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50th

Group Anniversary

Group Update

CELEBRATION AND CHANGES

From the Acting Chair Francheska Patisson

I would like to start with a very big thank you to Vasu Reddy who has been in the Chair of Southern Ceramic Group for nearly five years, and on the committee, in other roles, for far longer. Her enthusiasm is infectious, and she has been a wonderful leader, directing enjoyable and festive celebrations of our fiftieth year as a group, steering the committee on difficult decisions, and supporting those of us who felt less certain in our roles. Vasu steps down from Chair, but will continue on the committee organising other events and supporting the whole committee; thank you from us all.

I have been Honorary Secretary for two years, both organising committee meetings and writing up the Minutes afterwards and supporting the Chair - acting as a sounding board and putting my two pennies' worth into the ring. I took an active part in the Brickworks event in June, organising and curating the installation in the drying room. This gave me the opportunity to meet and get to know many more members which has been truly rewarding. I have tentatively put my name forward for the Chair's role, but I feel very strongly



that I can only accept the position, (should everyone else think it's a good idea), if I have sufficient support. I am therefore taking the role as acting Chair until enough volunteers have stepped forwards.

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CELEBRATION AND CHANGES - cont

This would leave the role of **Honorary Secretary** vacant, so we are looking for a volunteer to step up. Reasonable skills on a keyboard, note-taking and organisation would be desirable, but the role has become very much easier recently with the introduction of an AI tool to record meetings and produce a summary of subject discussed within seconds. It really is rather remarkable. The role would also be supported by me, with my modest experience, and other members of the committee who really are a helpful and exceptionally friendly bunch!

With my secretary's hat on, I am proposing the AGM 2026 is held on January 24th. For the last few years we have held a demonstration, free to members, around the AGM and sharing lunch. This has encouraged lots of members to join in, making the AGM quorate and a great day's entertainment. This year the role of **Demonstrations Officer** is vacant, as Maria, who has filled the role recently, is, any time soon, preparing to welcome a third child to her family. We need a volunteer to take on this role, otherwise the AGM might have to run without a demonstration. This committee position involves booking the venue, liaising with, and supporting potential demonstrators, and letting the members know the details. Please think about whether you can volunteer.

The Great Kitchen exhibition in Chichester Bishop's Palace in July/August was another wonderful event, with 3,800 visitors attending and most artists selling at least one piece. Thanks to the exceptionally hard work of Diane Henshaw, as GK Exhibition Organiser, and Nick Taylor, supporting her, the event ran smoothly, and the format has been honed to make it as efficient as possible for contributing artists.

After two years, Diane has stepped down so the **GK Exhibition Organiser** role is also now vacant. Diane is happy to continue liaising with the palace administration team. Please consider volunteering either as GK Organiser or as part of the supporting team. If no-one fills the role, there will be no GK26.

Nick Taylor has been in the role of **Webmaster** for 4 years. He runs the IT for joining members, the website, exhibitions, other events and so much more. Nick would like to step down from his role as webmaster but has agreed to continue in many of the other support roles he fills. If you are competent with IT and running a website, please volunteer for this role. Without someone to step up to this position the website might not be updated and running exhibitions becomes near impossible.

All the roles on the committee are voluntary and committee members give our time willingly and generously to the smooth operation of the group, putting on exhibitions, demonstrations, and other events. Volunteers to support each of the roles are always needed; none of these would happen unless the committee is supported and regularly replaced - please consider how each of you can help to keep Southern Ceramic Group vibrant and healthy as we head into the next fifty years.

For any further information on any of these roles, do contact me or any of the committee for more information. We would love to hear from you.

As we move into the more autumnal weather, at the time of writing there are a few places left on the Alternative Firings day on November 2nd to be held just north of Alton, Hampshire.

Later that month we can look forward to the celebratory exhibition at the Oxmarket: '50 Years Fired Up'. Artists have been asked to create a wall piece to express the sentiment 'Feed Your Soul'. It promises to be a fascinating collection of work with Christmas shopping opportunities! See the website (www.southernceramicgroup.org) for more details.

