



Bucks Pottery and Sculpture Society

Newsletter, July 2025

Hi members.

There have been so many very welcome news items for this issue that a couple of features will need to go into the October issue. Thanks everyone. Many thanks to Chris Inder for her lovely tribute to Dorothea Reid, wonderful person, long-standing member and friend to many of us.

Great to see that we have six new members and a big thank you to committee member Madalyn Baskerville for introducing her students to the society!

We had three excellent speakers in the last few months and more planned thanks to our chair Holly. Happy reading, Yvonne.

25 April
DEMO

Sophie Aguilera Lester: The Art of Living Clay - Qing Chen

Sophie Aguilera Lester was born in London and is currently based in Barcelona. She studied Fine Arts before focusing her artistic practice on ceramics. Over time, Sophie has developed a unique ability to create vibrant, lifelike plants – especially flowers, rendered in clay. She cites inspiration from the works of 17th century Flemish painter Clara Peeters.

Beyond floral ornamentation, Aguilera Lester's work is recognised for blending ceramics with other artistic languages, including installation, object art, and scenography. Sophie masterfully uses porcelain slip-casting and moulds to recreate everyday textures and forms with haunting realism. Often, only the subtle reflection of fabric in a shadow gives away the illusion. (see left). Her use of clear glossy glaze on white porcelain, as well as bold contrasts in red, yellow, and blue, create powerful compositions—almost like three-dimensional paintings.



Her work frequently explores themes of identity, memory, and ephemerality, often with emotional intensity. One of her most touching works, *Beneath the Daisies*, is a deeply personal tribute to her mother, who passed away when Sophie was very young. (see right).

Her professional highlights include developing the technical components of the limited-edition packaging for *Cuando Te Muerdes el Labio*, a music album by Leiva (2021), which was nominated for a Latin Grammy Award for Best Packaging.



She also collaborated with Cartier, creating an exclusive ceramic piece that merged traditional hand-building techniques (such as coiling) with contemporary processes like porcelain casting and decal image transfer. Sophie's work continues to evolve, but always with the same core: the ability to shape emotion, memory, and meaning into tactile, lasting forms. www.sophieaguilera.com



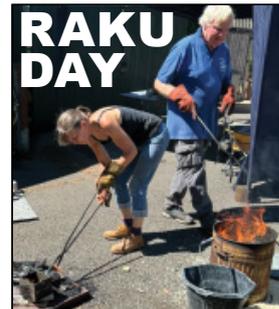
Porcelain Flower Workshop with Sophie Aguilera - Madalyn Baskerville

Back in May a few of the Bucks Potters attended a day workshop with Sophie Aguilera Lester at Bronwen's house where we were taught to make porcelain flowers. Firstly Sophie demonstrated how to make a rose. We used Audrey Blackman porcelain and the central part of the flower was quite tricky to master. We then went on to make carnations, lilies, hydrangeas and even apple blossom.

Sophie was fantastic at helping us experiment making different flowers. Using the moulds and a few stamps helped too! The trickiest part was assembling them and attaching them onto the slab to make a wall plaque. We used small pieces of sponge to prop up the petals whilst they dried. Bronwen kindly fired them. We chose to leave the white porcelain unglazed but Sophie also demonstrated, using stains to colour the porcelain.

Everyone found it a thoroughly enjoyable, relaxing workshop. Even those people who didn't think it was 'their thing', learnt a lot.

Sophie has offered to run a Pottery Still Life workshop next time she is in the UK.



RAKU DAY

This was on 12th July – one of the hottest days of the summer. We were very relieved to find that Elaine had set up gazebos to give us shade from the scorching sun. Richard & Carol still braved the elements to get all of our pots fired. Here are some of the results, apart from Wendy's as she had to dash off to celebrate her birthday! Thanks so much Elaine, and to Richard and Carol for all your hard work.

