

NEWSLETTER FREE TO MEMBERS
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Spring 2021

SCOTTISH POTTERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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WWW.SCOTTISHPOTTERS.ORG

Chair's letter

BY CHRISTINE FLYNN

Welcome to my last letter as Chair.

I am sure you will all be wishing to know the plans for the year, especially in respect of Tulliallan. Unfortunately, we believe that it will not be safe to hold Tulliallan at all this year but we are already planning for March 2022. Oh what a party that will be, when hopefully it will be safe and life will have taken a big step forward towards normality. Fingers crossed anyway.

Throughout this year the committee have continually tried to come up with different, innovative ways to keep our interest up and try to have a positive influence on the pottery activities of all our members. We began making video workshops but it has proved difficult for us to record these during lockdown. We would like to hear from anyone that would like to make a workshop video for circulation to our membership via our YouTube channel, particularly those who have the means to film it themselves. We have the means to edit if necessary. Also let us know what subjects, in respect of workshop videos, you would like to see.

The Wednesday coffee mornings have been a tremendous success. We have had members join in from the USA, France and Hungary as well as all over Scotland. We discuss glazes, firings, kilns, our mug swap along with the different projects that are in development. It's been great to get to know our members better through our Zoom chats. As a result of its success we are now looking at hold coffee evenings for those that can't join us on a Wednesday morning. The zoom code to join us is always the same and can be found on the website. There is also an advert in the newsletter on page 11.

We have just recently held a mug swap and 23 potters took part. Another initiative is the introduction of our members only dedicated Facebook group – **Scottish Potters Community**.

Come join us and get involved, exchange ideas, learn from others and even just interact with others and show support. We have 80 members involved so far and I would love to see more.

Our AGM is planned for 21 March, 2021 to get things back on track. Please put the date in your diary to attend on Zoom again. We will send out the necessary documentation well in advance along with the reminder. During the AGM there will be a few changes to the committee including Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Newsletter Editor. Your vote counts in all we do and we appreciate your attendance. We will of course be thanking Iain Campbell, Juliet Macleod and Fiona Robertson for their outstanding work and commitment to the SPA over the last few years. It's been a pleasure and a privilege to work with all the committee whom I can't praise enough as a brilliant, committed group of people who have been there to make things happen for the SPA. Thank you all so much.

Being on the committee is a great way to get to know a lot of potters from all over the country and beyond. An ongoing project is the preparations for the SPA's 50th Anniversary in 2024 – we feel that we really need help from the membership for the planning for this important milestone. We are setting up a 50th sub-committee so please come on board with fresh ideas to make this event the special occasion that will highlight the Scottish Potters Association as one of the best pottery associations in the country. I believe it already is so let's keep the bar raised high.

If you are interested in any of the items I've mentioned please contact me by email, chair@scottishpotters.org I look forward to hearing from you.

I would like to thank you all for your support over my term as Chair. Enjoy the newsletter and keep potting.

The Scottish Potters Association (SPA) is a registered Scottish charity (SCIO No: SC048850).

Events 2021

Some dates for your diaries. In the current circumstances please double check with organisers before travelling to events:

Potfest Scotland
11-13 June
www.potfest.co.uk

Potfest in the Park
23-25 July
www.potfest.co.uk

Potfest in the Pens
30 July – 1 August
www.potfest.co.uk

Pittenweem Arts Festival
7-14 August
www.pittenweemartsfestival.co.uk

SPA Facebook Group

Scottish Potters Community

The SPA now has a members group on Facebook. It is a private group for members only where you can share ideas, ask for advice, let others know of an exhibition or craft fair you are participating in. It's a group run by members, for members to help members get to know each other better, network, find others locally to share clay delivery costs – whatever you want it to be! At the time of writing, the group already has 80 members. The link to the group is: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/459589531734381> or within Facebook, search for **Scottish Potters Community**.

If you would like to take part but are unsure about using Facebook, contact our social media coordinator Caroline on zombiecazz@gmail.com

The SPA Committee accept that not every member will want to participate in Facebook and some may not agree with it in principle but we feel that, in these extraordinary times, the more connections we can offer members by whatever means, the better for our wellbeing and mental health.

Committee contacts

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Next newsletter deadline 1 May 2021

For planning purposes please contact the team in advance of submitting articles.

Phil Rogers – 1951-2020

BY CARL RADFORD

It was with a heavy heart that I learnt of the passing of one of the giants of the pottery world just days before Christmas. Thoughts go out to his wife, their young son and family.



Phil Rogers at work at Marston Pottery
Photograph above, and portrait opposite
by Jay Goldmark of Goldmark Gallery.

There will be a number of folk who write well informed and researched obituaries about Phil and his influences on the pottery world and what follows is not one of them. These are some personal observations, comment and thoughts on the kindness and generosity of a man that gave his time to help someone that he never knew and sought nothing in return.