Francheska Pattison
Acting Chair and Honorary Secretary



Group Update - cont.

NEW MEMBERS

Since June twenty three new members have joined the group.

Ms	Brenda Potter	Waterlooville	Mr	Michael Lainchbury	Shoreham- by-Sea
Mrs	Camilla Hyde	Chidham	Dr	Susan Whittle	
Mrs	Helen Gilmartin		Mr	John Sutton	East Cowes
Mrs	Judith Baker	Winchester	Mrs	Sue Oster	
Mrs	Emma Walker		Mrs	Mary Armitage	Southampton
Miss	Caroline Albin	Eastleigh	Mrs	Maria Leekblade	
Ms	Jo Potter	Petersfield	Dr	Samantha Youles	Southampton
Ms	Honor Edgcombe		Ms	Michelle Shields	Farnham
Mrs	Sue Blake		Mrs	Jo McManus	Southampton
Mrs	Liz Cook		Miss	Rachel Hayward	Chichester
Ms	Cadi Froehlich		Mrs	Lesley Kent-Brown	Birdham
Ms	Sandra Boggiss	London			

A warm welcome to all these new members and apologies should any have been missed.

Caroline Piggott scg_membership@southernceramicgroup.org.uk



Social Media



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 your stories can be re-posted 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 [@southernceramicgroup](#) 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!!

To learn how to market on social media, or use social media to your advantage please get in touch

We are constantly looking for help with our media content. If there are any members who would be interested in joining a small social media team to help on specific events please contact Beccy Gardiner.

Becky Gardiner mrsrrgardiner@gmail.com

GREAT KITCHEN 2025 - Diane Henshaw



How do you turn this empty room into an amazing exhibition?

Well, it takes planning, a dedicated hard-working team of people, and 61 wonderful potters!

Our annual summer exhibition, 'GK25', was held at the Great Kitchen of the Bishop's Palace in Chichester between 25th July and 10th August 2025. Approximately 3,800 visitors attended buying 352 pieces of work for a total of £20,221.



This year, the space seemed lighter and brighter due to the removal of two ugly cupboards, heavy curtains and stage lighting. It was also greatly aided by the addition of spotlights created by Nick Taylor.

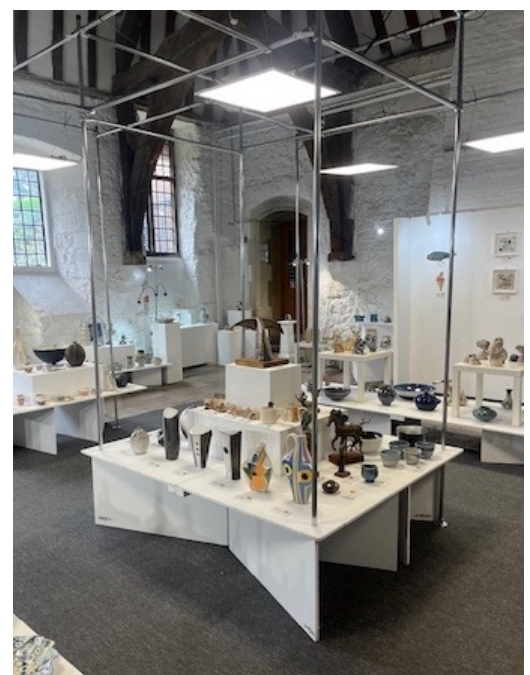


Following the results of our 2024 survey, some changes were made from last year and speaking to members, they were well received. The number of items that could be submitted was reduced to 12 per person which helped greatly with storage and location of pieces. Work was grouped by artist which gave the space more of a gallery feel and business card holders made it look more cohesive and professional. There were also framed Meet the Artist signs that could be displayed by those stewarding. 2 sales cards were produced for each piece so that buyers could take away an 'official' card. A new portfolio was produced with details of all exhibitors.

