Bucks Pottery and Sculpture Society

Newsletter, April 2026

Hi members.
Welcome to the April newsletter. We've had some really inspiring and informative meetings in the last quarter with varied techniques and styles, all reviewed inside.
The Bucks Art Weeks programme is not far off now, running from 6th to 21st June. So there'll some full-on creativity happening over the next couple of months. All the best to everyone taking part.

Hopefully the summer weather will allow some fast drying of pots for added productivity! We can also hope for lovely weather for the Raku Day in July.
For anyone who has not paid their subscriptions, they are due now as our year runs from 1st April to 31st March. The new members keep coming which is fantastic!
Happy reading, Yvonne.

30 January
DEMO & WORKSHOP

Claire Tatarek – *Jane Ostler*



Claire demonstrates carving into leather hard clay.



The evening was well attended

Claire gave an interesting talk and an opportunity for a hands-on go at carving a piece of leather hard clay. She describes herself as a 'pottery decorator who makes pottery to decorate'.

She says she was always creative, mainly in drawing and painting, and went on to study Mechanical Engineering at university! However the creative streak remained and it was apparent in the very elaborate birthday cakes for her children, and also in face painting. Her ceramic interest started following a visit to a local "Pottery Paint Your Own" shop. She then embarked on some evening classes run by the shop owner until he retired and the shop closed. Claire decided she needed to learn to use the wheel and make all of her own pieces. Along the way she saw some beautiful carved pieces in layered porcelain. She discovered that the potter used 'diamond core tools' for carving the lovely clean lines, and she has never looked back.

In her words: "While I love throwing and experimenting with glazes my greatest joy is in carving designs into the clay before it fully hardens. It is a time consuming technique, especially if the finished article is to be multi-coloured. The translucent glazes which I work with require three coats but I think it's worth it for the results."



For her demonstration she used a Diamond Core Tool P1 to carve a bowl. These tools are available on: Amazon uk; Bluematchbox; and Scarva, and probably other UK suppliers. They're not cheap, but are worth the money.

We all then had a chance to use a selection of the tools she had brought to carve our own designs into the leather hard pieces which we had brought (as shown).



Claire uses Scarva Super Smooth clay, and uses brush-on glazes (mainly celadons) and fires to cone 5 (1180- 1205°C).

For further info: **https://www.tatarekpottery.co.uk**

Thanks for all your instruction and inspiration Claire.





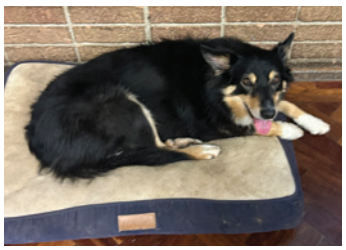
See back page for a close-up view of Claire's work.

27 February
DEMO

James Ort – Sculpting Life and Movement in Clay – *Monica Dent*







James brought along his lovely dog Millie – very appropriate inspiration for the theme of the evening!

BPSS members enjoyed an engaging evening when James gave a live demonstration of his distinctive animal sculptures in clay. As he worked, James shared insights into his creative process and career, showing how observation, experimentation and a willingness to embrace mistakes all contribute to bringing character and movement into his work.

James's route into sculpture was by no means conventional. He studied GCSE and A-level Art, and went on to complete a degree in Biology after his grandfather, Bryan Pryce-Thomas, an illustrator of Ladybird children's books, advised him to have something else to fall back on. James subsequently worked in wildlife conservation before the opportunity arose, 16 years ago, to help run the Phoenix Studio in Towersey.

There he began experimenting with mixed-media sculpture and eventually discovered metals and ceramics, developing expressive animal and bird sculptures that often combine clay with wire or sheet metal. His hollow clay forms allow him to create lively poses, often with a touch of humour.

For the demonstration, James sculpted a wild dog's head, working from photographs and his own sketches (see right for an example). He began with a simple armature made from scrunched newspaper taped around a wire rod fixed to an angled board. Clay was cut into thin slabs – "like an anatomical sewing pattern" – and wrapped around the armature "like a Cornish pasty", then shaped to suggest the animal's musculature. Texture and movement were developed using small pieces of clay and kidney tools.

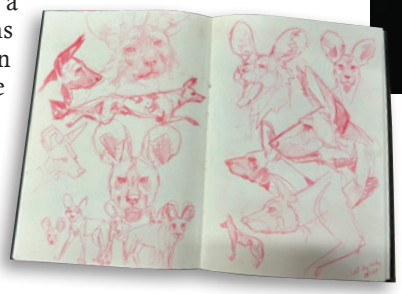
James works with terracotta clay, fired to around 1100°C, before glazing with black copper oxide and underglazes and re-firing. His approach to glazing is deliberately loose and expressive – "more Monet, less Airfix" – involving the application of glazes loosely with a paint brush tip and water mist from a spray bottle, and allowing some of the natural clay colour to remain visible.

Members greatly enjoyed watching the wild dog gradually emerge from the clay during this fascinating and inspiring demonstration.

Thanks for a very inspiring evening, as always James.







Above: *examples of recent work.*

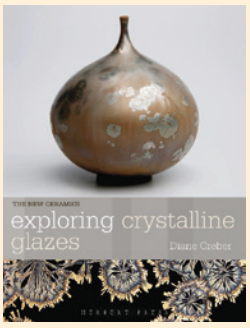
Left: *a spread from one of the sketchbooks which James brought to the meeting.*



Another well attended event.

NEW BOOK RELEASE

Exploring Crystalline Glazes by Diane Creber



Crystalline glazes are known for producing exciting works reminiscent of floating galaxies, frosty windows, rare gemstones and delicate flowers. Until recently, however, few potters worked with this elusive medium.