Like myself, most will know of Phil due to his immense skill and passion for eastern style pots – particularly influenced by Korea – which are exhibited and collected worldwide. Many have said that there are few Western potters that have ever been so widely respected and admired within Asia.

Phil has also written seminal works on ash glazes and salt firing as well other instructional books and there are many catalogues from the numerous exhibitions of his pots. There are some videos clips of Phil to be found on YouTube – demonstrating throwing, glazing and firing pots all of which have increased my appreciation of for his pots and pottery in general. I have enjoyed being able to see other potters demonstrating and talking of their process and the influences that they draw from – watching videos of Phil at work certainly falls within this category.

Sadly, I never met Phil. A visit was on my list for early this year. I had communicated with Phil by email discussing ash glazes following the purchase of my first piece from him in 2018. It's a pot that I use, although not as often as I should, for my special teas. One of those few times that you actually sit down and take the time to enjoy the tea along with an appreciation of the cup itself. In September 2020, good friends had holidayed in Rhayader and they went to see Phil to purchase another pot as a Christmas present for me.



They left with a pot for me and two pots for themselves. The following day they returned and purchased another pot for me and yet another for themselves. They spoke to Phil at length about pottery and kilns knowing my interest. Phil kindly signed and made a dedication in a catalogue as part of my Christmas gift. There are no doubt hundreds of others that will have similar experiences and memories of Phil. There is little doubt that his pots have taken on even greater meaning for many that are lucky enough to own them knowing of his passing.

I would like to get to meet the potters that I have purchase pieces from. I like the idea of connection and of the personality behind the pot. I am sad that this was not the case with Phil but feel privileged to have had the little connection that we did.

RIP Phil.

Editor's note: If you are interested there is also a very good obituary by Isabella Smith which you can read online in The Guardian, 19 January 2021.

Exhibitions

BY FRAN MARQUIS, EXHIBITIONS OFFICER

Season's Cycle Watermill Gallery Aberfeldy

3 April – 16 May 2021

As I write we are hoping that your ceramic work on this theme has been fired, photographed and images emailed to me and the other selectors for inclusion in this exhibition. Submission deadline was 14 February. The deadline for delivery is 29 March and the exhibition due to open from 3rd April. There will be around 100 pieces of work from about 20 members included in the exhibition. We hope that it will be open until 16 May and that you will all visit the Gallery. Decisions on this are constantly being revised because of Covid so please check SPA and Watermill websites before visiting if in doubt. The Watermill in Aberfeldy has a lovely café, bookshop and upstairs gallery (not easily wheelchair accessible, I'm afraid) and is in a pretty village in a lovely part of Perthshire so really worth a visit!



Season Cycle submissions
from Erica Lowe

Scottish Stories The Barony West Kilbride Craft Village

Spring/Early Summer 2022
(Dates to be confirmed)

Visit Scotland have chosen 'Scottish Stories' as their theme for the year 2022. Claire at the Barony has asked us to organise an SPA exhibition on that theme as a broad topic basically celebrating Scotland and its history, stories, culture and crafts.

I hope that this topic will appeal to the more sculptural members of the SPA and those who prioritise decoration, but for members who like to make pots there is also the option of referencing Wemyss Pottery who are still making pigs and cats etc (see Griselda Hill Pottery in Ceres, Fife) or the old Seaton Pottery in Aberdeen where clay childrens' toys as well as functional ware was made. There is time to do some research and think about Scottish myths and fairy tales as well.

So let's get inspired and think ahead, by then surely a real 3D exhibition will be possible!

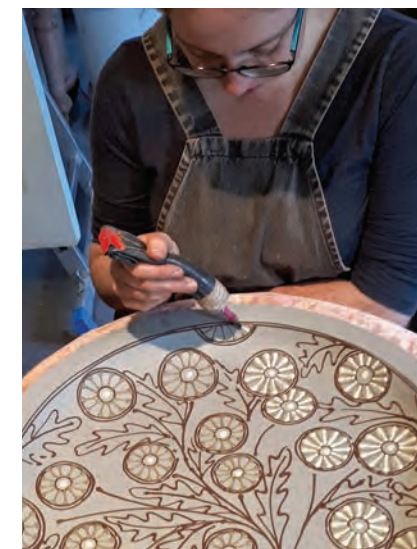
Workshops update

BY MARIA NORDGREN, WORKSHOP COORDINATOR

Tulliallan

You will probably not be surprised and I am very sorry to tell that we have had to cancel the Spring workshop weekend at Tulliallan Castle again this year. We were planning to postpone it to later in the year and, when Tulliallan cancelled our booking, we tried to find another venue. Unfortunately, the Covid situation is just too uncertain and we don't want to get everybody's hopes up, only to have to cancel it again with short notice. We have reinvited the demonstrators; Wendy Lawrence, James Oughtibridge and Tricia Thom for Tulliallan 2023.

