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EDITORIAL

Another summer is over, signalling the end of all the hard work for BK 2022 with success or disappointment for some.

The darker months may encourage more studio time, greater experimentation, worries about the energy implications and costs of our pastime/profession. Perhaps now is the time to try glazing greenware, with all its complications: leather hard or fully dry, and variations to your favourite glazes to suit.

Neil Dewey

Group Update

CHAIR'S REPORT

Hello again to all SCG members.

It is a strange time of year. Everything has opened up and it feels like life is almost normal again. But I know from personal contacts that many of you are still getting COVID and some have been suffering from long term symptoms. Things are in flux. I hope that for those who are under the weather you find your spirit and energy again in clay.

Thank you to everyone involved for making BK 2022 such a success despite the problems of ill health that beset the organisers. The work on display was wonderful – it gets better every year! And comments from visitors were really appreciative. Thank you to Jane Ogden-Swift for her work in setting up BK before falling ill. And thank you to Nick Taylor, Helen Scribbans and Lynn Nicholls for heroically stepping up to save the day. For next year we are looking for a small team – a triumvirate perhaps – to run BK. More fun sharing the work and decisions. For this **we urgently need volunteers**. It doesn't matter how new (or old!) you feel – please contact me to ask about this or offer help if you are at all interested and able. (I sound like one of those Uncle Sam posters – saying 'we need you' –

but we can't run this exhibition if we don't get volunteers!).

Some items of news from the committee that might be of interest to you.

First, you might remember that we had mentioned in the last newsletter that in response to many requests from members we were working on an initiative to set up a platform for promoting interaction between members called 'Local Studios'. You will find more about this further on in the newsletter. I hope very much that you can participate in it – fellow ceramists can be a huge source of encouragement and support.

Second, we are planning an alternative firing day for Spring 2023, with some raku and some different smoke firings taking place. It will be a full day event that will be open to all. You will hear more about it soon and about what sorts of bisqued pieces – you should bring if you want to join in it. There will be a small charge for participating in it – towards costs involved in running it, with a 'bring a dish' lunch during the day.

For now, greetings from me and the committee and hoping the autumn brings you inspiration and courage.

13 September 2022

Vasu Reddy, scg_chair@southernceramicgroup.org.uk or vasureddyceramics@gmail.com



NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

Our next meeting will be on Saturday 10 December at 10.30am.

If you have anything you would like to bring to our attention please contact Joanna Wakefield, Hon. Sec., scg_secretary@southernceramicgroup.org.uk, 07899 948019 or any other member of the committee

BISHOP'S KITCHEN 2022

Our annual exhibition at The Bishop's Kitchen in Chichester was a great success thanks in no small part to the dozens of volunteers that made it happen. Whether you helped paint the plinths, set up the exhibition space, check-in and curate the pieces, whether you gave up your time to steward or whether you were working behind the scenes – many thanks to all of you. BK 2022 can't happen without your time and good will.

As you are probably aware we were operating a little short staffed this year due in no small part to the cyclic resurgence of Covid. Due to this we did suffer a few 'glitches' here and there but on the whole the exhibition went to plan with footfall and sales nearly as good as the bumper year that we had last year.



Here are some headline figures from BK 2022 compared to BK 2021 :

	BK 2022	BK 2021
total items sold	335	388
total value of items	£19,365.50	£20,538.00
daily average	£1,139.15	£1,283.63
average value of sale	£57.81	£52.93
average daily sales	20	24

The number of items sold was down 14% on last year but average sale value was 9% higher which meant that overall we were only 6% lower in total takings.

The daily sales fluctuate somewhat and rather surprisingly the weekends are not especially good sales days. Wednesday 3 August was an outstanding day for sales – no idea why ! Four of our members achieved really quite stunning sales of over £800 each. Average sales for all exhibitors was £293. Unfortunately there were too many days when the visitor numbers were not recorded for us to make a comparison but the feeling was that numbers were similar to last year.