I went in each morning during the week to help with setting up and explaining how to use the systems and Nick went in each weekend. Thankfully the technical issues experienced last year were avoided by Nick's new piece of tech which the Bishop kindly allowed us to site in the private garden – hurrah - no more asking people to find a cash point or wandering around trying to find a signal.

Initially, 5 pieces per artist were displayed, and this was increased as space allowed. For the final weekend, all remaining pieces were on display. I moved the display around several times to try to ensure that the exhibition continued to look interesting and fresh and to give everyone a fair chance of making a sale.

Thanks to everyone who attended the private view on the Friday evening – and for bringing along friends and family. Sorry if it felt crowded - there were 130 visitors including the mayor (wearing his official chain of office) and his wife. Extra help had to be drafted in (thanks to my family and Nick's) to help with sales which amounted to £2,561 in just two hours.



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GREAT KITCHEN 2025 - cont.



We had good publicity this year including an article and photo in the Chichester Observer – thanks to all who helped with that especially Rebecca Gardiner who worked hard throughout to promote on social media.

Well done to everyone who gave their time and contributed to make the exhibition so successful – there was definitely a ‘buzz in the air’ and lovely visitor feedback. After coordinating the exhibition for 2 years, I feel someone else should have a go, so please don’t be shy in putting your name forward – I will be around to help too so you won’t be dropped in at the deep end.

Diane Henshaw - Summer Exhibition Coordinator

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION - at the Bursledon Brickworks Museum

Well, after over a year of planning, the collaboration between the SCG and the Brickworks Museum went off without a hitch and with great bonhomie. Thank you to Fiona Kelly for suggesting this venue in the first instance – it was a wonderful place to be. The huge kilns, chimneys, thousands of brick moulds, giant clay processing machinery that literally makes nerdy hearts throb and of course the wonderful drying rooms. A huge thanks to the Brickworks Museum for supporting this event. Thank you in particular to Carolynne Haynes for her patience and encouragement, to the team of volunteers on the day whose enthusiasm about the event made it all feel worthwhile, and to Jodie who not only made lunches in the lovely café but provided us all with gorgeous cake and prosecco at the end.



There were two guest speakers – Mella Shaw and Cadi F – (photo above) both of whom were truly inspiring. Their participation and availability to chat throughout the day was much appreciated.

Then there were the demonstrators – many SCG members set up stall at tables in the large downstairs hall and visitors and other members were shown various techniques and outcomes. One of the biggest hits was the demonstration by Tom Chamberlain of making medieval encaustic tiles (as in Winchester Cathedral). Annie Flitcroft showed the different stages of making her lichen pots – it was both fascinating and humbling to watch. Alan Green showed the making of press moulded sculpture – I think he set himself a challenge (and passed it) to finish the whole process in half an hour! Jane Davy and Neil Rampton were hard at work demonstrating throwing large and small on the wheel – and were joined for a while by Cadi F who demonstrated throwing her earthenware plates and working on them with slip. Karen (of Misty Ceramics) showed us her work on sculpting intricate coral forms and Pauline Bradbury showed us how she hand built her poppies.

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50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION - cont.

A huge community-involving success was the 'Hands on Clay' venture by Lesley and Mick Dixon in Drying Room No. 6. The aim was to encourage people, young and old, to enjoy using clay by running a "HANDS ON CLAY" workshop.



One of the pieces in the "Suspended in Time" installation, (see later), by Lesley Dixon, represented the past 250 working years of the Brickworks with 250 dried terracotta clay clenches strung on wires hanging in the drying room. The "HANDS ON CLAY" workshop invited people to squeeze pieces of soft clay to make 'clenches' representing the present and future of the site of the old Bursledon Brickworks.

The clay pieces stood vertically and together they began to look as if they were a gathering of strange creatures. People took part in groups or on their own, some poking the clay nervously to start with, some reassured by the sight of a bowl of water and a towel, others emboldened by watching others. First timers were encouraged by the sight of volunteers to help, and those with more experience were glad to find an opportunity to put their hands back on clay.

There were some amazing results. Simply squeezed clenches, some very intricate models made with great care, humorous pieces, endless variations. People returned for another go, some stayed for five minutes or an hour. Some pieces developed into clay models with great emotional significance, 'Can I take it home?'