After we had to cancel the Spring workshop weekend last year, we reinvited the demonstrators; David Wright, Carina Ciscato and Lesley McKenzie, to next year's workshop. I am pleased to be able to tell you that they are all very happy to come and it will take place on the first weekend, 4-6 March 2022. One of the demonstrators and some of our members are taking part in Ceramics Arts London, which probably will be mid or late March. Since this will be our first real life workshop in a very long time, we want to make it as special as possible. Please let me know if you have any ideas!



Doug Fitch and Hannah McAndrew's
online demonstration is coming soon

Online workshops

Thank you all, who have sent suggestions and offered to do workshop videos and online demos! We will let you know more as soon as we have solid plans in place. Cathrine Holtet's online workshop, Carving and Water Etching, is planned for this Spring and we are now just waiting for restrictions to lift to start recording.

The plans for the Zoom demonstration with Hannah McAndrew and Doug Fitch are taking shape. It will be about an hour and a half long, starting with a tour of the workshop and surroundings at the Fitch & McAndrew pottery. Then Doug will show us how he throws his beautiful two-part jugs and some of his decorating techniques. Hannah will throw and decorate one of her amazing plates.

After the demonstrations, the microphones will be opened up, so participants can ask questions and chat. We will try to make the demos available on the SPA website, for those who have not been able to take part. Keep a lookout for the date and booking information – it will be announced in an e-bulletin, on the website and social media.

Take care and please keep your great ideas and suggestions coming!

Making a slab-built tripod pot

BY AVESHA DEWOLFE, SPIRAL TIDE POTTERY

This form is so fun to make and hugely versatile. It can be any size depending on your template and can be a mug, a tumbler, a lidded jar, a vase, or can be stacked on top of each other to make a sculptural form. The sky's the limit... well, that and the size of your kiln!

Step 1 Decide what you're going to make: Jar? Mug? Vase? Sculpture?

Step 2 Create a rectangular template for your form, a mug uses a template roughly 6 inches tall x 11 inches wide.

**Helpful hint: printer paper works well for trying out shapes once or twice, cardboard works well if you want to make a small run of pots from it, and tar paper lasts forever so use that if you know you'll want to create the form forever. The template I'm using here is made of photo mount board, these templates last a good year or two before needing to be replaced.*

Step 3 Roll out a nice slab (textured or smooth) and compress it well with a rib to prevent cracking. I like to texture my slabs, using found objects and shells. (see photos 1 and 2)

Step 4 Release your slab from the surface you're working on before cutting out the shape of your template so you don't ruin your edges when you lift your form off the table.



Step 5 Cut out your form from your slab. Use a straight cut on the top and two short sides, but hold your knife at a 45° angle when cutting the bottom edge (see photo 3). This helps keep the feet tidy later on.

Step 6 After releasing the slab and cutting out your form, treat the rim to soften the top edge. You can use your finger or a cloth, I use a wallpaper seam roller (see photo 4). Since I use this form mainly for making mugs, I soften the front and back of the rim to create a nice lip to drink from.

Step 7 It's essential at this stage to leave the cut out slab form alone for a while to set up a bit before turning it on its edge and working with it. I use drywall boards to speed up this process, it takes about 20 minutes for my slabs to set up properly. You want your slab form workable but not mushy, if your rim starts to flatten when you turn it up, you'll need to wait a bit longer.

Step 8 When your slab is ready, turn it up onto the rim and close the edges by slipping and scoring the outside of one edge and the inside of the other and attaching them well. Make sure you support the inside of your seam with your fingers, I use a broken rolling pin as I like to accentuate the rim with texture and need a firm surface to press against. (see photo 5)

Your seam can disappear into the body of the pot if you want, rather than accentuate it. To do this, cut both side edges at complimentary 45° angles so they will meet as one when you attach them. Whatever you decide to do with your seam, try to do this part as quickly as you can to prevent damage to your rim.

**Helpful hint: turning the ends of your slab around a broken rolling pin helps create the circular 'memory' your slab will need to keep from warping in the kiln. Also, if you're a thrower, you can skip the previous steps, throw a hollow cylinder and join us in the following steps.*

Making a tripod pot continued

Step 9 Once your seam is finished as you want it, keep the bottom of the pot facing up and use a 'rounder' (unglazed terracotta flower pots work really well for this) to lift the rim of your pot off of your wareboard and keep it from flattening as you treat the foot.

