersed in ceramics over many years: the building of kilns, making and formulation of clay bodies, colours, slips and glazes; those who had a fundamental understanding of the materials and where they came from. Acquiring the necessary knowledge would take many years to accumulate and this, together with the cost of equipment,



Photos: Kevin Millward

Left: Silicon carbide kiln shelves. Right: Red earthenware test tiles.



Flakes of iron rust from an old gas kiln used in glazes and clay bodies.

prevented many accessing the craft other than by attending local evening classes. I was part of the team at Harrison Mayer, now PotteryCrafts, that introduced pre-mixed colours and glazes in brush-on form, small potters, wheels and top loading kilns that ran on a domestic supply in the mid to late 1970s, to open up the craft to more people.

More recently *The Great Pottery Throwdown* programme that I developed and still work on for Love Productions has brought the possibility of getting involved with ceramics to the masses. This has brought new life to the suppliers in the UK and the sales to the hobby market of clay bodies, colours, glazes, tools, potters' wheels and kilns have grown and grown, and the love of ceramics and the joy it brings has surged. But at what cost? There is increasing consumption of energy not only to fire the finished item, but to transport raw materials – perhaps from the other side of the world – by ship, air and road, to customers. Consider, for example, the importation of raw clays into the UK to make a porcelain body just that little bit whiter – not understanding that porcelain was never that white and was traditionally fired in reduction giving a blue-white, not the stark whiteness seen in porcelain bodies fired in oxidation. All these come together to have an impact on the environment. I am not for one minute saying "don't make pots" but just be aware of its cost to the environment.

I was recently discussing with some of my MA students the reasons why you don't see badly made pots from the past. This is often because nothing was fired until it was of an acceptable standard, whereas today we have a tendency to fire everything, then throw the rejects into the skip, so why not reject it at the clay stage and recycle it?

In my new book *A Green Approach to Ceramics*, I explore many of the subjects mentioned above. I aim to educate the hobby potter to be aware of the amount of preparation that has to go into the production of a ready-to-use clay body, as it has been known for a customer to ask the supplier "why is clay so expensive when you only have to dig it out of the ground and stick it in a plastic bag?" I discuss the perils of glazing and how many pots are lost in the kiln – along with kiln furniture – all due to not knowing how to apply a glaze correctly. I also cover packing and dispatching and the cardboard versus plastic issue. The final chapter is about individual potters I know personally and the efforts they are making to make their practice more sustainable.

~Kevin Millward

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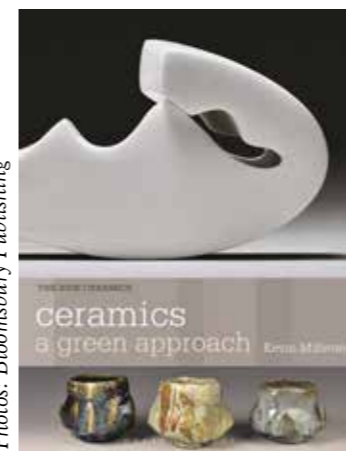
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Book Review



Photos: Bloomsbury Publishing

Kevin Millward's book comes at a time when pottery has never been more popular, but also when it seems that those working in ceramics are disconnected from the material aspects of their craft. His book sets out to educate and inspire potters in how to practise with a green approach. All creatives need to think about the impact created by any work, from inception to the studio shelf. Our education as potters is not just about making; it is about the stewardship of resources so easily available to us. This book opens a conversation about how we can be "as green as possible".

The author's key concern is the extent to which modern potters have so little to do with the technical aspects of ceramics – making glazes, kiln knowledge, the fuels we use, and the disposal of waste from the studio. We need to consider the environmental challenges of our craft and how we can mitigate the worst practices; respecting raw ingredients, resources, and our environment. He identifies the following green challenges for potters:

- Reducing long journeys of the heaviest items
- Educating ourselves about raw materials
- Awareness of the amount of water and energy needed for studio products
- The constant drying and rehydrating of glaze materials, which increases the risk of contamination
- Finding ways to re-use waste heat from kilns
- Habits of reducing, re-using, and recycling

A significant chapter is "Fuel for Thought". Millward writes with passion about the new regulations that Japanese potters now face. Rather than bemoaning the loss of cultural practices, he applauds those working within safer parameters.

The book reminds us of the dangers of all dry materials. In short, the safest substance is a wet one – safety simply requires a little more time and thought from us. I think he is correct that we are often more concerned with speed than being responsible as potters.

I have some caveats about the book:

- The content is instructive but some of the highly detailed technical aspects were harder to absorb because of the way the text was laid out.
- Practical techniques are given less attention.
- There are diagrams and one excellent summary of the origin of raw compounds, but this is not consistent across all chapters.
- For key technical knowledge (fuels, glazes, finishes), more tables or summaries of comparisons would help.
- For some reason the book has no index.

Ceramics: A Green Approach by Kevin Millward | Pub: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2025 | Paperback/Kindle | 224pp | £25.00/£20.42 | 18.92 cm x 1.65 cm x 24.51 cm | ISBN: 978-1789941944

What I enjoyed most about the book :

- The book provides real inspiration for potters to be more green.
- The content encourages thoughtful reflection, and better decision-making for potters who want to be responsible.
- The layout encourages browsing as well as deep reading and insight into ways forward.
- Millward reinforces the idea that ceramics is both a hands-on and a conceptual art.
- The "tips" sections at the end of chapters are all informative.
- The chapter on inspirational potters is fantastic.

