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Editorial

Slowly normality returns with news of members' recent shows but not enough future activity - at least not made available to this publication.

After the phenomenal success of BK2021 our next group meet is our AGM, and the prospect of more live demonstrations to add to our excellently curated online talks.

Fingers crossed that progress is maintained.

Neil Dewey

Group News

SCG AGM AND LIVE DEMONSTRATION

The next live demonstration will be by Gareth Mason at Porchester Community Centre, Westlands Grove, Porchester, Farnham, PO16 9AD, on Sunday 23 January 2022 from 10.00am until 4.00pm. Our 2022 AGM will take place during the lunch break.

Registration documents and clarification of any COVID requirements will be available in early November 2021 on the SCG website, and will also be emailed to all members.

SCG ZOOM LECTURES

We've had an interesting selection of speakers over the last 3 months: Matthew Blakeley telling us how to turn rocks into glazes; Lee Cartledge gave a very enthusiastic talk about the history of country potters in his area, and the links to the studio pottery he and his mother run; and Tim Copley's talk and demo on making his pieces, with a modern take on the Leach tradition.

About 40 – 60 people either attend the live Zoom talk or watch the recording afterwards, though attendance at the live event has been patchy, which can be dispiriting to the speaker. You can always switch your video off if you're doing something embarrassing or distracting during the talk!

Forthcoming speakers are:

Vidya Thirunarayan in October. Many of you will know SCG member Vidya. She trained in Bharata Natyam, a classical dance form from Southern India, and has worked professionally in this area for many years. In recent years she has begun combining her dual practice in dance and clay. She will be sharing some of the insights and observations from this exploration – as in the trailer to "Sites of Belonging", a Bharata Natyam production:
<https://www.vidyathirunarayan.com/sites-of-belonging>

Deiniol Williams in November. Deiniol is a Welsh potter located in Yorkshire. Much of his work is based on the functional forms of wheel thrown tableware, but radically deformed by the inclusion of stones. As a contrast, he also makes a series of ceramic tiles.
www.deiniolwilliams.uk

(cont. on next page)

Group News - cont.

Paul Wearing in December. Paul is another Welsh potter, though based in Cardiff. He makes hand built vessels with rich, complex surfaces created by layers of slips and glazes, inspired by the Welsh countryside. Paul will be talking about and demonstrating some of his making and glazing techniques. <https://paulwearingceramics.com/>

Toby Duncan in January. Toby isn't from Wales, but from Norfolk, and lives in Cambridge. Another lover of rich surfaces, but very different from Paul Wearing's approach, applied to his sculptural forms. He will be talking about his work and the micro-sized wood fired kiln that he has built.

We also have the following waiting in the wings, with dates yet to be finalised:

Nic Collins, renowned for his wood firing: www.nic-collins.co.uk

Kevin Millward, long time potter and instructor, and one of the driving forces behind setting up Clay College: www.kevinmillwardceramics.co.uk

Sam Lucas, creates ceramic sculptures as highly abstracted humanoid forms: www.sam-lucas.com

Booking details will be announced via Tony Thompson's mailings.

Some time later this year I am moving to the Welsh borders, so I'll be handing this over to Vasu Reddy.

Tim Thornton

BISHOPS KITCHEN 2021: BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER



A huge thanks to everyone for a very successful event at the Bishop's Kitchen this year.

Well, it could have been the cancellation of cruises, the horrors of booking multiple PCR tests for holidays in Greece, or just sheer lockdown blues. Whatever the reasons – and despite all our qualms and doubts and anxieties until the very last minute - it really was a great success.

Not that many more visitors than in 2019 – about 3,700 rather than 3,400. But very much more buying – about 100 items more sold than in 2019 (388 pieces) and over £20,000 in turn over (compared to over £13,000).

(cont. on next page)

BISHOPS KITCHEN 2021 cont.

Those canceled cruises must have been burning holes in pockets! But more than anything, the visitors were invariably and lavishly positive. Makes it all feel worth while.

The display this year was superb – maybe the long and enforced absence of socialising did bring some benefits to our artistic endeavours. And maybe the break of a year brought a freshness to the work of the team. They certainly worked really hard.

Thank you to the three Neil/Neals – Rampton, Dewey and Griffin for all the hard physical work in setting up the lighting and the plinths. And before that, the plinth painting team: Marigo Harries, Diana Carter, Nick Taylor, Lesley Dixon, Jane Ogden-Swift, Kevin Akhurst.