Step 10 Slip and score. Make sure the edge of your form is in the round after putting it on the rounder and then slip and score the cut edge. It helps to clean up the outer edge a bit after this scoring step as it makes the foot cleaner when it's all together. Again, work as quickly as you can in the next steps as the rounder will dry your rim out a bit as you work. (see photo 6)

Step 11 Close the foot. You want your pot to sit evenly on the table, so the goal here is to keep the centre opening as close to a proper, equal-sided triangle as possible as you go. Helpfully, your hands already make that shape, which is wonderful! (see photo 7)

If you chose to accentuate your seam, consider where you want it on your finished pot (whether it will be along a foot side or down the middle belly of the pot) and start pinching from the corners of the triangle in toward the middle, keeping the triangular opening as even as you can up until it closes. (see photo 8)

Smooth out the foot as much as you can with a finishing sponge.

**Helpful hint: If you have a maker's mark, it's easy to add it here, just use a flattened ball of clay and attach it right there in the middle of the foot.*

Step 12 The form must rest again to let the foot toughen up and dry out a bit before adding volume to the pot.

Carrier bags work really well here, tuck a bit of the bag inside the pot and wrap the rest around the belly of the pot leaving the feet out to dry while the rest of the pot stays nice and workable.



Here in Scotland, this drying step can take days in the winter or just 10 minutes on a sunny day in the summer... just be sure that the feet are dry enough so when you turn the pot on its feet they don't collapse. Trial and error is the only way to find this out for your particular clay and your work space.

Step 13 Belly out the pot using a supporting hand outside and a pressing finger or two inside the pot. For the throwers reading this, this will be a HUGELY familiar hand placement! (see photo 9)

It takes up to four turns to belly out the pot, this is the stage where it's easy to put a finger through the walls of your pot if you push too hard so go slowly until you get used to the feeling of this step.

Step 14 Once you have the volume you want, treat the rim either with a roller as before, or soften with a sponge. Think about what you're using this form for, do you need a gallery for a lid? Will it be a drinking vessel or a vase?

Do what you need to finish off the rim, add a handle or lid if you're going to and... Voila! You have a tripod pot! (see photo 10)

www.spiraltidepottery.com

Coffee Mornings

We have online Coffee Mornings EVERY Wednesday morning from 10.30 to 11.30am.

Join us on Zoom – meeting ID 793 322 4286. There is no password, and the meeting ID is always the same. Each week we have a few regulars and then different people pop in. Conversations are wide ranging from changing kiln elements to preventing clay freezing, the weather to Covid vaccines and everything in between. So, if you find yourself free on a Wednesday morning, don't forget to pop in and say hello.

Members gallery

RECENT WORK FROM SOME OF OUR MEMBERS



Clockwise from top left:

James Bassett Slip trailed Wedding Plate

Dorothy Hunter White Glazed Jugs, thrown and handbuilt in stoneware.

John Nimmo Shallow Fish Dish, 32 cm, white earthenware decorated with slips whilst still in its wet state on the wheel.

Amy Buttress Dish, handbuilt crank stoneware, recycled glass, fired to 1220°C in an electric kiln.

Sylwia Kolasinska Wheelthrown mug in grey grogged stoneware, white underglaze and black underglaze transfer, black underglaze pencil, electric fired to 1230°C.



Clockwise from top left:

Joe Morgan Stick Lump, Scarva PF 560 clay, pinch slab and extruded, fired in oxidation to cone 9.

Richie Cameron Finely grogged stoneware, modelled or slabbed, underglazed and waxed or with cobalt oxide wash.

Carol Hiles Stoneware with coloured slips, underglazes and copper with a high alkaline glaze, fired to 1190°C.

Geralyn Walker First attempts at throwing black porcelain, Mayco mid fire rage glazes, fired to 1220°C plus 10 min hold.

Jill Houghton Slyte Coiled crank clay, raku fired black.

Kristine Blackburn Commission, raku clay, raku fired with feathers, gilded interior and driftwood handle.

A Pandemic Tale

BY PARK POTTERY, FINDHORN

Greetings from Park Pottery Findhorn, a relatively new 'enterprise' in an old pottery situated within the Findhorn Foundation at the Park site along Findhorn Bay.



A small team have been regenerating the empty pottery since spring of 2019. We renamed it, rebuilt the interior and started from scratch with the generous kindness of friends, angels and miracles along the way. Here's our story so far.

Before we even had a kiln, we were selling and paying our rent monthly to the Findhorn Foundation (a Spiritual Community and educational charitable Trust). We borrowed space in neighbouring kilns to fire our work. Local potters and professionals visiting from afar (USA and France) also donated their work for sale and the good will of the extended community and friends contributed equipment. Soon enough, we could buy a kiln and a new wheel as well as the ongoing necessities. All sales support the upkeep and expansion of the pottery. So far, no potters profit financially from the work they create, only from the joy of sustainability. We sell the work of about eight potters, displaying a great variety of styles and techniques (wheel thrown and hand built) and various uses from functional to decorative to sculptural. We even managed to run some classes for a while, and hope to do so in the future. It is truly a community pottery.