Mick and Lesley thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon, watching these clenches being made, reflecting the personalities of the different makers. The final part of the piece was to create a mound from the unfired clenches and allow plants and grass to cover it over, returning it to the original site of the Bursledon Brickworks for the future.

Probably the most impressive part of the celebration was the set of installations in the Drying Room. All members of SCG were given a challenge – to design and make an installation on the theme "Suspended in Time". The results were hung from the ceiling in the Museum's stunningly atmospheric Drying Room with its slatted floor and ceiling and muted light filtering through. Sixteen members rose to the challenge and the outcome was unbelievable. Each came up with completely different interpretations of the theme, and every maker had not only put hours of work designing their creations but spent pretty much two days actually hanging them.

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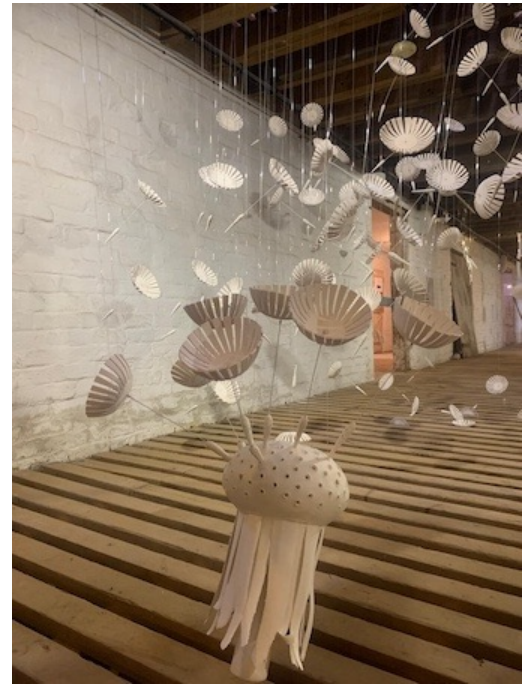


50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION - cont.

At the end of the event on the 15th of June, the Guest Speakers were asked to judge the installations, select one winner and two runners up. The winner was the incredibly delicate creation by Francheska Pattison of a dandelion caught in the moment of its seeds blowing into the air. As one of the judges described it, the idea was as bonkers in its difficulty as it was beautiful.

The two runners up were Sue Kelly with her hauntingly stark landscape hanging in beautiful undulating forms, focussing on transient and long-term marks on the surface of the land and Linda Kelsall-Barnett who depicted the fragility of the population of Large Blue butterflies.

Artworks were also contributed by Pauline Bradbury, Chiara Cattrra, Leslie Dixon, Annie Flitcroft, Rebecca Gardiner, Brigitte Gillespie, Alan Green, Fiona Kelly, Melanie Legge, Anton Page, Maria Sharipo, Eugenie Smit, and Karen Townsend. Thank you to all of you.



While the artists were taking their work down, they were visited by the Chair of the museum trust, Andy Elford, who introduced himself, was very enthusiastic about the installation, expressed regret that it should be removed so soon, and hoped that SCG can work collaboratively again with the Brickworks. Various museum volunteers reported back that numbers of visitors had flourished while the installation was in place, with people asking at entry at the front desk whereabouts it was within the museum.

Information boards had been prepared with brightly coloured posters to provide details and photographs about the history of Southern Ceramic Group. These can then be re-used at other events such as at the Oxmarket exhibition in Chichester in November 2025.



The celebratory prosecco and cake at 4pm not only presented prizes to the winners of the installation challenge, but also awarded life membership to Jan Griffiths. Jan has served in very many different functions in the SCG – on the Committee, in the Glaze Group, in the Annual Chichester exhibition and so on - and continues to be active in helping and participating in activities. She more than deserves this!