Now, with new advancements in materials and digital processors, amazing results can be achieved without the problems usually associated with these glazes, such as excessive glaze run-off and unpredictable crystal growth.

In this book, Diane Creber explores the history of this process, beginning with the most suitable clays, the different types of crystalline glazes, how they can be grown under controlled conditions, and how different ingredients react with each other. Through a survey of several well-known crystalline glaze potters, she reveals their secrets and shows examples of their unique work. From clay and glaze recipes to an in-depth look at firing aids and types of kilns, Exploring Crystalline Glazes has everything a potter needs to make their own glazes and create their own stunning works of art.



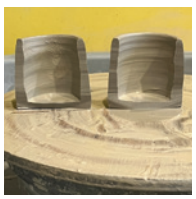




Charlotte Meacock (BPSS member) is using the BPSS wheel on loan and has sent some photos re: her progress. She has written the following:

"I've been really enjoying using the wheel! I've attached some pictures of my progress (first two are from when I first got the wheel, second two are more recent).
I hope to get back to it again now that I'm back from university for the Easter holidays!
Best wishes, Charlotte Meacock."









MEMBERSHIP NEWS

There have been five new members since the last newsletter including:
Clare Marshall, Jeanne Stiff, Peggy Postma, Lola-Blu Altass and Edith Garraway.

A very warm welcome to you all. We look forward to seeing you at the meetings and hope you will all enjoy getting involved in the society.

Edith has written a few words:



Edith Garraway

My interest with clay started about nine years ago. Just felt like I'd like to give it a go, then suddenly I was hooked.

I make various ceramic garden sculptures and get my inspiration from church gargoyles, animals, nature and anything else that takes my interest. *Edith*

Also to mention the website address of our member Andrea Toon: **andreatoon.co.uk** (Apologies for the omission in the January newsletter, Andrea).

Raku Day
Date: 12th July



This summer annual event is always popular. After many year's of BPSS Raku events, Elaine Wells has again kindly agreed to hold the event in her garden in Chesham Bois.
The very knowledgeable Carol Read and Richard Ballantyne will once again be running the raku firing.
More details to follow by email and on the website.

ANNUAL COMPETITION

The theme for this year's Peter Stocker Award, as chosen by last year's winner Trish Hall is:

'The Alphabet'

£75 Prize

Entries must be handmade pottery or sculptures by BPSS members. The Vote and Prize Giving is on 27th November – our last meeting of 2026.



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



Show and Tell – 8pm, 29th May
For this meeting we encourage members to come and bring a piece of their own work or a piece they have proudly bought to show and briefly talk about. It is hoped there will be some lively discussions around the table!



Hilary Audus – 8pm, 26th June
Hilary has worked in the Animation industry, and now sculpts in her garden studio. In the art of animation one is deceiving the eye by making 2D drawings appear 3D. It is a natural progression to physically work in three dimensions by making sculptures.



Making Session of Plant Pets – 2-4pm, 31st July
Paula will be teaching how to make a Plant Pet, as inspired by Chinese Tea Pets. It is a small pottery figurine, originally kept by some Chinese tea drinkers as a traditional ornament or a good luck charm.

27 March
DEMO

Frederick Bristow – Talk and Demo – *Claire Foord*



The delicate removal of slip-trailed clay for transfer to a plate mould.





Freddie began attending ceramics classes at Amersham College in April 2024, where he currently works as a Technician. Since then, he has developed a passion for throwing, slipware (inspired by Dylan Bowen), and wood firing (Oxford Kilns, Svend Bayer). He draws inspiration from the aesthetic quality of both historical Japanese ceramics, such as Shoji Hamada and Bernard Leach, and contemporary artists like Yogi Yamada.

Slipware, a traditional decorative technique originating in 17th-century England, involves applying white slip to terracotta earthenware. Freddie demonstrated slipware on a thrown plate, and also a moulded plate, showcasing a freeform design inspired by Dylan Bowen. He explained the process of pouring and using a slip trailer, emphasising the importance of using wet clay for better adhesion and creating attractive indentations. The clay that Freddie uses is 80% Draycott White & 20% Sibelco Black Smooth. He fires to 1250°C.

Freddie then shared his experience at Oxford Kilns, a wood-firing studio founded in 2014 by Dr. Robin Wilson, a professor and anthropologist at Oxford University. The studio was established after an exchange programme with Bizen, Japan, where wood firing was traditionally a closed practice. Freddie explained the differences between Fast Fire, Anagama kiln, Wood Ash and Flashing techniques. He particularly highlighted the wonderful people and the bonding experience he had during his time at Oxford Kilns.
Thanks for a great & very informative evening Freddie.





Examples of Freddie's recent work

CTM Potters Supplies – 5% Members Discount

We have agreed a 5% discount for all BPSS members with CTM Potters Supplies.

When ordering you will need to phone and say you are a member of BPSS and give your name. They will then check against the list of names (no contact details) that we have sent.

For Doncaster, Tel: **01709 770801**. For Exeter, Tel: **01395 33077**

CTM Potters Supplies - if you use clay you need CTM



A close-up view of Claire Tatarek's work.

The 2026 Potterycrafts discount code for BPSS members.

Society/Association Terms and Conditions

1. **Discount codes are for members use only.**
2. **Discount code cannot be used in conjunction with any other offers or sale/discounted products.**
3. **Discount code is to be distribution to members by Society/ Association and not Potterycrafts.**
4. **The discount code value is 10% OFF order. Not including delivery charge.**
5. **Any misuse of discount code may result in termination.**



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
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Membership Secretary:	Jane Ostler
Exhibition Co-ordinator:	Madalyn Baskerville
Editor/Designer:	Yvonne Cornes