Our first six months included a lively summer, culminating in a two-week workshop in January 2020 – part of the educational programmes of the Findhorn Foundation. And then the pandemic struck! The Foundation closed to guests in April, drastically reducing our clientele. The adjacent Holiday Caravan Park reopened in July and the pottery was a point of interest for a few months. But what happened in between is the miracle that kept alive the pottery and the spirit of community.

When Coronavirus hit the nation, like every other organisation, the Findhorn Foundation found itself needing funds to survive, as



85% of its income came from residential educational guest programmes hosting people from around the world. And the world was in lockdown.

A creative long time member from the early days of Findhorn and present time, Caroline Shaw, thought that donors are more often moved to give to the Arts than to a Charity in need of funds. As a result Park Pottery Findhorn was commissioned to design and create a Phoenix mosaic made of ceramic tiles to be inlaid between a beautiful sandstone crazy paving terrace in front of the Phoenix Café outside the Universal Hall.

The Universal Hall is a performing Arts auditorium for three hundred people. The building is dressed in sandstone by different stone masons, each wall an art sculpture in itself. Many people built it over a period of about ten years. It was completed in 1983. What did not get done was the decorative finish of the terrace due to lack of money and time.



After thirty seven years the opportunity arose to complete the terrace as the Café was closed, due to the pandemic. The pair of stonemasons could work independently on the crazy paving outside. Park Pottery, closed to the public, could work solo or in teams of two inside, masked and socially distanced.

Whilst waiting for our local quarry to open and supply the sandstone, the Park Pottery Findhorn, headed up by Craig Gibsone, pulled together a design team to create the symbol of the Phoenix, the mythical bird that transforms itself by setting itself on fire. A new Phoenix emerging from the ashes is born. This is the symbol that the Findhorn Foundation is using to regenerate itself and to help our world renew in a more loving and sustainable way. And what better place to do it in than a pottery also in a 'phoenix moment' – rising from its ashes.

continued overleaf...

Clockwise from bottom left: Lesley & Marialaura laying out design on cardboard; Raw tiles; Craig Gibsone at Park Pottery Findhorn; Finished tiles from the kiln.

A Pandemic Tale continued



Community artist Lesley Downie emerged as the main designer of the Phoenix with right-hand-woman Marialaura Romagnoli, a local potter and contributing friend of Park Pottery Findhorn.

Park Pottery set about making the tiles from various clay bodies. A new slab roller was bought to facilitate the project. Much experimentation with tiles, including texture to reduce slipperiness, as well as shape and colour changed with each firing.

The Phoenix stretches almost the full length of the terrace, (about eighty five square meters). The tail, mainly blue, represents the elements of water, air and ether in colours, moving towards the browns and greens of the body for the element of earth and then reds, oranges and yellows expressing the power of fire in the wings of the bird.

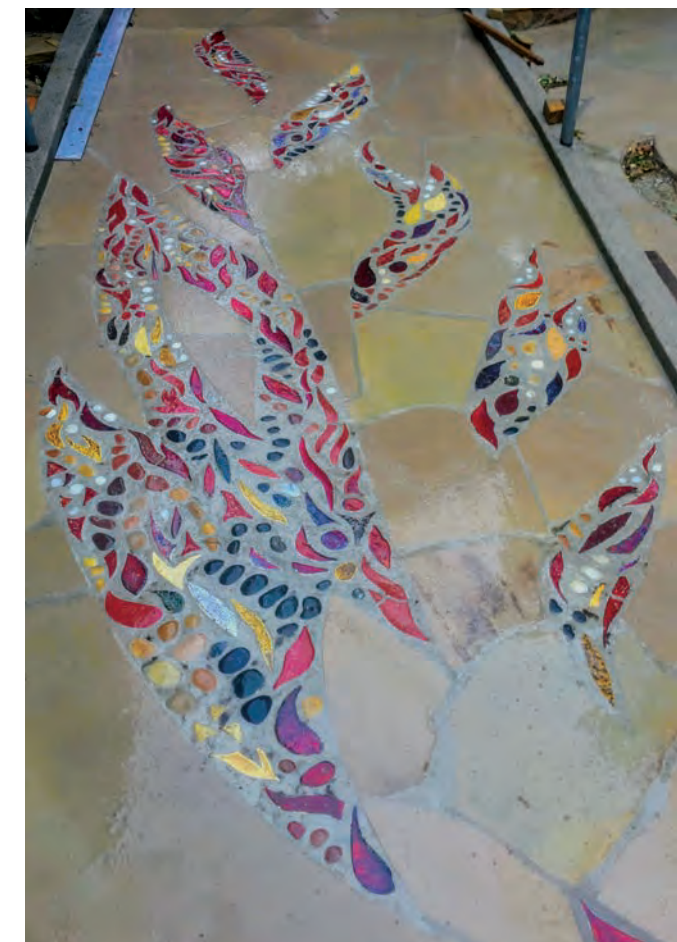
At the start we envisioned a six-week project. In reality it lasted almost six months. People from near and a bit farther came to help with the making of the tiles in the pottery. Under the supervision of the design crew, other dedicated volunteers learned to lay tiles in mortar on the terrace. The spirit of hope and community service and love spread like a pandemic. We had to turn people away, only because of space and health considerations and because we were full!