30 May
DEMO

Lucy Baxendale

– Trish Hall

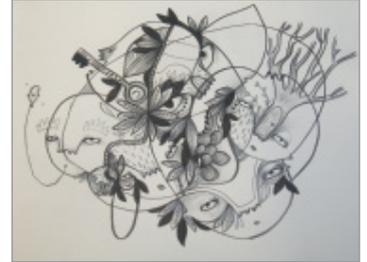
Lucy uses surrealist automatism to create detailed drawings which become the starting point for her porcelain pieces. Fascinated by the journey from two-dimensional sketches to three-dimensional sculptures, Lucy explores the shifting relationships between the lines in her drawings. As these lines transition into tangible forms, their narratives also evolve.

The outcome of these explorations are one-of-a-kind 3D drawings, intentionally unglazed and stained to echo the essence of a sketch. Through her work, Lucy bridges the realms of imagination. She invites observers to witness the evolution of lines into stories, forging connections between the drawn and the sculpted, between 2D and 3D. Lucy also makes a homeware range, inspired from characters that spring to life within her drawings – a playful attempt to marry fun with practicality and bring joy to the everyday. Lucy's drawing is intentionally childlike influenced by fairy stories and one of her favourite illustrators, Quentin Blake.

Translating her drawings into clay gives her the freedom of working in 3D as opposed to paper. The drawing then presents itself. Lucy generally slab builds forms for the base of work using crumpled up newspaper and the clay she uses is special porcelain. For depth and colour, she adds body stains to the clay and after firing, she stains and wipes back for contrasts, each leaf is individually made, she does not use sprig moulds.

Lucy took part in a big bonkers musical contraption which was made from recycled material as a different challenge for a Herefordshire project. She also did a 'big heads' project, again for Herefordshire. Some of her commissions have been for a clock, a cat flap cover, a robin, and a ring in silver. Driven by a playful curiosity, Lucy generally works in black and white but has started to add a little colour into each item now. Working with her dad she has introduced innovative qualities making interactive models including sound, lights and even one which prints out a personal poem, written by Lucy.

Lucy did a mixed degree at Herefordshire college of art where she took wood, textiles, ceramic and metal. Three years ago Lucy had one of her sculptures shown on the Great Pottery Showdown and people recognised her work although it was not attributed on the programme. Her doodles are probably much the same as when she was a child. Her parents encouraged creativity and Maurice Sendak's book – 'Where the Wild Things Are' – was a big influence. It was fun and interesting watching Lucy prepare her sculpture from her drawing and the intricacy with which she prepares them.



Charity event

– Pauline Upstone

From time to time family or friends do a run or long walk for charity and as I don't think I could run 5k or walk 26 miles, I wondered what else I could do to help raise some funds, and whether my mugs would ever be good enough to sell.

I attend classes at Oxfordshire Arts in East Hendred and luckily for me, Pippa, another student there, decided to host a Macmillan Coffee Morning with sales of mugs, as well as tea and coffee (and cake!) Both beginners and experienced potters from several classes donated 54 mugs between us.

All of them sold and the event, held on 21st June, raised over £1000 in total. It was a nice feeling to see people purchasing the mugs I had made, and my mug making definitely improved over the term.

Here is a photo of all the donations before the coffee morning started. I have a table top pottery wheel at home which was given to me by someone I didn't know, whose wife had been a potter, and sadly had died of cancer, and so the Macmillan charity felt appropriate.



Remembering Dorothea Reid

27th August 1948 – 16th June 2025

– Chris Inder

I first met Dori in 2007 as a fellow mature student on the BA Ceramics & Glass course at Bucks New University.

From the outset her sense of humour and mischievousness were apparent, as was the warmth of her personality. We went on to become very good friends, helping each other out at exhibitions, enjoying meals out with our other halves, her renowned 'Hogmanay' parties and being on the BPSS committee together.