Thank you to those who came in and helped on the setting up and checking in day – Nick Taylor, Lola Claeys Bouuaert, Helen Scribbans, Jan Griffiths, Mike Braisher, Margaret Newton. And thank you to the curating team – Brian Tew, Vidya Thirunarayan, Abby Ducharme and Jo Tricklebank.

Thank you to all who stewarded for carrying on so valiantly; the wonderful social media team – Katharine Schafli and Tim Thornton; the publicity team – Heather Muir and Gill Waller, the web superman – Neil Rampton: the publicity was wonderful this year.

And to many of those who worked behind the scenes – Claire Stevens and Tim Thornton doing magic with the spreadsheets; Lynn Nicholls with printing; Annie Flitcroft with the portfolios; Helen Scribbans and John Howell with the finances; Sandie Dixon with her masterful stewarding rota; the two car parking teams – Suzanne Rampton, Eugenie Smit, Caroline Piggott, Jo Morris, Debbie Kolios; the checking out teams – Fiona Kelly, Caroline Wadhams, Richard Hollingberry, Nigel Hobbs, Lesley and Mick Dixon, Alec Roberts....

I know, as I write this, that I am going to kick myself for starting to list names: I am bound to have forgotten several names. But... it felt like such a joint effort that it seems unfair not to name names as it were. It was really a group effort.

So – apologies in advance if I have had a senior moment and left you out, and thank you to everyone for making it such a success.

Vasu Reddy

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

Our next meeting will be 'live' at Vasu's House, "Tanglewood", Outlands Lane, Curdridge, SO30 2HD on Sunday 10 October at 12.30.

If you have anything you would like to bring to our attention please contact:
Sandie Dixon, Hon. Sec., 2sandie@tiscali.co.uk, 07899 948019 or any other member of the committee.

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to our new members:-

Mrs Faye Stevens
Mrs Carolyn Knight
Mr Michael Burrell
Mrs Brigette Gillespie

Farnborough
Eling, Totton
Ifold, W Sussex
Farnham

Mr Geoffrey Thiel
Mrs Bronwen Coussens
Mrs Jane Brind
Ms Jess Skelton

Chichester
Henley on Thames
Sherborne St John
Steep, Petersfield

What's On and Been On

THE CREATIVE GALLERY - WAREHAM

Fiona Kelly writes: After such a strange few months it's been a delight to welcome two more SCG members to show their work at our gallery.

Linda Chew's show (top and middle right) in April was cut short by COVID closure, so she'll be back again in July 2022, and Lesley Dixon's fantastic work (bottom row) will have been on show to the end of September.

Please check out

www.facebook.com/creativegallerywareham

www.instagram.com/creativegallerywareham

Or visit us at:

The Creative Gallery, St John's Hill, Wareham, BH20 4NB

Daily 10am-5pm

01929 551505

www.creativegallerywareham.co.uk



CHRISTMAS COASTAL ART TRAIL - ALDWICK AND ROSE GREEN, BOGNOR REGIS

Christmas Coastal Art Trail on 27 & 28 November 2021 from 10.30- 16.00.

Local art trail around Aldwick and Rose Green, Bognor Regis, PO21. Artists will be opening their creative spaces to the public with ceramics, paintings, glass, illustration, jewellery, floristry for sale. Lovely original handmade Christmas presents.

contact sucloudceramics@gmail.com for more details

ONLINE COURSES FROM TIM THORNTON

With the shortage of formal courses in pottery and ceramics, it is increasingly difficult to obtain the technical knowledge needed to pursue our craft, whether as a student or as somebody who has come to clay later in life.

Tim Thornton offers a number of online courses that help fill this gap, with the autumn term starting on 21 September. Courses available are:

Studio Health and Safety

This course gives you all the information you need to run a studio safely, and also how to evaluate how much truth there is in some of the health and safety posts on social media and elsewhere.

You will learn about how to identify and resolve risks in the studio, through the whole making process from dealing with clay and other raw materials, through making and firing work to final packaging. You will understand how to identify any potentially harmful materials in the studio, and how to deal with them. You will also get to understand good working practice in the studio, as well as appropriate clothing and the use of PPE. You will also be shown resources that you can use to help decide whether something is a significant risk or not.

