



Anglian Potters

Annual Report to Members 2025-2026



The spectacular “Dragon Kiln” constructed and fired at Potters’ Camp 2025

Chair – John Masterton

We first compiled an annual report to members during the Covid lockdown, when we were unable to meet in person for our AGM. We have continued to publish a report every year, as not everyone is able to join us at the AGM, and it's important to let our members know what has been going on over the last year. When we first published a report, we printed it and posted it to all our members, but the cost of both printing and posting has grown and grown, so we now create an electronic version that is available to everyone through the AP website.

We have continued to grow our membership numbers – up to 617 at the end of April 2026. I do hope that you all get something of value from belonging to AP. Everyone is sent a copy of our Newsletter (three times a year), which accounts for around 65% of the membership subscription. All of our other activities are designed to break even, or create a small surplus, which helps to replenish our reserves. We do try to provide a range of activities – demonstrations, exhibitions, clay stores, camp and other workshops, all of which are open to members. Many suppliers offer discounts to our members, and a 'virtual clay store' arrangement with Potclays gives excellent discounts on all products. If there are any other activities you would like to suggest, please do get in touch with any of our committee members.

Celia Greenaway retired from the post of Treasurer at the last AGM, and Louise Puckett joined us taking over the role. It was a battle to transfer all of the accounts, but Louise now has it all under control, and has been a welcome addition to the committee. Andrea Morton has looked after the exhibitions portfolio for some time, but has decided to move away from London, down to Cornwall, which is a bit far away to continue with the work, so we are searching for a new committee member to coordinate the exhibition activities. Many thanks to Andrea for the work she has put into the role, particularly working with Susan Cupitt, getting us back in to Emmanuel College in Cambridge in the summer. We are very fortunate to have experienced teams who volunteer at each of our venues, so that is a bonus, but we do need someone to look after the interface with venues, make sure everything is organised, etc.

As always, I'd like to thank everyone who has been involved in the wide variety of activities this year. Nobody is paid, we are all volunteers, but things happen! This is something that inspired me when I first joined AP, and continues to make me happy! There are too many people to list here, but nothing happens without the gift of time and effort, space and expertise of our members. I'd like to particularly thank the committee members who give their time in an attempt to keep things running.

I am conscious that I have now been Chairman since 2016, which followed previous involvement in organising demo days and the website. I started a new term of three years last year, and feel that I ought to stand down when this term is over (at the 2028 AGM, assuming I last that long!). I'm happy to continue for now, but I don't want things to get stale, and I certainly don't want to go on for ever! So, if you would like to get more involved in helping to run AP, and feel up to the challenge of being Chair (the committee do most of the work!), please come and chat, or suggest someone who could have an arm twisted.

Treasurer – Louise Puckett

We are currently awaiting input for the Treasurer's Report from our accountants. The Report and associated documents will be sent out separately before the AGM.

Exhibitions – Andrea Morton

In general, I have noticed a falling off of both exhibitor numbers and sales over the last twelve months.

Our exhibition at Hyde Hall over the bank holiday weekend (2025) was a success. Nineteen exhibitors took more (£14,000) in sales than was taken at Undercroft in both 2025 and 2026. There is space for up to twenty-four exhibitors and there are, again, only nineteen potters taking part this year. As usual it was held alongside the Craft and Design Fair, which enables a high footfall, although there are always plenty of keen gardeners who visit over that weekend.

The exhibition at the Ferini Art Gallery in Pakefield, Lowestoft ran during May 2025. Ruth Gillett and Sylvie Gagne are giving up the organisation and curation of this exhibition and Nick Walker and Amanda Newman will be taking over for 2027. Thank you, Ruth and Sylvie, for all your hard work over the years that you have been organising this event.

Walberswick 2025 enjoyed another sunny weekend over 26 and 27 July when 20 Anglian Potters set up and sold their work in the local village hall. We had some new members join us, which was fantastic and gave new interest for the many members of the public who come and buy, some every year. Andrew Eastaugh sold his own pots for charity. A very worthy cause – The Olive Harvest Breakfast Club – a charity set up to raise funds to provide equipment such as musical instruments and computers to schools near Nablus, on the West Bank. The charity works through local contact with teachers and community leaders. The kitty surplus from the tombola was £120 and Andrew raised £770, so £900 total was donated, which was fabulous. A wonderful weekend enjoyed by all.