Retiring from a career in the Health Service, Dori was able to give more time to her art and established a very successful career in this too, exhibiting widely throughout the UK. She was an active member of the Oxford Sculptural Group, The Buckinghamshire Craft guild and of course Bucks Potters. For her BA, Dori drew on her childhood, spent near the sea in Peterhead, Scotland. Expressing both curiosity and sensitivity she focused on coral bleaching and then subsequently for her MA on the use and abuse of the North Sea. She was a diligent researcher! In complete contrast, her humour and love of wordplay found a different outlet in her quirky and colourful sculptural shoes.

In her words ... 'like most women I have an 'Imelda Marcos' gene lurking somewhere!

A fun, witty and talented lady, she will be missed by many.



Summer Workshop

A plaster mould making day will be hosted by **Sophie Smith** on Saturday 30th August. Cost: £45 per person. BPSS members only. For booking and for more details: buckspotters.com

BPSS Annual Exhibition

This will take place on the last weekend of November – set-up & opening: Friday 28th, exhibition: 29-30 November. Venue: same as last year – Oldham Hall in Great Missenden. More details later. Time to decide what to exhibit & make!

27 June
DEMO

Sophie Woodrow

– Holly Inglis & Jane Ostler

Sophie shared with us her unusual and individual sculptures. She was fortunate to grow up having a craft focused upbringing and schooling. She mainly concentrated on drawing until higher education where she discovered porcelain. Her ideas come from a quick thought process, followed by a quick sketch. Her creations follow the format of four legged figurines, all in white. Each is completely unique. They are a celebration of diversity, a link to the fringes of nature and a reflection of character in an anthropomorphic metaphor.

All her pieces are made using porcelain – Scarva Earthstone ES170 and start with a ball of clay made into a pinch pot. As it grows upwards the clay is incised, imprinted and modelled to create a richly textured surface. She creates a plethora of textures: baskets, ribbons, ruffs, coral, chequered pattern etc. The texture celebrates the way porcelain catches the light and shadow, hence no colour. We were fortunate on the day she visited that the sun was low and bright and as it shone through the window from behind, it illuminated the hollowed out eyes of a particular piece (*see right*). This was a joyful contrast to the dark hollows that are normally perceived in her work.

Her figures are psychological portraits. “I am interested particularly in the impression that landscape leaves on us, and the contested boundaries between the landscape of the earth, and the landscape of our imagination.”

She started using plaster bats to dry the clay, and realised the clay was often patterned by the uneven surface of the bat. So now she makes specific bats which she carves into to make specific patterns. Also a stiff paintbrush brushed over the surface of



the not quite leatherhard piece will give a nice organic finish.

Sophie only uses clear glaze (from Bath potters). The pieces are fired to either 1280°C or 1220°C (if she wants a silky matt finish). As

with all porcelain, the pieces will shrink between 15 and 20%. Her pieces have been described as ‘magical’, ‘amazing’ and ‘stunning’.

<https://sophiewoodrow.co.uk> or instagram: [sophiewoodrow](https://www.instagram.com/sophiewoodrow)

UP AND COMING BUCKS POTTERS MEETINGS at Little Kingshill Village Hall, HP16 0DZ



Elaine Wells – 2-4pm, 29 August 2025. BPSS member, previous chairperson & Pottery Throwdown participant, Elaine will give a throwing demonstration on the theme of lids and bottles. This is an extra mid-summer daytime event. Free for BPSS members, £5 for non-members.



Sophie Smith – 8pm, 26 September 2025
Sophie makes bright & colourful highly decorative but functional earthenware ceramics. She is strongly influenced by medieval art and design. Her demo will include hands on enameling and on-glaze transfers.



Andrea Brewer – 8pm, 31 October 2025
The ancient and universal symbol of the spiral is Andrea’s main influence. She is also fascinated by clockwork and mechanical machinery. She makes mainly hand-built ceramic sculpture, & other media, particularly metal.

**Making Session,
WILD THING
vote
& festive treats**

Festive Making Session – 8pm, 21 November 2025
Richard and Carol will give us a subject and guidance for one of their popular making sessions. This is always a fun evening, including the annual competition vote, mince pies and mulled wine. (Please note the earlier date.)