2022 saw the return of the Private View which allowed us to test the new card reader and the use of the laptop for recording sales. Those of you who were there will know that we had some serious issues with the card reader resulting in a rather stressful few minutes while we worked to resolve the problem. I don't think that this effected sales on the evening however it did make for an 'interesting' start to BK 2022.

We are now starting to think about BK 2023 and to that end we will shortly be sending a questionnaire out to all members asking their opinions regarding BK 2022 and a few proposed changes for BK 2023 which we hope will make the whole process of running the Bishop's Kitchen events more efficient. **We will also be looking for new volunteers to help with some of the organisation leading up to next year's exhibition** – watch this space !

Nick Taylor, scg_webmaster@southernceramicgroup.org.uk



LOCAL STUDIOS



Many old and new members have expressed interest in meeting other members in their locality; some way of meeting a wider range of colleagues in ways other than at our annual exhibition, AGM or demonstrations. This

was reinforced in our analysis of the survey so many of you made the time to complete.

There are circles of longstanding friends among the membership. There are also members who are just happy to make their work, exhibit with us and elsewhere and leave it at that for the moment. And then there are new members rightly anxious to join an active community.

So we would like to introduce a way members can meet, should they wish, to share their enthusiasms for ceramics, their ideas and knowledge in small informal settings, to enable practice discussions and local opportunities, and just get to know potters near them.

Your committee has been working hard on how this might be achieved and as the flyer says - "keep checking your inbox", we hope to have more news later in the autumn.

Neil Dewey

NEW MEMBERS - April to September 2022


Gary Kramer	Bognor	Ellie FD	W Sussex
Lyndsey Stride	Lyndhurst	Nina Romanowski	Newbury
Sara Wilde	Chandler's Ford	Brigitte Gillespie	Farnham
Matthew Bugeja	Southsea	Julian Matthews	Rugby
Debbie Cathcart	PO12	Fiona Charter	Salisbury
Daine Henshaw	Chichester	Lucinda Davis	Midhurst
Pippa Honess	West Chiltington	Mathilde Blum	Shoreham
Janish Patel	Southampton	Patricia Audrey Fletcher	Waterlooville
Pauline Bradbury	Southampton	Jeanette Walpole	Eastleigh
Michael Boredolerm	Worthing	Lisa Hawker	Cranleigh
Linda Maunsell	Lymington	Jo Butler	Winchester
Michael Hartz	Alton	Susan Bassil	Chichester
Steve Restall	Bedhampton	Simon Goodison	Bursledon
Alix Mercer-Rees	Worthing	Sarah Russel	Storrington
Paul Kirnig	Godalming	Jeanette Sheraff	Weymouth
Alice Crowe	Southsea	Robin Cowen	Hambrook
Helen Adams	Bognor		

This list partially overlaps that submitted with the previous newsletter. The total membership is now 199.

A warm welcome to all these new members and apologies for any accidental omission of some from our last newsletter.

Caroline Piggott scg_membership@southernceramicgroup.org.uk






Exhibition of Ceramics

Allen Gallery

Church Street, Alton GU34 2BW



1st October - 30th October
Tuesday to Sunday
10.30am - 4.00pm
Entrance Free

www.ceramicus.co.uk
www.hampshireculture.org.uk/allen-gallery

MEET THE POTTERS
here on the morning of
1st October

Nigel Hobbs reports that he and Mike Bush (also a SCG member) will be exhibiting with Ceramicus at the Allen Gallery in Alton throughout October.

The group, formed in 2010 and totalling 10 potter friends, called itself Ceramicus - (hence the name). They have since had an annual exhibition of their own work most years in many places such as The Oxmarket, Chichester, Winchester City Space (now The Arc), Haslemere Museum, Farnham Pottery as well as The Allen Gallery.

Many types of firing will be on show from wood firing and raku to reduction stoneware. All work will be for sale.

Allen Gallery is also very well known for its extraordinary collection of historic pottery, porcelain and tiles dating from 1250 AD and is worth a visit as well as to see the Ceramicus 2022 exhibition.