The course doesn't deal with the specific legal responsibilities of having staff, or of running a teaching studio, though the health and safety aspects are covered.

Product Safety

If you make functional work, then this is the course for you. This course tells you all you need to know to make

work that is safe for the user, including glaze stability and food safety, and all the other aspects of producing good, safe, functional work. All aspects of product safety are covered, giving you the underlying theory, the means to test pieces, how to improve the design, and the relevant standards and legislation.

A considerable proportion of the course covers making durable glazes, crazing, leaching and food safety. Attention is also given to all the items that may be used on the table or in the kitchen. Also producing pieces that are frost proof. And general considerations such as stability and waterproofness.

Electric Kilns and Firing

A new course that covers everything you are likely to need to know about electric kilns and firing them. It is ideal for you if you've just bought a kiln and want to get to grips with it, or if you use a studio where work is fired for you and you want to understand what happens, or if you've had a kiln for a while but aren't sure if you're getting the most out of it.

The course covers choosing, installing and maintaining your kiln; kiln safety; how a kiln heats up, how we measure it with thermocouples and cones, and how we control it with the kiln controller; what happens to clays and glazes during the firing; how best to load your kiln and when to unload it; and firing faults, their prevention and cure.

For more information, and to book your place, please go to <https://tim-thornton.com/courses-2/>.

Tim Thornton Ceramics

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www.tim-thornton.com

Instagram [@Tim_Thornton_Ceramics](https://www.instagram.com/Tim_Thornton_Ceramics)

Facebook [@TimThorntonCeramics](https://www.facebook.com/TimThorntonCeramics)



ALISON WEAR - WELLINGTON COLLEGE, CROWTHORNE

Alison will be exhibiting her handbuilt smoke, raku or pitfired organic forms at Craft in Focus' Craft and Design Fair 2021, Wellington College, Crowthorne, Berkshire, RG45 6DY from 29 - 31 October.

Alison Wear Ceramics

www.alisonwearsceramics.com

Instagram: [alisonwearsceramics](https://www.instagram.com/alisonwearsceramics)

Find us on

The Southern Ceramic Group has its own Facebook page and it is easy to find using the following link;
<https://www.facebook.com/southernceramicgroup>

If you visit you will find announcements, details about events and photos. These are usually posted by one of the committee members but anybody who has joined the Facebook group can post. It offers a great opportunity to chat to other potters. You can show your work or ask for help with a particular problem. Potters are generous people and always willing to teach, advise and share the lessons they have learnt.

Not on Facebook?

It is easy to join and simple to use and you are in complete control of the information that you wish to share and the friends that you want to have. I have found two videos on You Tube that will guide you through the necessary steps.

How to Setup a Facebook Account

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zf5q0oS0FM>

Facebook for Seniors, Grandparents & Boomers FREE Short Video Course & Preview
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVy6q2JHfKU>

Daunted? Then let us know and we will find somebody to talk you through it.

Connect, share, and learn.

There are a lot of groups on Facebook that have something to do with ceramics. Some are focused on the UK and others are global. I have found everyone to be kind, helpful and supportive.

Finally

Please post on the Southern Ceramic Group Facebook page. Show your recent work. Share a disaster. Seek the solution to a problem.

Currently all our lives are restricted to one degree or another so please reach out, share and communicate.

Jane Ogden-Smith

scg_membership@southernceramicgroup.org.uk

TIM THORNTON

Tim runs the SCG social media accounts on Facebook and Instagram. Whilst these have been useful in helping to promote our exhibitions the aim is to keep them active all year round, (particularly as we are still unable to run events due to Covid restrictions), in order to spread information round to members of the group (this will be in addition to existing channels like Tony's emails and the newsletter).

Please email Tim with anything you'd like posted – it could be a nice pot you've made, some spare kit you want to sell off, an exhibition you attended or you have coming up, or anything else that may be relevant. Also, images! Preferably at least 1024 pixels square resolution (don't worry about them being too large), and if they can have nice wide borders it makes it easier for him to crop them to the different image sizes for Instagram and Facebook use. If you have video,

then even better. But without images it won't get posted on Instagram, and you'll need to persuade him that it is worth posting on the other accounts.

Our accounts are below – please follow them, so SCG posts appear in your feed.