NEW MEMBERS

A very warm welcome to our six new members: Moya Fillmore, Claire Foord, Amanda Wood, Candida Spencer, Julie Rumsey & Charlotte Meacock. We hope you will enjoy being involved in the society. I received intros from the following:

Claire Foord

I was first introduced to throwing with terracotta at 13 and studied GCSE Ceramics. While at university, I continued through Saturday classes at The Putney School of Art. After years focused on work and family, I’ve rediscovered my joy in clay! I mainly throw on the wheel, making functional pieces with thoughtful design. I enjoy experimenting with form, function, colour, and texture. I’m now setting up a home studio and enjoy learning from each piece I make.

instagram: [thyme2dance](https://www.instagram.com/thyme2dance)



Amanda Wood – I have just completed my first academic year at Amersham College studying Ceramics. I have learned so much under the supervision of the lovely Madalyn Baskerville. I am becoming happier with my clay work, but my finishes still need perfecting. I am known as “The Chicken Lady” for my love of making small nature inspired birds and animals. Hopefully, in the not too distant future I will feel more confident to share them with you.

Candida Spencer

I have been potting since my grown up children were small, starting with Christmas decorations at the kitchen table and building my small business from my newly built studio about 25 years ago. It took me a while to find my style, but once I had, I found it much easier to stick to my original aim to make functional but cheerful pieces. My work often sells as presents, such as special birthdays, anniversaries and Christmas.



Julie Rumsey

My first encounter with ceramics was during an art foundation course and after a degree in Fashion & Textiles I went on to become a shoe designer. A change of career lead me to printmaking for 20 years and I rediscovered ceramics in early 2020. I enjoy mark-making and pattern to make everyday functional ceramics either thrown or hand-built in stoneware. I love the whole process of making something by hand and I’ve still got so much to learn!

www.julierumseyart.co.uk (mainly printmaking),
Instagram: [@julierumseyart](https://www.instagram.com/julierumseyart)



Charlotte Meacock

Since starting weekly classes in September 2024, alongside my Art Foundation year, it’s safe to say I’ve become slightly obsessed with ceramics! My work largely relates to the human form, whether this be through mimicking organic shapes of the body, dressing my pots in macramé or making decorative items for the body, like pendants. I’m currently focused on developing my throwing skills and looking forward to learning more as part of this society.





Sculpt a miniature clay landscape and let your imagination run wild.
£5 per participant.

Suitable for ages 4-11. Timings: 10am-3pm



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‘Ceramics: A Green Approach’ A new book by Kevin Millward

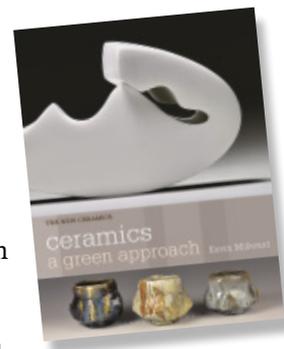
On August 21st Herbert Press are publishing:

‘Ceramics: A Green Approach’ by Kevin Millward. (part of their ‘The New Ceramics’ series).

From extracting clay to exporting your work, this is a practical guide to producing unique ceramic pieces with minimal environmental impact.

Being a green potter is not an easy feat. Historically, a lot more attention is given to the finished pieces coming out of the kiln rather than to the damages made throughout the designing and making processes.

In this book, Kevin Millward explores how potters and ceramicists can be more responsible in sourcing and using the planet’s finite resources.



This year’s ‘Peter Stocker Ceramic Award’ theme is:

WILD THING

The vote and prize giving will take place on 21st November.

£75 PRIZE

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. Members can add their profile and a few images of their work to the Members’ Gallery on our website www.buckspotters.com. Our facebook page is ‘Bucks pottery and sculpture society’ and we are on Instagram as ‘buckspotters’.



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 hlinglis@gmail.com

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.

BPSS Contacts

Chairperson: Holly Inglis

Treasurer: Bronwen Corrall

Membership Secretary: Jane Ostler

Interim Editor/Designer: Yvonne Cornes