The completed project's dedication coincided with the 58th birthday of the Findhorn Foundation in November. As for the pottery, we had a month to get ready for Christmas and then lockdown again, which only means we are well stocked for reopening... whenever that occurs.



In the meantime, our supply of extra tiles became a best seller for the pottery as residents tiled their paths or created other projects with the veins of the Phoenix spreading through our community. For Park Pottery it felt like grounding our new existence as well as giving to our community something beautiful and colourful that will last beyond our years of custodianship and cement hopeful transformation for future generations.

Park Pottery Findhorn
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The Park
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Email park.pottery@findhorn.cc



Opposite page: The Phoenix head mosaic.

Clockwise from top left: Middle section; Tail section; Terrace ramp to Universal Hall; Ramp in process.

My space: The Supershed

BY MICHELLE LOWE

'My Space' in Edinburgh is in the somewhat unlikely setting of a typical later New Town basement.



Working in it feels as close as you can get to being outside, whilst being inside and warm and dry. It has masses of light from seven double glazed windows and two glass doors (reclaimed from a skip by a friend who works next to a glazing company). There's a small lean-to greenhouse built on to one side, so from my workbench and desk I look onto our seedlings growing. From my wheel, I have a leafy view through a plum tree which is espaliered across the front. When the weather is nice, I spill out into the garden with pots spread out to dry.

I've been working in the supershed since 2015. Before we built it, I used a room in our house for a couple of years. And before that, I had a workshop at Gorgie City Farm which was a lovely community to be part of, but my workshop which was an old bottle store for a pub, was dark and very damp. Pots seemed to



get wetter not drier on the shelves there and I used to clear any frogs who had come in from the adjoining wildlife pond from under my kiln before firing it!

When I left my 'Frog Pottery', I was delighted to move into our house. Not only because it was warm, dry and light, but also because it meant I didn't need to cycle for half an hour to do every little job. I now love being in my supershed even more as it is near enough to nip out in seconds, but distant enough to be my own separate space. That is even more valuable now I have two small children.

I make functional slip decorated earthenware pots, mostly thrown on the wheel and the space is just big enough to take a kiln-load of pots through every stage of the process. It's about 3 x 4m and has all the essentials: a wheel, drying shelves for boards of pots, a standing workbench and a sitting desk, a Belfast sink with a clay trap and a damp cupboard fridge.

There are shelves everywhere for books, moulds, templates, slips, stamps, sheets of plastic etc. Under every surface are buckets



of glaze, boards and clay storage. The space is pretty rammed as I am a hoarder and like to keep every little thing that could possibly one day turn out to be a useful tool/texture/inspiration.

I've also got a pugmill with a work surface over the top of it with my little slab roller on top. When I want to pug I slide the worktop across onto my drying rack. It's a great space saving solution as I tend to pug a big batch of clay and store it in plastic boxes so I don't use it very frequently.

My kiln still lives in our house in what used to be my workshop, but is now our laundry/finished pot display area/extra bathroom/cardboard box and packaging storage room!

I will have to say a very sad goodbye to my supershed later this year as, all being well, we will be moving across Edinburgh to Portobello. I might also have to clear out some of my 'useful' studio clutter before setting up again in our new garden!