An absolute highlight: The final third of Millward's book includes work from potters, both exceptional in quality and in environment responsibility. Over twenty-five examples bring the "green approach" content to life, showing how skill and creativity can coexist without sacrificing artistic or environmental integrity. *Ceramics – A Green Approach* offers a wide-lens view on what ceramics has been in the past, and where we as potters can help it to go. It challenges potters to think critically: about material, about function, about meaning. It is also a wake-up call for any dedicated crafts person willing to make changes to their practice. To quote the final injunctions from the book :

"Be kind to yourself and the planet."

"Adopt small changes if big ones scare you."

"Making a difference is possible, without sacrificing your art."

For more information about the book, please visit:
www.bloomsbury.com/uk/ceramics-a-green-approach-9781789941944

~Cath Jeannot @cathjeannot.thepotter



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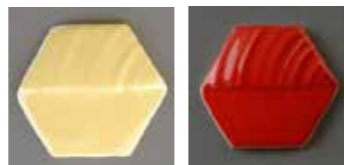
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www.katherinewinfrey.co.uk

www.katiespotterystudio.co.uk

www.lydiacollings.co.uk

www.lorrycudmoreceramics.com

www.louisecrookendenjohnson.uk

www.louisegridley.com

www.madeincley.co.uk

www.madelainemurphy.com

www.maggygardiner.com

www.markjudsonart.blogspot.com

www.marywyatt.co.uk

www.moiragoodall.com

www.ngpottery.com

www.nickysheales.co.uk

www.paulwestley.net

www.philarthurpottery.co.uk

www.potterycourses.com

www.potterycourses.net

www.richardbaxter.co.uk

www.roadlesstraveller.net

www.robbibbyceramics.co.uk

www.rowanhumberstone.co.uk

www.rustathouse.org/JRA.html

www.sandylarkman.co.uk

www.sharonlaslett.co.uk

www.spaceforclay.com

www.spettigue.com

www.stephenmurfitt.squarespace.com

www.sueeyreeceramics.co.uk

www.susancupitt.co.uk

www.suffolkstoneware.co.uk

www.swaffhampotter.co.uk

www.theceramicshub.co.uk

www.trevordyceramics.co.uk

www.waterloohouseporcelain.com

Forthcoming Events

Potfest in the Pens

Melton Mowbray Market,
Leics., LE13 1JY
7–9 November 2025
<https://potfest.co.uk>

Art in Clay Farnham

15–16 November 2025
The Maltings, Bridge Square,
Farnham, Surrey, GU9 7QR
Sat 10.00–5.00, Sun 10.00–4.50.
www.artinclayfarnham.co.uk

Kiln Cambridge Christmas Show

22–23 November 2025
Ditton Walk, Cambridge
www.kilncambridge.com

Margate Ceramics Market

29–30 November 2025
Turner Contemporary Gallery

Norwich Ceramics Market

7 December 2025
The Forum, Norwich.
@norwichceramicsmarket

100 Years, 60 Designers & 1 Future

Until 7 December 2025
The Potteries Museum and Gallery,
Stoke-on-Trent.
www.stokemuseums.org.uk

House

18 November –24 December 2025
County Hall Pottery, London.
A curated marketplace of functional
ceramics for the home.

For details of even more ceramics
events and shows visit:
www.thisthingwithceramics.co.uk

AP Clay Stores

Our clays are sourced from Valentine, Staffs: an inexpensive source of clay for members. They are sold in 12.5kg bags. Paper clay can be ordered by request, as can any Valentine or Scarva clays.

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.

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),
Great Plumstead, Norwich NR13 5AX
07516 503016 **TEXT ONLY, PLEASE.**
diana@ngpottery.com

STONEWARE Firing 1150°C–1280°C

Special Fleck	£ 7.80
ES5 Original	£16.35
B17C grogged	£10.25
ES40 Handbuilding	£20.50
ES50 Crank	£13.55
V9G	£ 7.82

EARTHENWARE

Standard Red Terracotta (1080°C–1160°C)	£ 6.10
ES130 White Earthenware (1060°C–1150°C)	£15.65

PORCELAIN: Firing 1220°C–1240°C

P2 Porcelain	£16.95
Royale Porcelain	£21.05
Porcelain Grogged	£21.85
Audrey Blackman	£23.05

Cambridgeshire: Denise Brown

Grange Farm, Whittlesey Road
Benwick, March PE15 0XU
07949 442772
info@denisebrown ceramics.co.uk

Suffolk: Rebecca & Dominic Upson

Stoke Farm, Battisford,
Stowmarket IP14 2NA
07939 170700
domup3@gmail.com

Diary Dates

AP Christmas Exhibition

All Saints' Church Cambridge
15 November–7 December 2025

Jaroslav Hrustalenko

Mundford
Sunday 25 January 2026

Rob and Debbie Rivett

Mundford
Sunday 22 February 2026

Karen Slade

Mundford
Sunday 22 March 2026

Membership Fees

Single £35 – half year* £20

Joint £60 for two people at the same
address – half year* £35

Institution £60 for a college or
workshop – half year* £35 (details from
the Membership Secretary)

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

*Half year rates only for new members

Advertising Rates

Price: per issue, three issues a year

1 page	w 18 cm x h 26.7cm	£80.00
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Summer Issue	1 June
Winter Issue	1 October

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