The celebration also provided an opportunity to thank Vasu in person for her unstinting work and enormous enthusiasm in the position of Chair for SCG. She has been our chair since January 2022, and before that was our organiser for the annual summer exhibition in Chichester. It is with great sadness the committee has accepted her request to step down from the chair role to spend more time with her family, in particular her grandson. Vasu however has promised to remain very active within the group, organising other special events like the alternative firings' days, so it's definitely not a goodbye.

Written by Vasu Reddy, Francheska Pattison, Neil Rampton, Lesley Dixon and Mick Dixon



50TH ANNIVERSARY BOOK

Over the past few months we have been working on an exciting venture involving 70+ SCG members in a celebratory 50th Anniversary book. Members will have their work professionally photographed by Duncan Shepherd and the book will illustrate and celebrate some of the beautiful range of ceramic work that members produce.



All SCG entrants will receive a copy of the book and we plan to have a limited number of books for sale at the '50 Years Fired Up' exhibition at the Oxmarket Gallery in November 2025

Opposite is a sample layout of the proposed book's layout.

'50 YEARS FIRED UP'

As part of our 50th Anniversary Celebrations 65 members from the Southern Ceramic Group will be exhibiting their work at the Oxmarket Contemporary Gallery in Chichester from 25 November until 7 December.

Individual and unique pieces of ceramic will be exhibited and available for purchase on the day.

Within the exhibition we will have a special display of wall hanging pieces in direct response to the theme "Feed Your Soul". Working with the tactile qualities of clay fosters mindfulness and relaxation and ultimately leads to a strong sense of well-being.

The exhibition is open Tuesday to Saturday 10-4.30pm and Sunday 12pm to 4.00pm.

Lynn Nicholls
scg_deputy_exhibitions@southernceramicgroup.org.uk

50 YEARS FIRED UP

CERAMICS
Exhibition and sale

25 Nov - 7 Dec 2025
open Tues - Sat 10am to 4:30pm
Sun 12pm - 4:00pm



Oxmarket Contemporary 



EMPTY BOWLS

In 2016, Lynn Nicholls, SCG member, worked with a few other local Portsmouth potters to set up the first 'Empty Bowls' Portsmouth event. They started small with 50 handmade soup sized bowls, but the event was so popular that ever since they have made 100 bowls a year.

'Empty Bowls' is a project that has been running in America and Canada for the past 30 years. It's a unique event that brings the community together by hosting a simple community meal of soup and bread to help remind people of those who are facing hunger or difficulties.



Each year SCG members have generously donated around 30 bowls and in 2024, with some financial support from SCG, Fatclay Pottery studio in Southsea, SCG member Matt Bugeja, joined the project and hosted making decorating and firing sessions.



All proceeds go directly to St Simon's Church in Southsea who support a range of projects to feed the hungry and support the vulnerable. In 2024 £2,500 was raised during the evening event.

How can you help?

If you can donate a soup sized bowl or two to help us achieve our target of 100 handmade soup bowls then that will be amazing. We have already 40 bowls made ready to be decorated but we would really appreciate your support.

If you would like to register your support to donate a bowl(s) please click the link below which takes you to our SCG website.

[SCG – Portsmouth Empty Bowls | Southern Ceramic Group](#)

Thank you in advance
Lynn Nicholls

MOVING ON - Annie Flitcroft

My ceramics studio for the past five and a half years has been Studio 12 of the Old Portsmouth City walls. Both Chewie (my dog) and I are moving on to pastures new.

Within the arches there are 13 artist studio's and we have loved every minute of our time there. However, without change we don't grow and I look forward to the next chapter.



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MOVING ON - cont.



I don't wish to leave without highlighting that this studio is perfectly placed for foot traffic and has a permanent PCC management support team on site. You have the chance to show your work in the Round Tower and be a part of Hotwalls Artists group exhibitions. I have installed an 11KW power plug for a kiln which I will be leaving so making it an ideal studio for a ceramicist.

Applications for a studio are being taken now.

If you are looking for a new challenge as a ceramicist I cannot recommend the Hotwalls artistic quarter highly enough. Over the years that I have been there I have been given the opportunity to grow my practice with the support of Portsmouth City Council and an amazing artistic community.