After a successful residency at spudWORKS, (see report on p9), Joanna Wakefield is now fronting teaching classes at the creative hub in Sway.

spudWORKS
Station Road, Sway, Hampshire, SO41 6BA

CERAMICS CLASSES

with

JOANNA WAKEFIELD

Get in touch!

07393946514 jowake12@gmail.com



- All materials provided
- Fridays 1-4pm
- 8 weeks
- £130 per person
- 9th Sept - 4th Nov





ELAINE KING

Elaine King says, "This year, having moved from Berkshire to Dorset in February, I thought I would immerse myself into Dorset life by exhibiting in the Rural Craft marquee at 'The Great Dorset Steam Fair'. It was a wonderful event, sales were very healthy and I came away with some excellent contacts and commissions too. Certainly worth considering for other SCG potters, if you can manage the marathon 5 days!"

'On the penultimate day, to my utter surprise, I was presented with the award "Best Rural Craft from Dorset" so I am the proud custodian of a beautiful silver trophy until next year's fair. The icing on the cake!"



Elaine King
elainekingceramics.co.uk



Social Media

Social Media support has been extremely successful and positive for the SCG over the past few months, especially ahead of the BK22 exhibition. In total 37 of the exhibitors (roughly 50%) generously provided images and content to be shared by the social media volunteers to help promote the exhibition overall. The campaign, which was active for two months before and during the event, consisted of a whopping 160 social media posts on Facebook and Instagram, plus further posts on the NEW twitter account. Compared to the same period in 2021 we increased reach 138% on Facebook and almost 330% increased reach on Instagram - much thanks to the very creative and constant media content and quality images you shared. We also learnt a great deal from the campaign for future volunteers to spring board from.

Currently the group has more than 680 followers on Facebook and 698 on Instagram, which is still a growing platform. Plus 55 on the new Twitter feed.

A huge thanks for the support of the volunteers who have played an important role in raising awareness of the exhibition to the benefit of all exhibitors: Eugenie Smit, Jessica Jordon, Libby Daniels.



TWITTER ACCOUNT - please follow!

We now have a fully functioning [twitter](#) account. [Click this link](#) or search [@SCG_Ceramics](#) to view the page, follow and get chatting with fellow SCG members and fans of ceramics around the world. Remember to include [@SCG_Ceramics](#) on your posts.

We'd love you to follow the account and Direct Message the account if you have ideas or questions.



INSTAGRAM - STORIES

Not content with beautiful and informative posts, our [SCG Instagram account](#) is now getting more and more active. You will have seen eye-popping posts about member's work on the hugely popular Instagram Stories function. SCG member and volunteer, Libby Daniels, had created animated posts to music to build momentum ahead of the summer exhibition. Please [@SouthernCeramicGroup](#) on your own Instagram stories so that Libby can re-post your stories for even greater exposure.

Don't forget to follow [@SouthernCeramicGroup](#) & [#SouthernCeramicGroup](#) when posting your amazing pictures of your ideas, work in progress, hacks etc.



FACEBOOK

If you have not already done so, please follow [@southernceramicsgroup](#) on Facebook - also a great place to see posts from fellow members and find out about local opportunities too.

The [Members Chat room](#) is a great place to share ideas, get advice and offer up unwanted equipment etc. If you are a SCG member and have not got access simply use the Facebook messenger function, with your name and membership number.



HELP NEEDED

Please try and use the SCG social media tools available to you to help keep the feeds active and engaging for fellow members. It really helps us get the word out to the broader community about the great work everyone is doing - and will help footfall at exhibitions - and that means better sales!!

If you would like to help support the social media volunteers for an event that you are hosting or any other relevant aspects please email Katharine Schafli at scg_social@southernceramicgroup.org.uk.

There are now vacancies for members to help with social media posts and creating content for sharing across the three social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) If you have experience, or would like to learn how to market on social media, or use social media to your advantage please get in touch. **Volunteering for a hour or two a month is all it takes.**

Thanks everyone,
Katharine Schafli scg_social@southernceramicgroup.org.uk



DOROTA LAWRIE

My story with clay started back in 2006, whilst pregnant with my first son Reuben.