Also, if you would like SCG members to see what you are posting on your social media account(s), please use the following link to let us know your account details:

<https://www.southernceramicgroup.org.uk/members-page/social-media/>

Southern Ceramic Group Social Media

Instagram: [@southernceramicgroup](https://www.instagram.com/southernceramicgroup)

Facebook: [@southernceramicgroup](https://www.facebook.com/southernceramicgroup)

Tim Thornton

scg_social@southernceramicgroup.org.uk

SCG ZOOM ACCOUNT

We have paid for our Zoom account, so we are not restricted to 40 minute calls and other limitations of a free account. If you are wanting to use Zoom for any SCG activities, please email Tim Thornton.

scg_social@southernceramicgroup.org.uk

Glaze Group September 2021

Five intrepid members met on September 8th for the first in-person Glaze Group meeting in almost two years. We met at a new venue – Nadia Hopkins' home near Hursley. The meeting followed the usual format, with each attendee bringing pots to discuss.

EUGENIE SMIT

Eugenie brought three objects which she had made. The first was a small colourful semi-abstract form with tall ears. Eugenie explained that when she first fired this it came out black all over, so she reglazed it and fired it a lower temperature, with successful results.

Eugenie's second piece was a model of an engine piston head. She used a Botz glaze for this, to give it a realistic metallic appearance. Although Botz say to fire at 1020 C, Eugenie found she could only develop the metallic finish by a long firing at 1000C.

The final piece of Eugenie's was in the form of a car wheel, with a very realistic tyre with a rubbery appearance and carved tread. Eugenie told us that she had needed to rub a specific oil into the tyre surface to get the right sheen on the black.



NICK TAYLOR



Nick showed the group a small jar with a blue glaze containing pinholes. He said that this glaze regularly pinholes, even though he is scrupulously clean at the bisque stage.

Various suggestions were made to try to overcome this, such as holding for a longer time at peak temperature when bisquing and also having a longer hold at the peak in the glaze firing. Tim noted that the liner glaze (a different glaze) in the same pot was not pinholed, and he suggested trying a pot with the inside and outside glazes swapped to see whether and where pinholes occur.

Nick also brought a small dish with a turquoise glaze with a smooth stone-like finish. This was made some time ago on a course and Nick asked if anyone could identify the glaze. The group felt, based on the colour, that it would be a strontium or barium glaze.

The group had an extended discussion on when an item could be described as 'food safe'. Tim has made a detailed study of this topic. An extreme position would be to say that the glaze must contain no toxic chemicals – for example the interior of Nick's jar had a green chrome glaze and Tim noted that green chrome was not toxic, whereas other colours from chrome are toxic. In high temperature glazes cobalt and manganese are potentially toxic. However, a lot depends on usage – a stable high temperature glaze in vessels used for serving food is unlikely to pose any hazards. However, Tim told the group that dishwashers are aggressive enough to dissolve silica from the surface of a glaze.

TIM THORNTON

Tim brought two pieces with his characteristic gnarly glazes. The first was a bowl which initially been glazed with an oil-spot glaze. He had then applied a nuka glaze over the temmoku and re-fired the bowl. This led to an extensive discussion on techniques for reglazing pots.

Tim's other piece was a moon-jar shape which had a thick wood-ash glaze. This glaze had run in the firing and created lumps and hollows in the glazed surface, even though it was a uniform coating to start with. We discussed what might have caused this and Tim pointed out that he deliberately does not mix his glazes thoroughly, so maybe local variations in the glaze led to this effect.



KEVIN AKHURST



Kevin passed round two test pieces from his most recent firing. One had a glaze with 16% red iron oxide ('Shynkaruk saturate' from Phil Roger's book on salt glazing). On the side of the pot facing the flames and salt this glaze had become a transparent yellowish colour, highlighting carving in dark brown. The rear side of the pot showed very fine vertical striations in shades of brown. One problem is that the glaze runs badly. Kevin plans to try it in a cooler part of the kiln, but he suspects the surface effects that he likes in this glaze are connected to the running.

The other test piece had overlapping areas of rutile and cobalt washes sprayed on the surface. On the rear of the pot they produced an uninteresting matt brown, but facing the flames and the salt these had merged into a swirling mix of yellow, blue and green.