Sadly, the exhibition planned for Ickworth in October was cancelled due to high winds. I am waiting for a response from their events organiser as to whether we can try again this year. It is a lovely space and well lit, with a separate raised 'stage' area that would be ideal for 'have a go' sessions and demonstrations, alongside up to thirty table displays. Anglian Potters used to take part in the Ickworth Wood Fair annually, so it would be good to get back there.

The All Saints' exhibition was very successful. All credit to Liz Chipchase and Tracey Parsons for curating an eye-catching display. Footfall was high, sales were in excess of previous years and we were able to make a generous donation to Winter Comfort, the chosen charity, from the proceeds of the Christmas tree decorations made and donated by exhibitors. Thank you to all who took part.

Undercroft (2026) was very quiet. Sales were good for the first weekend and then fell off dramatically. Although exhibitor numbers were fewer than could be accommodated (fifty potters in a space that can take up to sixty-five), Liz and Tracey again created a wonderful display. We designated a specific area to Paddy Dean, and her pots helped a great deal in supporting the takings. A generous donation in her name was made to Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

I have received an email from Norwich City Council stating: 'I'm afraid that we're not yet taking bookings for 2027, as we are waiting to hear whether there might be some building work in the Undercroft next year. I will keep a note of your interest and will be sure to let you know as soon as we have the venue's availability confirmed.'

Our exhibition at Emmanuel College has, after much negotiation, finally been confirmed. We last held an exhibition there in 2018, so it will be good to be back. The exhibition will run from Wednesday 19 August (with a private view that evening) until Saturday 30 August. I expect to send out the ITP in mid-June. I will be overseeing the Emmanuel set up in person for this year.

Thank you for supporting my endeavours at organising the exhibitions over the last eighteen months. I am relocating to Cornwall but will retain my membership and hopefully exhibit at Emmanuel and All Saints' in future. My plan for this year is to continue to cover the administrative side of the exhibitions, alongside Nick Walker, who has generously volunteered to help and eventually take over.

Stoke Farm Site – Nicki Darrell

Last summer's Potters' Camp was the best yet according to many of the participants. We were, of course, lucky with the weather, which always helps. There were some fantastic workshops and activities and lots of pyrotechnics with the various kiln firings and pizza ovens. Of particular note was the fabulous dragon kiln fired on Saturday, and the experimental wood kiln, which produced some lovely results. This will be dismantled soon and a new rocket kiln built in its place for 2026.

Since last summer there have been two more three-day salt and soda firing events where more AP members have been introduced to the delights of vapour firing. We had lovely weather for the autumn firing. The spring firing was somewhat chillier and damper, but everyone stuck it out and we had a great kiln opening and tea party to celebrate Paddy's life the following Friday.

After Easter the ground was dry enough for things to get going at Stoke Farm again. A small team led by Richard Innes worked very hard on two successive Fridays to get the foundations finished and our lovely new shed erected. It will provide dry, secure storage for the wheels for camp plus lawnmowers and other camp tools. Stephen Cheek has also been busy re-commissioning the water and gas for the static caravan and showers. The winter cold caused a number of plumbing leaks so he has had his work cut out! Liz Lewis and her husband delivered some donations to camp from Paddy's pottery studio and threw in another lawnmower themselves. With that addition we should be able to keep on top of the grass mowing this year.

Applications to camp have now closed and camp is full for this coming summer. We are hiring in one big marquee for workshops and meals this year as our aging marquee erection team are finding the workload too daunting. However, we will still have plenty to do getting up the throwing and hand building marquees plus numerous gazebos for glazing, washing up, earth toilets etc. The experimental kiln this year will be a bottle kiln for which we will need large quantities of multi-coloured wine bottles – so please start collecting now! We are always on the lookout for people willing to run a workshop, demonstration or do a bit of one-to-one teaching in the throwing area. If you have something you'd like to offer, we'd love to hear from you. Please get in touch with Nicki (cantleypottery@gmail.com). We can't pay you but can provide materials and will invite you to join us for a communal meal in the evening.

Events – Rose Brettingham

Attendance has felt a bit mixed this last year with some demonstrations having good numbers, but one being particularly low for Rob and Debbie Rivett. The demonstration by Karen Slade with medieval encaustic tiles had a partly interactive element. Although I couldn't attend I had some very positive feedback from the day.