I am delighted to still be in Southsea and actually moving on to what is surely the Notting Hill of Southsea - No. 64 Castle Road. I share the street with Fat Clay, Arty Potz, the artist Pete Codling, the wedding dress designer David Western and framer Steve Tyacke to name just a few. All very exciting and a little daunting.

The space is a little larger giving me two rooms and allowing me to divide my studio and gallery space. Together with the very talented jeweller, Charlie Leftley, we intend to divide and conquer to show how our work which is both contemporary and unique can be for everyone - how your life is enhanced by bringing sculptural art and beautiful one off pieces of jewellery into your home and life.

The wiring for my kiln should be in by the time you are reading this (fingers crossed) and I will move things over slowly during September. I am running Christmas Angel workshops all day in the Round Tower on the 4th October and this will be the last thing to do before leaving the walls. Sort of hoping for an opening party in October some time but I might just be an exhausted sack of potatoes by then...Oh and haven't we got a little Anniversary Exhibition in Oxmarket in November!!
Busy Times

Annie Flitcroft
acflit@aol.com





CERAMICUS

Southern Ceramics members Mike Bush and Nigel Hobbs will be taking part in the next **Ceramicus** exhibition which will be held in Allen Gallery in Church St., Alton. GU34 2BW.

Ceramicus is a group of ten Potters from the Hampshire and Surrey areas who annually come together in an exhibition of their work. This year’s exhibition will run from 4th October until 31st October from Tuesday to Saturday in the Allen Gallery. For those that do not know it, the gallery is home to very many historic ceramics and is well worth a visit for this as well as the **Ceramicus** Exhibition.



SOUTH DOWNS CLAY



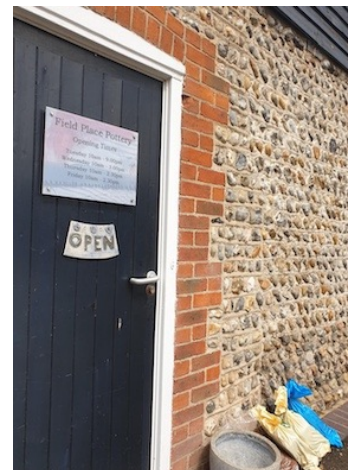
Hi, my name is Jess and I run Field Place Pottery in Worthing. We’re a small, welcoming pottery studio full of fun, laughter, and a big passion for clay. Alongside our classes and studio space, we’re excited to be launching South Downs Clay – a new pottery supplies business.

South Downs Clay will offer a range of clays, tools, underglazes, and glazes. We’re starting small, with an online shop and a simple click-and-collect service from our Worthing site with postage to follow very soon.

This is a project we’re building from the ground up, and while it may take a little time to grow, our aim is to support you with all your clay needs ASAP.

We can’t wait to share this journey with you and to help fuel your creativity in clay.

Info@southdownsclay.co.uk
www.southdownsclay.co.uk
Instagram: @southdownsclay
www.jessicajordanceramics.com





THE MONTHLY MUG

A note from The Editor

"I came across this website and its associated monthly newsletter packed with information and ceramic events and I can highly recommend it. I'll let its creator Jessica Charge explain".