I joined a local ceramic group in Beckenham. My work was very different from the other students; it was wonky, messy and I didn't think I was good at it until 2011 when I started my BA fine Arts degree at the University of Chichester, where I spent 6 years studying part time, the last 4 years of which were spent in the ceramic studio. Then I knew what art discipline I was going to follow.

As a ceramic artist, I constantly multitask; coiling a pot requires control of the clay's moisture, and time is vital while waiting for the pot to be malleable. I often start another task or continue with a pot that has been started earlier. Ceramicists require discipline and good time management in terms of manipulating and managing their work. Creativity, self-discipline, and consistency are the keywords to become a good "Clay worker".

To touch clay, it's like, to begin the story, each lump of clay will be transformed into a storytelling object with its marks, shape, texture, colours, decorative motifs, and the firing process. Artists are the creators of the new, the untold story of the creation of which hasn't existed yet; simply, ceramics act like a vessel of storytelling about cultures, emotions, places, and communities.





I used stories from my own experience and captured them in poetry through my ceramic sculptures in the form of an installation for my MA Craft degree show at University of Brighton, which I have now completed.

For example, painting often starts with a blank canvas, and music usually begins with silence. This poem, part of my MA installation, is based on my experience traveling through the Pyrenees mountains 30 years ago. It talks about shelter, water as the source of life, and faith in God's covenant and also describe how the fear of something unknown can be misinterpreted in real life. My poem portrays an optimistic story of my individual experience, of the desire how to overcome obstacles in life and achieve self-discovery.

"Water fountain in The Pyrenees Mountains...."

Into the Spanish dust
I hear a voice guarding
I sense the beast
So, I am hiding
The carnival
I am thirsty, but I am afraid to go
This abandoned village in a Pyrenees Mountain
The only life left are cows and the water fountain
Dogs guard their cows
And I need water
10 abandoned houses
There is one where I am hiding
Roof over my head, and the night has fallen
Do I go out because the thirst is calling?
There are 3 of us, and the nerves of youth and
adventure are pinching
The jaws are clenching
Anxiety is building up
We are surrounded
Am I the warrior to go ahead?
Over one drop of water?

A weapon, a paralyzing gas
Before I left Poland
My dad said, "here you go, my love."
He knew I was going to leave
He knew I was going to be in danger
And here I am

I hear my footsteps
Shatter on the Spanish land
Then the stand of a man froze me
He looked confused
I spoke in broken Spanish
"Hola senor, ajudo, este perros...."
I see his facelift in relief and kindness.
He said, "this dog will kill you but only by licking you to
death."
And he laughs like lion roars
I feel at ease
"People are always hiding here."
I am released. There is no beast!
The guards came over
To sniff and great
And to show the master
He acknowledged his cows
Are not in danger
Our mission is not to eat!
The cows are safe
The message was sent
The fear cleared
Dust settled
The protection wasn't in need
The water was a compass.

Dorota Laurie



JOANNA WAKEFIELD



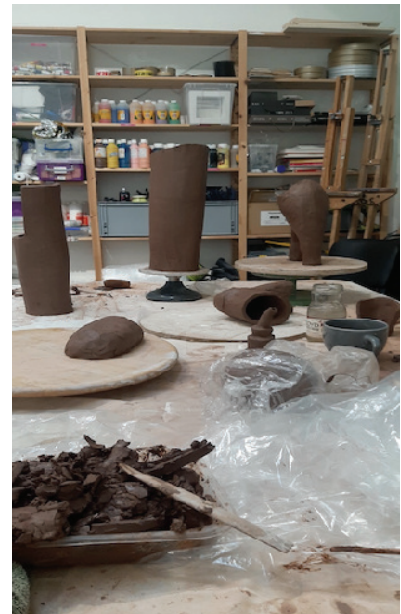
I have just completed a two week residency at spudWORKS. It was a wonderful opportunity to concentrate on my ceramic art without interruptions, as well as utilising a large studio space. spudWORKS is a non-profit artist hub situated in the quiet beautiful village of Sway.