www.michellelowepottery.co.uk

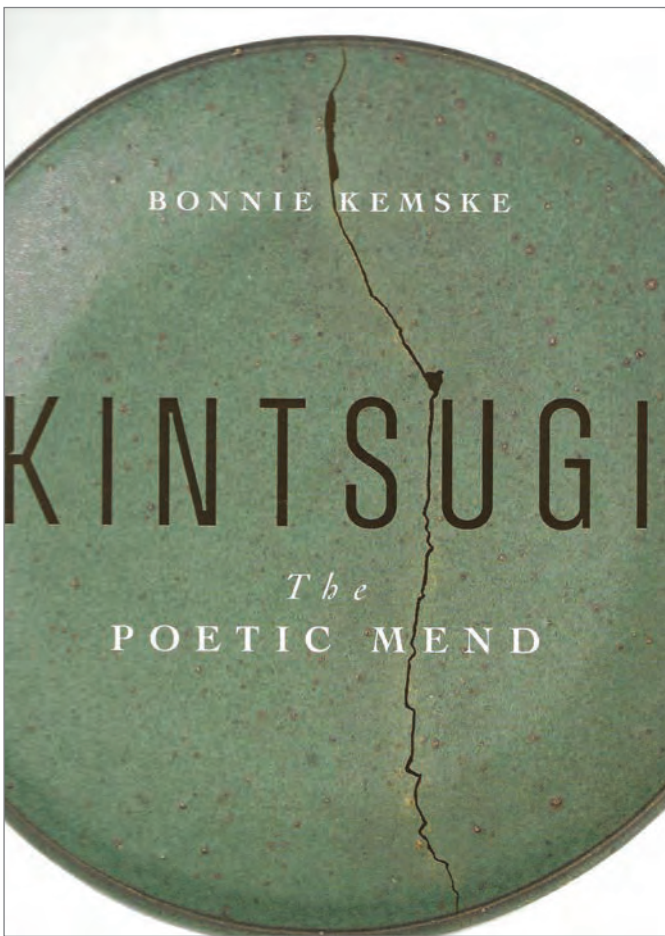
Book review

BY ROGER BELL

KINTSUGI

Bonnie Kemske

Published by Herbert Press (Bloomsbury)
£30.00



Probably 'Kintsugi' is a new word to you as it was to me. By chance, waiting for my review copy, I noticed it used in a book on building a gas fired kiln by Chris Barnes, which I was reviewing for the NPA. It is the Japanese art of repairing broken ceramic pieces with lacquer and precious metals, making them more beautiful and valuable than before the damage in many cases. The subtitle 'The Poetic Mend' is so appropriate. Metaphorically it represents recovery, strength, and individuality. In contrast European repair

aimed to make the piece 'as good as new', though the modern approach in archaeology is to keep the damage obvious. You probably know of the author, Bonnie Kemske, an artist and researcher, from her time as editor of Ceramic Review, which she revitalised after a rather dull few years. The clarity of her writing, chapter organisation, page layout and selection of illustrations all combine to make a somewhat specialised subject fascinating. Hiroko Roberts-Taira did much of the research for the book and is acknowledged as largely responsible for the chapter on the history of the technique.

The Japanese procedure is to use lacquer as an adhesive and filler, then apply gold dust, and allow to dry before polishing. Modern variations use other precious metals or just colour to finish. Sounds simple but there are multiple stages. The basic material is the sap of a tree growing widely in east Asia. It requires a multi-stage refining system involving heating, adding cotton wadding, processing in a centrifuge, then in some cases colouring. It is not a completely safe process as most people are allergic to 'urushi' which contains the same substance as poison ivy. The basic material is painted on all edges as an adhesive. The broken object is assembled, excess is wiped off, and rubber bands or adhesive tape used to hold until fixed. As a filler starch glue and sawdust is added. Any further gaps are filled and left to dry before urushi is used for the gold dust to stick to. Finally the object is cleaned and polished. Kintsugi pieces can be as expensive and often more so than the unbroken original would have been. A number of companies now produce faux Kintsugi pieces to attempt to cash in!

The traditional Japanese method is practiced outside Japan in the UK and elsewhere. There are also simpler methods which can be used. These are outlined in the book. One interesting example is the use of photoluminescent glue. The methodology is clear but this is not a 'how to' book. While the major emphasis of the book is the variety of techniques in Japan and its practitioners, there are plenty of examples of work from other parts of the world and pieces using the technique as a means of producing original work without waiting for the accidental breakage. A maker you are probably familiar with is Paul Scott who has used it on his Cumbrian Blues pieces, sometimes on deliberately broken items, sometimes where refiring old ceramics has cracked them. There is a short chapter on the lovely original pieces produced by Suzuki Goro.

There are photos of pieces 'repaired' after breakage and a range of work where more and more work has gone into making an art object. Interestingly Kemske extends consideration to related work. Bouke de Vries

has a kintsugi repaired lidded porcelain jar alongside an identically shaped glass jar filled with the shards of a lidded porcelain jar. Reiko Kaneko has two bone china plates on plate setters, warped and cracked through over-firing, and with kintsugi repair. There are silk and rayon thread repaired bowls by Zoe Hillyard. A life size figure sculpture by Paige Bradley reproduces the gold repair effect by using interior lighting. Doris Salcedo's crack in the Tate Modern Turbine Hall is also illustrated.

In the final chapter Bonnie links to cracks/breaks and their repair/recovery in other parts of our existence, be it illness, religion, disability or sustainability. She has found direct and indirect links to the principles of kintsugi including a faith community using a repaired bowl on a poster advertising 'Kintsugi Worship'! She notes that this goes much further than its Japanese originators would consider.

