



# Bucks Pottery and Sculpture Society

Newsletter, March 2021

Hi members.

Thanks so much to those of you who have sent in info, much appreciated. This is a busier newsletter than previous lockdown ones with the zoom meetings now adding to the activities. Thank you to Holly and Bronwen for the technical setting up of these. Laura was a

great choice as our first Zoom speaker, thanks Holly. Given that Laura is based in St Ives, it would have been unlikely that she could have done a demo at Little Kingshill. Communication is great in these trying times. Happy reading, Yvonne

## 29 January ZOOM Meeting: Members' Lockdown Show & Tell

– from Holly's notes, edited by Yvonne

It was great to have our first members' ZOOM get together in lockdown and share news, activities and advice. Members showed recent work and gave comments and tips.

Overheard – a new motto for ceramicists:  
*'If it ain't broke it will be shortly!'*

Max has been making vases in various shapes involving hitting them with a rolling pin.

Patricia has been keeping creative with mixed media paintings as she has no ceramic studio access.

Holly has been making 'Egg people' from Halloween drawings.

Debbie has been making a coiled bust with amazing hair called Bacchus. It's been a very tricky process. She made the head without a crown and attached it later.

Elaine made a teapot with a willow handle. She also experiments with rusty wire, and old string.

Elaine uses V9A clay mixed with B17C. She said that 'Throwdown' is viewed on US TV and as a result of being on the show she now sells work to America.

Joy has been practising throwing and making cute carol singing mice using porcelain and stoneware using Ashraf Hanna. She says it is expensive but doesn't shrink after bisque firing.

Celia has also been doing throwing. She has been making stamps using the edge of a credit card.

Bronwen has been experimenting with colour and trying slab built patterns from the internet. She has found powdered underglazes unsuccessful as they are overly sensitive to touch, however mixed with plain glazes and CMC (Bath Potters) they work well. CMC is a protein based polymer, a by product of wood pulp, also used for painting on silk: 3% dry glaze weight of CMC (100g dry glaze plus 3g CMC, leave over night. Mixed up has consistency of emulsion paint) 3 coats necessary.

Dawn added to the discussion, with her son's lovely fish painting as a back drop.

Mary has moved to Gloucester as a result of lockdown. We're really pleased that she wants to remain a BPSS member and has been attending all our zoom sessions. Mary is also in the Chorley Wood Art group and is getting back into throwing, which she showed an example of: beautiful, elegant throwing in porcelain with added handles. She has set up a studio and has also been drawing and knitting. Having been affected by lockdown she uses ceramics 'to absorb mental healing'.

Chris has been restoring a sewing trestle and is still being creative. Banana yarn is a thing!

### Some more tips/comments:

- Amaco underglazes go shiny or velvety whereas Contem are more matt. *Yvonne*
- Pinholes in glazes: To remove air from clay, use a high temperature and a long soak. Over firing can cause bloating. Tip for re-glazing: Rub glaze down, fill remaining pits with glaze (mix with a cheap wallpaper paste). *Jane*
- Warping of lids: If too hot, flat things tend to warp. Keep them nearer the bottom of kiln. Fire mugs upside down in biscuit to keep handle round. *Susan*
- Effective technique: Scratch leatherhard surface, underglaze into scratches, then wash back. *Paula*
- A pinhole is necessary unless clay is super dry or using a super slow firing. *Paula*
- Paper Clay with polyfiller dries hard, therefore doesn't need firing! (Inspired by papiermaché and polyfiller artist). Not sure if it will survive outside but hopefully will with varnish! Using a cardboard armature (part metal) is fairly light. *Camilla*
- To keep raku metallic, really press ceramics into sawdust to increase reductions. *Adam*
- An experiment with a copper raku piece that was dark and unappealing. I re-glazed the piece with tin glaze under a high alkaline frit copper glaze and re-fired it in an electric kiln at 1060°C. The resulting glaze was lovely. However - there was a patch of blue raku on the original work which ran down the side of the piece - so watch out - not all raku glazes will cope with higher firing! *Dorothea*