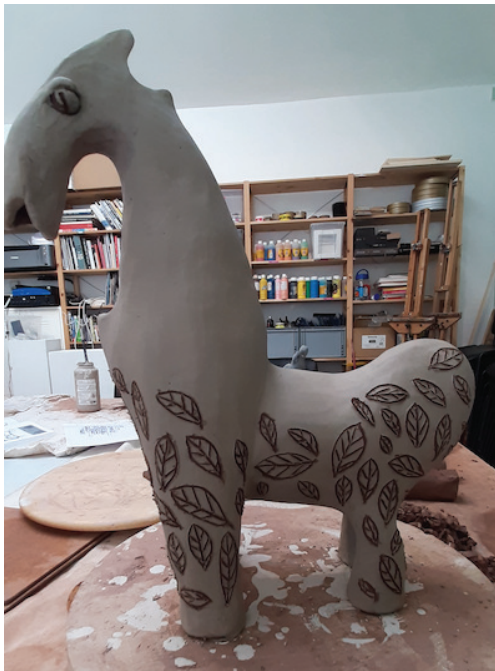
The residency gave me a bedsit room with small cooker, fridge and TV. Showers were in the main building where there was also a larger kitchen alongside the work studio and spudWORKS' gallery. The gallery space was being used by Artful Collective as part of the Hampshire Open Studios, which was good for me as I had plenty of visitors to show my work. It is a great space to use if we ever tire of BK.

It was a busy 2 weeks and I worked well into the evening, spreading out my work and not having to clear up at the end of each day. I was inspired by the forest and the ponies, so made a series of trees, and a few of my signature horses with leaf motifs. I worked with terracotta clay and white slip to give the desired effect, keeping the designs simple and exploring carving into slip. I made some good contacts and I am hoping to start a class there in September.

Joanna Wakefield



Starting work (right)



Horse 1 (left)

Reclining Nude.(below)





COMMERCIAL STAINS AND GLAZES - HOW SAFE ARE THEY?

Most potters probably use commercial stains and glazes to at least some extent – how else can you get those bright reds and yellows with the sale of raw cadmium oxide banned, and the paperwork to buy uranium oxide makes selling and shipping a pot to the EU seem trivial in comparison. But how safe are they, both in the studio and, for functional pieces, to the end user?

The short answer is we don't really know. If you look at the manufacturer's website and the SDS for the product, they may at best give you an indication of the materials used, but not enough specific information for you to make your own risk assessment.

SAFE TO USE?

Generally, the main hazard when dealing with glazes is silica dust, and if you have good studio practices to keep dust under control then that will generally sort out everything else. Obviously if you use ready-mixed glazes, or are of the type that you add water to the container the glaze is shipped in, dust management is a lot easier.

The manufacturer may give specific usage instructions, which it makes sense to follow. Also, the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) will give hazard information, but two things must be considered when looking at the SDS: first, the one document covers everything from potters with 500g of a glaze to large scale manufacturer using tons of the stuff, and you need to take your level of exposure into consideration when reading the SDS; and secondly, different manufacturers take different approaches to the SDS – some are very detailed and include every possible hazard, whilst others give next to no information about the product and any possible hazards.

I have seen some US manufactured glazes include some substances (generally biocides) that are banned in the EU and UK due to their being a health hazard, but although possibly illegal the risk to the potter is small, due to their low concentration in the glaze, and the limited time most potters spend with their hands in the glaze bucket. So this is not really a matter of concern to us.

A good thing that comes from the US is ACMI certification. The ACMI is an organisation that certifies a wide range of arts materials for being

safe to use, and they currently have two levels of certification: AP says that the product doesn't have enough of any substance to give acute or chronic health problems; and the lower level of CL says that it does contain toxic materials, but the product is safe to use if the instructions are followed. Many ceramic materials manufactured in, or being sold into, the USA will have obtained certification. Of course, you can't tell if the lack of certification means that the product has been submitted for testing and failed, or if it just has not been submitted for testing.