Overall a fascinating book, deeply rooted in its Japanese origins.

New books

Ceramic Art & Civilisation	Paul Greenhalgh	£30.00
Ceramics of Iran	Oliver Watson	£50.00
Complete Pottery Techniques	Jess Jos	£25.00
Adrian Dalpuyrat	Tornier & Marino	£200.00
Gas Fired Kilns – How to Make & Use	Chris Barnes	£15.99
Hand Building	Thomas Arroyo	£15.51
An Illustrated Brief History of Chinese Porcelain	Yang Guimei	£15.99
Making Polymer Beads	Carol Blackburn	£12.28
Masters of Attic Black Figure Painting	Elizabeth Moignard	£28.99
Practical Pottery	Jon Short	£23.95
Salt Glazing	Phil Rogers	£30.00
Special Effect Glazes	Linda Bloomfield	£20.00
The Way We Were. The Potteries in the 1950's & 1960's	Abberly & Hardy	£14.99

Spotlight on...

FRAN MARQUIS, EXHIBITIONS OFFICER



I remember making mud pies decorated with lentils when I was very young. But it wasn't until I was 41 (with three young sons) I went to Art College in Dundee to complete a B Des in Ceramics.

I was so excited to be able to be creative all day that I accidentally got locked in the college one night not even realising until long after closing time!

Following my degree in 2000, we moved north and I worked for Aberdeen City Council with community groups and made many murals with pupils and patients in schools and hospitals. My biggest independent project was with the International School in Aberdeen. It was exciting but a bit over-whelming as enthusiastic parents and helpers kept expanding a one panel mural to become four and to involve 500 primary pupils instead of the planned two classes! I also enjoyed teaching evening classes in ceramics to keen adults at Gray's for three years.

Then on moving back to Arbroath I worked for THAT (Tayside Healthcare Arts Trust) with different groups of people with e.g. chronic pain, Alzheimer's and Heart conditions. Through all this community group work I was reminded just how wonderful it is to play creatively and how much people of all types and abilities love to experience clay in a non-judgmental, supportive context!

Over the last decade, I have been teaching pottery at home have enjoyed many students working in the house and garden. We have had SPA workshops with Josie Walter in 2015 and Marcia Selsor in 2019 with 20 plus participants which were challenging and fun! Hopefully there will be more in the future.

With no teaching possible now, I am currently giving myself the challenge of doing most of the Throwdown tasks given on Channel 4 TV series. See Instagram @springfieldclaystation

My journey with the Scottish Potters has been interesting and the community very supportive of me through times of family chaos. After joining (free!) as a student in 1997, I later became Newsletter Editor, then Chair and am now Exhibitions Officer.

If any SPA members out there feel you need more pottery friends and have some time, skills and ideas to offer, remember that the SPA is often looking for helpers for Potfest, contributors to exhibitions and people to serve on the committee. I have certainly gained much more from SPA teaching, friends, and interesting connections than I have ever given!



Letter from France

BY VERONICA NEWMAN

Creating Art during the pandemic (or not).

I recently read a post by Cathrine Callow on the Women in the Arts Facebook page that really struck a chord. She said she was struggling to find time to make anything because of family commitments and homeschooling her son. When she did have time she had no inspiration left. I have no excuse not to be making lots of pots – I'm on my own with no one to look after or cook for but I feel guilty that even with nothing to stop me working I'm not getting anything done. I could be making lots of new work, but as last year all my fairs apart from two small local ones were cancelled I still have lots of pots in the pottery and little incentive to make more. I work best under pressure with a deadline and now have neither. On the positive side my garden has rarely had so few weeds in it as I seem to find weeding the gravel and the vegetable patch very therapeutic.

What I found most interesting about this is that 209 people reacted to Catherine's post with 147 comments and almost all were from artists suffering from the same creative block. So if like me you aren't managing to make any new work it might help you to know that you are definitely not alone. If, on the other hand, you are creating and being inspired keep going and enjoy it. Let's hope the rest of us soon find some new impetus and inspiration.



FOR SALE Laser kiln, kiln bricks and props

These items for sale individually or job lot. Preference and price reduction for someone starting out as a career in pottery. See SPA website for more info. Culross Pottery, Fife KY12 8JG



FOR SALE: Copies of 'Paperclay' by Otakar Sliva and Astrid Sangar

I assisted in the translation from German and these were left with me to sell on their behalf. They have now asked me to dispose of the remaining copies to raise money for an art or ceramic charity.

I have decided to send copies to any potters interested for £5 including P&P. The excess over postage cost - £2.30 - will be donated to Adopt A Potter at Clay College, Stoke.

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