We are still hoping to find some extra volunteers to help with the tech side of things, although Joanna Reynolds has been learning a bit about the sound system. It would be nice to have a couple more people as back-ups in case 'regulars' can't help.

I have been trying to push social media advertising, but it seems a bit slow to get things out there. Maybe it would be good to re-assess the social media team?

John West is booked for 27 September, and I am hoping to have one more demonstration in the autumn. I am looking into people for the spring with the plan to spread them out more between the spring and autumn next year.

Newsletter – Julia Bruce

We have published three Newsletters since the last AGM with the Summer 2026 issue due out in July. I continue to be grateful to members for providing such excellent copy for each issue of the Newsletter; please keep it coming. I have also been fortunate this last year to have attracted interesting contributions from outside the membership, including an eye-opening article from a current ceramics student, an update from the creator of a new clay creative space in Ipswich and a fascinating history from a well-established potters' supplier in their eightieth year of operation. It's nice to expand our horizons with such articles, but the Newsletter is primarily by the members for the members, so I look forward to hearing about anything pottery related from members over the next twelve months – anglianpotters@gmail.com.

I am considering a minor redesign of the Newsletter to refresh and update the look. As a precursor to this I have checked all the websites in the Members' Websites section and found many of the URLs were out of date – these have been removed, and members are asked to send updated details if desired. I have also updated the Ceramics Helpline.

Our advertising continues to be very healthy with three new advertisers signing up with us this year. In addition many of our advertisers also offer discounts to members.

As ever, I am particularly grateful to Carolyn Postgate for her continuing support, and our excellent printers, Cambridge Print Solutions, for printing and distributing the Newsletter.

Website and IT – Jason Root

Over the course of the year, we've been performing data cleansing on membership information. It was noted that a few members were not appearing on email and newsletter lists when they should have been. We believe this exercise has been completed, but if you are not receiving newsletters in the post or emails regarding demo days, etc. then please let us know on the info@anglianpotters.org.uk email address.

Various website pages have been reviewed, with out-of-date information updated or removed. We try to keep the website as accurate as possible, so please feel free to contact us if you notice something seems incorrect.

Behind the scenes, we've upgraded our website security following a spate of spurious password reset emails. Please be assured that these emails did *not* mean there was any data theft and all of your personal details are securely stored. The fact that these emails have stopped seems to indicate the precautions we took were successful.

Membership – Viv Burns

Anglian Potters now has 617 members with 73 new members joining during the last year.

There seem to have been fewer issues and glitches with the website with members finding it easier to renew membership and update their personal details. BACS payments can still be difficult for me to process without a full name and membership number given on the transaction.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jason for being so supportive and in showing patience and tenacity when there is a database problem or query that I cannot solve. This sentiment is shared by many members who also find Jason very helpful with website issues.

Publicity Report – Ian Vance

We maintained a strong presence throughout the year on social media, through our mailing list and in routine publicity forums, especially associated with our exhibitions, both larger and smaller.

Our mailing list grows by about two new subscribers a week who click the box on our website, and this together with our ever-growing membership list means that we now have well over 2,000 people who we can email. We also add the contact details from the Visitors' Book to the external list. We don't use this mailing list for anything other than exhibitions so as to not overload subscribers. Feedback indicates that this is the main publicity route that brings people in as visitors (although a lot of them also click through to look at the website)

We advertise in *Arts East* magazine and also list our shows in a lot of online forums such as 'What's on in Norwich'.

For the Undercroft exhibition we recorded two voice note announcements, which went out on BBC Radio Norfolk's Saturday morning show. These also linked our presence in Norwich to the amazing show of Ken Matsuzaki's pots at Fire & Flux gallery – a win-win for both shows.

The social media teams followed up on all that was tagged with Anglian Potters and posted about the exhibitions and about individual potters who were taking part.

We have quantities of the Anglian Potters DL leaflet – if anyone needs these to distribute please contact Ian Vance – ian@vance.myzen.co.uk.



Salt and soda firing and tea party in celebration of Paddy Dean's life, March/April 2026, Shotley. Clockwise from left, flowers in one of Paddy's vases adorning the tea table; busy glazing; Paddy throwing by Ray Auker; Paddy in the salt kiln by Helen Humphreys.