FOOD SAFE?

If you make pots for use with food or drink, then you'll want to avoid any harm to your customers. The requirements here are not the same as in the studio, though.

Some may say that their products are free of lead, and quote the lead and cadmium leaching standard, as if to say that that makes them food safe and legal. But people have had acute toxicity from antimony and copper glazes, and other materials such as cobalt and manganese can cause problems with long term exposure – i.e. over many years. You want your customers to remember many years' usage of your mug because of its beauty, and not because it poisoned them.

Glaze manufacturers also tend to forget about the generic legislation on food contact materials, that makes it illegal to sell anything for use with food and drink that will make it toxic, or change properties such as colour, taste, smell, or texture. So no crumbly matt cobalt glazes that give pretty flecks of blue in the diner's mash, takes out their fillings when they bite on them, and contribute in the longer term to organ failure.



But why won't the glaze and stain manufacturers certify their products as being food safe, you may be asking yourself. For two basic reasons. First, they have no control over how you will use their product, or your making and firing processes, which may be radically different from what they envisaged. Secondly, in any product manufacturing (for that is what your making pottery is), it is a long-established principle that responsibility for the product ultimately lies with the manufacturer, i.e. you, and not the component supplier, i.e. the glaze manufacturer.

If the manufacturer gives the ingredients, either in the SDS or the product description, this can be helpful. Often, they won't give quantities, but you can choose to avoid glazes that contain potentially toxic components.

Of course, the composition of the fired glaze is not the same as the raw materials, so the ACMI certification won't apply to the fired glaze. It is likely that the AP certificate means that the product will be food safe. However, there are a number of potentially toxic substances that are in a non-toxic compound in the unfired glaze, but this transforms to a leachable, toxic form in the fired glaze, such as cobalt oxide or manganese carbonate. Lead is another example of this – lead bisilicate is carefully engineered to be safe to use in the studio, but this safety is not carried through to the fired glaze, which may leach lead.

Can you send a pot off to be tested? Well yes, but change the glaze, the clay or the firing schedule and you should really send it off to be tested again. Also, test houses doing leaching tests are set up to test for the substances with quantified leaching limits, lead and cadmium in the UK (for which they'll charge you anything from about £20

each). They aren't set up to test for anything else you may be concerned about, and you wouldn't be able to afford their charges to set up a one-off test for you. And even if they could, would you have the knowledge to be able to decide what leaching level is safe?

Practically speaking, there are two options open to you. First, for those glazes and stains that do list their ingredients, you can decide to just use those that don't have anything potentially toxic in them, assuming you know which materials are on that list. Secondly, and this is the most practical route for most potters, you can subject your pots to both the lemon and the vinegar test for glaze stability (as often one will react with the glaze but not the other). If there is no sign of any degradation of the glaze in either test, then it is probably safe to use in food contact areas on your work.

SUMMING UP

Commercial products are great if you don't want to spend the time, or don't have the knowledge, to mix your own glazes. But, to a greater or lesser extent, you have inadequate information to make a fully informed decision on their safety either in the studio or for use on functional ware. The good thing, though, is that if used sensibly they are unlikely to cause many problems – the manufacturers realise that if their customers end up in hospital, they are unlikely to place repeat orders!

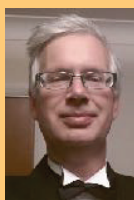
Tim Thornton



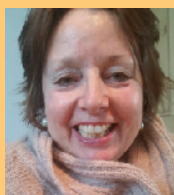
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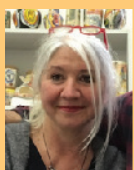
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Newsletter Matters

Please send contributions to: scg_newsletter@southernceramicgroup.org.uk
NEXT NEWSLETTER DUE: 3 January 2023
NEXT COPY DEADLINE: 15 December 2022

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



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Interested in advertising in the Southern Ceramic Group Newsletter?
If so please contact Neil Dewey : scg_newsletter@southernceramicgroup.org.uk

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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