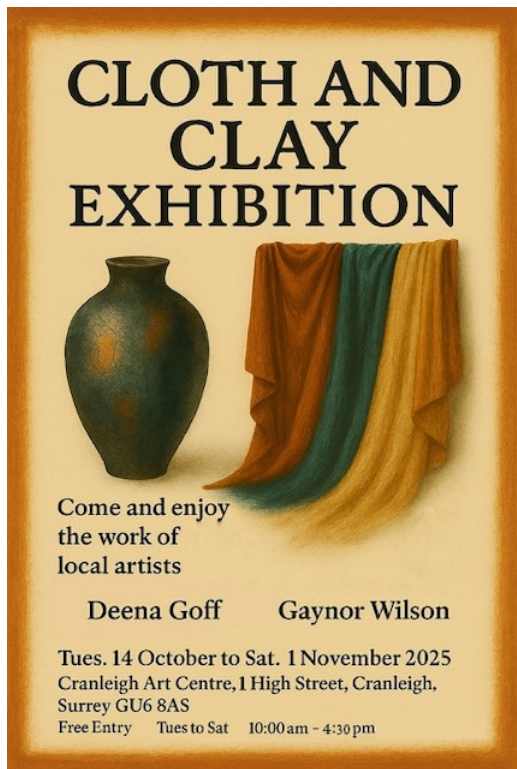
Hello I'm Jess and I started the Instagram account 'I Have This Thing With Ceramics' back in 2018 in an effort to curate a beautiful grid, I started it for fun, to bring me and others visual pleasure. It took off and grew to the 114K followers it has today and through this I discovered the wonderful ceramics community. You're the best. Fast forward to 2024 when I went to my first major ceramics event, Ceramic Art London and I LOVED it. Seeing the ceramics in real life and talking to their creators was brilliant. This led to me deciding there was no single source online for UK ceramics events, it was all very piecemeal and often out of date!



So I built my website thisthingwithceramics.co.uk which lists ceramics events primarily but has now grown to include exhibitions, art galleries and shops as well as a directory of venues offering classes. The newest addition is the People section where I briefly interview other people who also have a thing with ceramics. Once a month (and no more because we all receive too many emails!) I send out **The Monthly Mug email newsletter** with the events of the month ahead as well as features and news. If this sounds like your cup of tea, please subscribe! Thank you for reading.

Jessica Charge **I Have This Thing With Ceramics**

[Visit my website](#)
[Follow me on Instagram](#)





FAYE STEVENS

I began my journey into pottery following my A-Levels, when I attended Harrogate College of Arts to do a two year diploma in Studio Ceramics led by tutors Tim Proud and Dennis Farrell.

Looking back it was an amazing course covering all aspects of pottery including throwing, handbuilding, stoneware and earthenware projects. We also covered different firing techniques such as raku, woodfiring, raw glaze firing and saltglaze. We even made our own bats and tools in the adjoining metal and woodwork departments (some of which I still have).



In our second year we specialised in whatever we chose, and I decided on saltglaze stoneware wheel thrown items. At the time I admired saltglaze potters such as Jane Hamlyn and Walter Keeler, and still have pieces of theirs which I have collected.

After college I set up at home with my wheel and kiln. Much as I would have liked to continue with my saltglaze, a kiln for this is not an easy thing to set up, so I settled for an electric kiln. I adapted my designs using the coloured slips I had developed for my saltglaze; slip trailing, paper resist, brushing of slip or oxides and sgraffito - techniques which I still use now.

After this, my husband's job took us overseas to live for many years, and I dipped in and out of pottery during this time, for instance volunteering in schools helping with the pottery department, in return for use of the pottery equipment. I also taught evening classes and after school clubs.



It is only in the last few years that I have managed to get back to concentrating more on my pottery, and I have enjoyed developing new styles and designs for my pots. I have done many test pots for coloured slips and developed a range of colours that I am happy to use on my pieces along with some underglaze colours.



I now fire to 1260°C using a white stoneware clay with a transparent glaze. I have always loved the countryside, being brought up in Wiltshire, and my designs reflect that love of nature. They include landscapes and animals, flowers and trees, and I am constantly experimenting to come up with new designs.

Faye Stevens
fayestevensceramics@gmail.com



SCG member Libby Daniels chats with Stephen Knott, Director

I recently met with Stephen Knott, the director of the Crafts Study Centre in Farnham at the conclusion of their exhibition titled "Open". I was lucky to be involved in this exhibition as one of the selected finalists of the 2024 New Ashgate Rising stars award, along with Charlotte Smith: jeweller, Philip Gay: woodcrafter, Barbara Sulzberger: Ceramic artist and Laura Gibbs: potter. We were offered the opportunity to curate a collection of our choosing from anything in the Crafts Study Centre archive and to respond to it in a personal way.

I was particularly interested in ceramics of course and was excited to be able to select pots by important 20th century makers such as Lucie Rie, John Maltby, Bernard Leach, Marianne de Trey and Michael Cardew.