Finally Kevin showed the group a bowl made by Rachel Wood. Kevin had seen a Zoom presentation by Rachel in which she demonstrated her techniques. Starting with a coarse clay, she hand-builds her bowls and shapes them while semi-dry to induce cracks and tears. Then she scrapes the surface to produce a rough texture and finally brushes on a variety of slips and glazes to get the painterly effects she wants.



NADIA HOPKINS

Nadia showed the group a bowl with a tenmoku glaze. The glaze had an attractive spotted effect, which Nadia attributed to Magnesium or Lithium in the glaze.



Nadia also brought out two large bowls for discussion.

One had a dynamic decoration in a cobalt/manganese pigment which had been squirted and brushed onto the glaze surface.

The other had a deeply carved foliate decoration, with the white carving cutting through a blue surface which had a rough stony feel and a crystalline appearance reminiscent of granite. Nadia explained that the blue came from a slip coating which was then carved through, followed by a coating of transparent glaze. The crystalline granitic effect is not easy to reproduce and pots with apparently identical treatments have produced more uniform surfaces.



minutes by Nadia Hopkins

What's in a Name?

Maybe the Southern Ceramic Group has long-standing members who can recall when our name was chosen, and the reasoning behind it. I recall when I first joined being a bit puzzled that we are Southern Ceramic Group and not Southern Ceramics Group. I considered that I made ceramics, not ceramic, and it seemed odd to me. It sounded as if the group itself was made of ceramic! When I Googled the group's name I used to get the response 'Did you mean Southern Ceramics Group?' (I don't get this any more so I suppose Google has learned something).

Recently though, my perspective on this has changed. I am reading Paul Greenhalgh's recent book 'Ceramic, Art and Civilisation'. In the prologue to the book he explains why he has used the term 'ceramic' "rather than the commonly used plural". He laments the fragmented nature of much previous writing on ceramic and the failure of the written history of art to provide "cultural space" to ceramic, resulting in its "long-term insecurity" and "intellectual fragility". Greenhalgh's

P.S. Since my item on old pots in the April – June newsletter I have written a couple more pieces on specific old pots. These are now on my website and may be found using the following links:

https://www.kevinakhurst.com/uploads/1/8/0/0/18008691/an_italian_apothecary_jar_made_around_1500.pdf

https://www.kevinakhurst.com/uploads/1/8/0/0/18008691/a_porcelain_dish_from_china_800_-_1000_years_old.pdf

Kevin Akhurst

purpose is to show that ceramic is "a thing in itself" with a significant role in civilisation over thousands of years.

The use of the singular in this way is stretching the English language a bit – dictionaries tend to limit the use of the singular to the material from which ceramics are made, and apply the plural to the art as a whole. However, Greenhalgh is not distorting the language in the pursuit of his agenda. Think of the term sculpture. No one is concerned about referring to a number of sculptural pieces as sculptures while at the same time referring to the discipline as sculpture.

Whether you feel that you are pursuing art or craft (or both) when you are making your ceramics I think we would all benefit from ceramic practice gaining its due respect in the cultural world. I will no longer view our name as being a little odd, but rather as one which in a small way furthers the status of ceramic.

What's Smoking?



by Tim Thornton

Kiln fumes are a topic that divides many potters – some are highly concerned, whereas others are oblivious to them. So I thought I'd dig down into what happens when firing an electric kiln, and how harmful any fumes may be. Space prohibits dealing with all the other ways of firing in this article, though they're covered in my studio health and safety course.

So, first of all, what fumes may be given off? To answer that, we need to look at the composition of what we put into the kiln – clays and glazes (note that I'm ignoring water, as it is not harmful to health).

Clay bodies generally have impurities in them – ball and earthenware clays are notably impure, as they pick up all sorts of stuff travelling from where they were first created, to where they were dug out of the ground. But there is quite a lot of variation in what different clays will give off, so not all of this need apply to you.

A noticeable component of many clays is organic matter – this is the stuff that burns out of most grey clays, leaving the fired clay a whiter colour.

(cont. on next page)

What's Smoking? - cont.

We may also intentionally add organic matter to the clay or glaze, in materials such as CMC, Gum Arabic, glycerine, wax resist or paper clay. These mostly burn out between 200 and 600°C, though some substances like rice husk ash need higher temperatures. When it burns out it oxidises and breaks down in the heat of the kiln, but doesn't generally create flames, and most of the substances exit the kiln as fumes. At low temperatures they come off as VOCs, aldehydes and similar, which are irritating and in high enough concentrations are not good for you, but as the temperature rises they break down further into more benign chemicals.