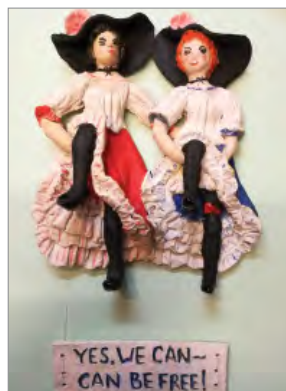
## Peter Stocker Ceramic Award 2020

As you know the theme for last year's annual competition was 'Performance'

Congratulations to Dorothea Reid on her £75 win with 'Yes, We Can-Can Be Free!'

Richard Ballantyne and Hilary Audus shared 2nd spot. Thank you to everyone who voted online.

As winner Dorothea will select the next 2021 theme from ideas submitted by the members. Ideas can still be submitted.



**ART IN CLAY** WINDSOR Great news that there are outdoor events being advertised now including

Art in Clay, which has a change of venue and will be held in Windsor at the Royal Windsor Racecourse on 20, 21 & 22 August. Over 200 exhibitors, including a full programme of talks & demonstrations and a Clay Creation Zone.

28 February  
ZOOM DEMO

## Laura Crosland

from the combined notes  
of Holly and Yvonne

This was our first lockdown Zoom demo with 23 participants, 26 at one point. Laura gave us an inspiring talk, initially while screen-sharing, and she let us interrupt which made it a relaxed evening with a lot of discussion.

Laura traced her ceramics development which started at school. At A-level she painted pots with acrylic as she had no access to glazes. She then went to college at Wolverhampton.

Laura's first professional studio experience was with Peter Beard who gave her lots of advice, then with Penny Simpson who taught her production throwing. Laura was then sponsored through 'Adopt a Potter' to work for a year at the Leach Pottery in St Ives in the production studio where they threw 100 mugs a day!

Laura set up a studio in Kent in 2015, exhibiting at Art in Clay and other craft fairs. Afterwards she returned to Leach Pottery, this time to teach.

Initially Laura loved carving, which included lizards. She went on to use carving as surface decoration. She does different shapes and likes curvaceous forms and tea bowls.

Laura showed us her working process including the different stages with pots made earlier. She first smooths off all the throwing lines while the pot is still on the wheel so they don't interfere with her carving. She scores a grid onto the pot at leatherhard stage. She then carves very precisely with a chisel head tool, working each side of a 'V' gouge separately. For this her pot wall needs to be quite thick as the carve is deep, it is therefore not good for tableware. The angled 'V' gouges need to be very clean to let the glaze get deeply into the grooves. Then thin inner lines need to be done gently with the tool, without pressure on the clay. Following this, very thin lines are drawn with a needle which requires more pressure.

Laura's carving is so precise that it takes 8 – 12 hours per piece. She needs to spray the piece a lot while working or it will become brittle. She rests her pot on a large piece of foam so she can work at angles without damaging the pot. All the cleaning up of the lines is at greenware as there's too much dust if doing this at bisque. She leaves one to two weeks drying time.

Laura took us through her detailed glazing process which involves long waiting times between layers. She fires in an electric kiln.

Her glazing process is: Tenmoku all over; copper rutile in select areas, which is sponged off so it sits in carved areas only; this is followed by her blue; then copper green transparent; followed by honey brown with iron. She dips the large areas, cleaning off as necessary for the design. The copper green is applied with a brush. She waxes the base on a wheel so it's quick to wipe off the glaze. Laura likes to use a contrasting colour on the insides of her pots.

After a couple of days of applying the last glaze she smooths uneven areas of glaze and pops any air bubbles with a needle tool. She fires to 1260°C in an electric kiln but as her kiln is overfiring she reduces this to 1240°C. She has an old kiln so she uses less soaking time as the slow rise in temperature acts like a soak.