With these materials burning out, oxygen in the kiln is used up. This will generate carbon dioxide and, unless there is enough fresh air coming into the kiln, it will generate carbon monoxide as the kiln environment temporarily heads towards reduction.

Some clays may also contain sulphur, chlorine and fluorine compounds, all given off at about 500°C, or 850°C if present as salts that need to decompose. Sulphur and chlorine both have unpleasant smells, as well as being harmful in high enough concentrations. Fluorine seems to occur mostly in porcelains. It is odourless, but again not healthy in high concentrations, and it will also etch glass over time if the kiln fumes pass over your windowpanes.

Turning now to glazes, the materials used are generally purer, so we can expect much less of the emissions associated with clay (apart from any organic matter that we have added). However some people do worry about metal fumes – especially as, if present, they are of nanoparticle size, and so very readily absorbed if inhaled. But tests I and others have conducted show that almost all the metals we use in glazes are not emitted as fumes to anywhere near toxic levels, except for lead, antimony and vanadium when fired to stoneware temperatures, and they are normally used in low temperature glazes. Lead doesn't start giving off fumes until somewhere between 1000 and 1100°C, and lead glazes can easily be formulated to mature below this point.

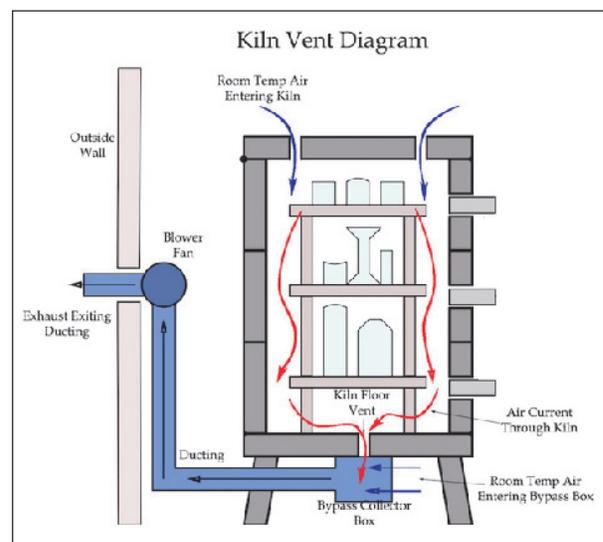
Finally, we also get nitrogen oxides being given off. These don't come from the materials fired, but from nitrogen in the air being converted into oxides at the high temperatures found in the kiln. Again, as anyone living in just about any of our cities will know, this is not something that is good for your health in any quantity.

So we have a few things that may be harmful, but are the concentrations high enough to actually do us harm? And how does the concentration vary through the studio? Concentrations of kiln fumes will be highest directly over the kiln, but then they will dissipate through the room. If the room is large (in relation to the size of the kiln), then the dissipated concentration

will be lower than if you have a cupboard for your kiln. And having a fan to circulate the air will help dissipate the fumes from the kiln area (though be aware that it may also raise dust levels).

The good news is that a study of 50 studio potters, varying from hobby potters to studios in schools and colleges, showed that overall there is no significant health risk from kiln fumes. Although close to the kiln the levels can get to the safe limits, or even temporarily exceed them, few people will stay by the kiln throughout its firing, and the limits are averaged over a working day, not instantaneous levels. But, depending on the materials you use and your level of sensitivity, you may find the fumes irritating to breathe, or just an unpleasant smell, in which case you may want better ventilation. This should also be the case in a teaching environment, as you don't know how sensitive your pupils may be to the fumes.

The simplest solution is to have a couple of windows open, or a fan close to the kiln that expels air. Both of these will also help keep dust down. Or you can fit a kiln vent, which sucks fresh air into your kiln and then



the fumes are ducted to the outside – there are some YouTube videos and web sites showing how to do this economically if you have basic DIY skills. The air flow created by the kiln vent may also reduce flashing, and help keep the kiln in oxidation when things are burning out, but it may extend your glaze firing times by as much as 30 minutes, increasing your electricity bill, and your anxiety time in waiting to see the results of your firing!

So, in summary, kiln fumes aren't going to kill you, but they may be an irritant. If so, some simple ventilation will solve the problem.