Her clay is Scarva Earthstone Extra Smooth stoneware. It is nearly white so the glaze colours stay vibrant.

To prevent dry hands Laura uses white cotton gloves inside latex gloves. She is very particular about sitting at the correct height so the pot is at eye level. This avoids hunching so is better for her back.

Laura clearly has a very patient working method. She varies her designs. Her favourite pattern at the moment is hexagon with layered tri-leaves.

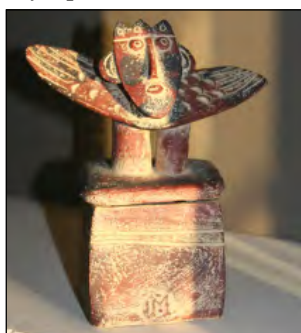
Thank you very much for a really inspiring evening, Laura.



## John Maltby R.I.P. Yvonne Cornes

I expect many of you would have heard the sad news that John Maltby passed away recently at the age of 84. My late husband Alan and I really loved his work and we were very fortunate to have spent a couple of hours in his company at Stoneshill, his pottery in Devon.

Back in 2013, we were travelling home from St Ives where we had been looking to buy a piece of his work. The galleries there were so expensive so we thought we'd



chance visiting his pottery/gallery on the way home. I found the address online. On arrival we were really surprised to find that it was actually his home but he invited us in. He was very friendly and chatted while we watched him work, surrounded by his beautiful pieces. He gave us a huge discount so we bought these three pieces, the smallest of which is my favourite (left). John let me take a photo of him packing up our pieces (see back page). I still have the box! I'll never forget that afternoon we had with John Maltby.





## BPSS website update

Yvonne Cornes

Adam has been making good progress on the new website. I have been helping and Jane has been adding the legal details. We will shortly be trialling the Members' Gallery with some of the committee. Once it's up and running, if you're interested in showing your work in the Members Gallery you will be given your own log-in. This will enable you to add and edit your own profile and include three images of your work. Adam will be giving a tutorial on how to create your own gallery page. It is very easy to use. More info to follow.

## April Zoom Meeting

Adam has arranged for Tim Thornton



to speak at the 30th April Zoom Meeting. Tim is in the Southern Ceramic Group. His work is very organic. He does a lot of thrown tableware and is experimental with glazing, including recreating historic glazes. Tim also experiments with wood firing and has worked with the Oxford Anagama kiln firings.

<https://tim-thornton.com>

## Richard Ballantyne's Lockdown experiments: HS2 Clay!

I moved to Steeple Claydon 30 years ago when I started teaching in Milton Keynes.

In those days you knew when it was going to rain as Calvert Brick Works was two miles to the south west of us and the smell, when the wind was in the right direction, was pungent. I did go round the works but what they were turning into bricks bore no resemblance to the clay I knew.

Anyway during lockdown I have had time to play and now living in the Bermuda Triangle of North Bucks with HS2, and the East West line crossing at the bottom of the garden and building sites everywhere, there are mountains of clay! So I decided to have a go...

Firstly, I found HS2 had dug a fairly pure clay (which I acquired) – dried it – slaked it – sieved it – dried it to workable consistency – and threw it.

How long was lockdown?

It threw remarkably well but it's colour was a nice yellow ochre (shit brown) – totally disgusting. Then came a bisque firing to 1000 degrees – it was no longer shit brown, now a shit orange.

I had thrown 11 little bottles – seven split, the other four had nearly vitrified and were no longer porous and would, no doubt, melt if fired to stoneware.

Interesting! But is there a future?

Bring back my Ashraf Hanna!



## The Renwick Cockatrice – David Hopper



### The Renwick Cockatrice

BY IAN PUBLISHED JULY 25, 2008 UPDATED DECEMBER 1, 2018

In 1733 a cockatrice terrorized Renwick when the church was being demolished. The beast was slain by John Tallantire with a rowan branch. The creature was described as resembling a bat. Apparently the cockatrice was again reported as having been seen in 1959. The classic appearance of a cockatrice is considered to be that of a large rooster with a lizard's tail and it is supposed to have the power to turn someone to stone at a glance. Maybe John just did fight a big bat with his stick.

I am a wood carver married to Pat Hopper a potter and we are both BPSS members.

This sculpture is a project I have done during lockdown. I also work in stained glass.

As the story goes, in 1733, while workmen were building a church in the Cumbrian village of Renwick, a hideous winged monster burst out of its foundations. Resembling the mythical cockatrice or basilisk – a crowing, reptilian creature supposedly hatched by a toad from a leathery egg laid by a cockerel – it terrified the local people, who fled and barricaded themselves inside their homes. The monster continued to circle overhead, flapping its huge bat-like wings and emitting bloodcurdling shrieks.

Then John Tallantire, one of the workmen at the church, armed himself with a branch from the rowan, or mountain ash, which was reputed to have magical properties that would repel the evil eye and witches' spells. In the churchyard he engaged the cockatrice in a fierce battle and eventually slew the beast. The grateful villagers rewarded Tallantire for his bravery by giving him freehold to his cottage and exempting him from parish dues.

A record of the remarkable episode is still kept in Renwick's church, but a certain zoological identity for the cockatrice of Renwick has never been determined.

*I bought this because...*



... I saw it at a Craft Council exhibition in London where I met the artist, Anna Barlow. It could only have been made in ceramic and it captures time with the static drips of icecream, frozen in time.

It is very British, reminding me of seaside holidays. The amazing detail of the tiny curls of icecream in porcelain and the clarity of the earthenware glazes made me fall in love with it. I put it on the window sill where it commands lots of attention.

People can't stop touching it!

*Adam Hoyle*





(continued from front page) John Maltby packing up our pieces!

## BPSS website

### MEMBERS GALLERY

Are you aware of the Members Gallery section on the BPSS website?

You can add your profile with an image of your work in this section. It would be fantastic if we could have more of the membership represented there. So, if you like to contribute please send an image and a few words (anything up to about 50 words).

### About the society


The Society was formed in 1963 and welcomes all artists working in 3D. Individual membership costs £25; £35 for a family and £10 for full-time students.

Membership provides access to monthly demonstrations, several hands-on workshops, and a quarterly newsletter.

We are on facebook and members can put an image and contact details on the Society's web page

[www.buckspotters.com](http://www.buckspotters.com)

### The Committee

The Committee meets regularly to develop the programme, organise the Annual Exhibition and review costs. If you find a good speaker who could demonstrate to the Society, please tell us. Also, if you have ideas you would like to raise with us, please do so at the monthly meeting or email. 

### GDPR information

The information which you provide to us on your membership form will be used solely for the purpose of processing your membership and dealing with you as a member of BPSS. The data will not be shared with any third party for marketing or commercial purposes without obtaining your explicit consent. Our GDPR policy is available to read on the BPSS website.

# POTTERY CRAFTS LIMITED

"Touching earth through the hands of a potter"

Roderveld wheels, equipment & POTTERY CRAFTS kilns are built by our dedicated team to an exceptionally high standard at our warehouse in Stoke-on-Trent, England.



"Our UK manufactured Wheels & Kilns"



"For the beginner and expert in ceramics & pottery"



- Kilns
- Wheels
- Glazes & Stains
- Raw Materials
- Bisque & Moulds
- Extensive Range of Clays
- Helpful & Friendly Advice

Potterycrafts Ltd  
Campbell Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 4ET



Tel: 01782 745000      [www.potterycrafts.co.uk](http://www.potterycrafts.co.uk)  
Fax: 01782 746000      [sales@potterycrafts.co.uk](mailto:sales@potterycrafts.co.uk)