For more information, go to www.tim-thornton.com.

Defying Gravity

Making Ceramic Horses In Lockdown - Linda Kelsall-Barnett

During the first Lockdown I turned a corner of my kitchen into a studio. I'd been attending Sandra Bidmead's clay animal classes, as a beginner, but now I was on my own, with the plan to make a larger standing horse.

SOLITAIRE started life as six kebab sticks stuck into polystyrene. Two sticks crossed over where the hocks would be in each hind leg. I worked from the feet upwards but due to the size and weight things started to go wrong - the body cracked as the clay dried and the back legs stretched apart. I cut the whole thing in half - the back legs came apart in my hands like two chicken legs and the front legs fell forwards.

I changed approach. The hindquarters were remodelled with fresh clay, wrapped in plastic and put away in an airtight box. The remaining front half also had a makeover, but refused to give up the forward lilt. I procured a metal frame from a stationery unit, which allowed me to tie string supports and regain control - out came the back legs and I reattached them, pinning the feet into the polystyrene with cocktail sticks. As it dried, it held together. I made the head separately and finally removed the supports.



Work in progress clockwise from top left: Solitaire, Elphaba in the sling, support for rearing pony Snowy, Elphaba showing extra support over the shoulders



SNOWY required a strong triangular support - I thickened the tail and fixed it to a hind leg. I allowed the lower part to dry out before moving up, always keeping the top edge damped for the next section.

Creating SOLITAIRE gave me the confidence to model HEIDI, starting with drawings from life - my preferred starting point. Life drawing allows you to see in a three dimensional way, which is so valuable when making a sculpture. This time I ensured the clay was an even thickness and properly supported throughout.

Process of Portrait of Heidi

Defying Gravity

Making Ceramic Horses In Lockdown - cont

While experimenting with combining grogged stoneware clay and paper clay I created a cantering horse balanced on three legs. ELPHABA (the witch in 'Wicked' who sings 'Defying Gravity') has stoneware legs and shoulders and a paper clay body and head. I worked forwards from the hindquarters using strips of stoneware to create a "skeleton" and covered this with the more flexible and lighter pieces of paper clay. Throughout, I ensured the joints were fixed with slip.

Concerns that cracks would form due to shrinkage were unfounded - ELPHABA emerged unscathed from the kiln. I have used this technique to make a variety of animals, texturing the paperclay to create fur.

Each piece is coloured with underglaze and oxides, aiming for a realistic result.



Finished pieces from top clockwise:
Elphaba, the menagerie, Solitaire, Snowy.

I am available for commissions for animal portraits. While I am a classical guitarist by profession I have always enjoyed drawing (I studied art to A level) and the challenge of transforming raw materials into a character. I am based in Chichester and you can find me on Instagram and Facebook [@ceramics.by.linda](https://www.instagram.com/ceramics.by.linda). I love to see how others are inspired to work - I follow some members of the Southern Ceramic Group - please follow me you if would like to, and I will follow back!

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Next Newsletter due: 2 January 2022
Next Copy Deadline: 15 December 2021

Keep me posted, please, at any time before the deadline with your news of galleries and exhibitions showing your work, studio tips, memories, and especially images that might be shared.

Photos and other images. Please send these as separate **.jpg** files. If your document contains embedded photos that is not a problem as it shows me where they should be placed but I always need them as separate files as well with descriptive file name please, (e.g. Freda blue pot). And please remember the reproduction limitations of the newsletter if viewing your technical or aesthetic detail clearly is paramount.

Neil Dewey

Advertisements

Interested in advertising in the Southern Ceramic Group Newsletter?
If so please contact Rolf Hawkins: rookerypotts@gmail.com

The rates for advertising are:

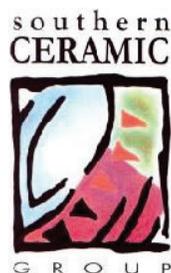
SCG Members: Free
Commercial B&W/Colour:
Full Page £20
Half Page £10
Quarter Page £5

New Members

Interested in becoming a member of the Southern Ceramic Group?
Application forms can be found on the Group's website at:
<https://www.southernceramicgroup.org.uk/join/>

Acknowledgments

Thanks go to regular contributors to the Newsletter and all the new ones prepared to have a go and submit something.



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