The enduring contemporary looking style of the selected pots and how their forms and surfaces related to each other when displayed in groups was something I was particularly inspired by.



I made three vessels of my own that would sit with the three groups of pots I had chosen. They were thrown and altered slightly to an oval shape like the tall, white vase by Heber Mathews. They were each decorated to echo the surfaces such as the honey yellow glaze and dots of the Lucie Rie bowl or the blue birds on the tiny Bernard Leach cup. I wanted to pay homage to the stylistic aspects of the exhibits I picked without overtly copying any items. My intention was to allow my pieces to sit comfortably with the selected pieces and not look out of place.



Bernard Leach (right)



Libby Daniels (right)



with Lucie Rie and Marianne de Trey (above left) and Michael Cardew and Lucie Rie (above right)

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The experience of working with the Crafts Study centre enabled me to not only view and handle some amazing ceramics from their store but to also interview Stephen to find out more about the centre.

Located in Farnham Surrey the Craft Study Centre is part of the University of the Creative Arts. It is a museum of 20th century to current craft objects and practice, also a research facility and gallery. Its two exhibition galleries are free to visit and open to the general public. For access to objects in their store from which to do research you can make a request to view specific things by appointment. The centre's website has information about current and upcoming exhibitions as well as links for researching the collections. It states:-

“The Crafts Study Centre nurtures and celebrates the study and practice of craft in all its diverse forms. Harnessing the rich collections of twentieth and twenty-first century studio craft in its care including maker archives, the Centre intends to make research into craft history and practice more accessible, dynamic, and relevant to audiences both in-person and online. Exhibitions and events are free and the Centre's research library is available by appointment for anyone with an interest in our collections.”

If any Southern Ceramic Group members want to undertake research and view objects in the CSC collection I can highly recommend getting in touch as I felt incredibly privileged to get up close and personal with some beautiful ceramics by esteemed makers such as Hans Coper, Lucie Rie, Bernard Leach, Marianne de Trey and Heber Mathews. The pieces that I chose to curate for the exhibition gave me so much inspiration for the three pots I made which were a departure from my usual style of work.

For more information on events

<https://www.csc.uca.ac.uk/programme/2/9/2025/fluidity-and-inscription>

<https://www.csc.uca.ac.uk/programme/4/10/2025/make-your-mark-opening-of-farnham-craft-month-2025>

To follow on Instagram

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

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

Stephen told me that, “conventionally the resources are used by students and PhD students but we are seeing increasing use of them by artists just to be amongst the work as inspiration. If anyone is interested in doing that they just need to get in touch and book a space.” Email craftscentre@ucreative.ac.uk

He also told me about the handling collection which can be loaned out to organisations to view. Pottery and craft groups have used it for their members to work from. “We are looking to use that handling collection more and to make it accessible, for people to take away and explore. We will provide guidance as to how to get the best from it.”

I asked him if he had to pick a favourite object in the CSC what would he choose at the moment? He told me, “It's so great to work with the collections and see so much variety, it's a learning curve every day. I always look for anomalies. There are some really great letters that appeal to my interests as a historian. It's all the archival scraps. There is a shelf in the storeroom, Shelf M5, which is full of things including sculptural ceramics which we typically haven't been known for.”

I spoke to Stephen in the interview about the importance of Farnham as a world craft town since 2020 and what that status means to the CSC. He tells me it was set up collaboratively with Farnham town council, The Maltings Arts centre and The New Ashgate gallery. He describes it as, “an organic, not too structured partnership. The importance of bringing national and international attention to Farnham Craft month (which is in October) through the uniqueness of its collections.”

To watch the full video interview please follow the link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSt0Izx63Ko&t=7s&ab_channel=CraftsStudyCentre

The Crafts Study Centre - cont.

FARNHAM CRAFT MONTH

Farnham craft month kicks off at the start of October with a selection of events, open studios, workshops and exhibitions. Check these websites for other information.

<https://www.farnhamcrafttown.com/>

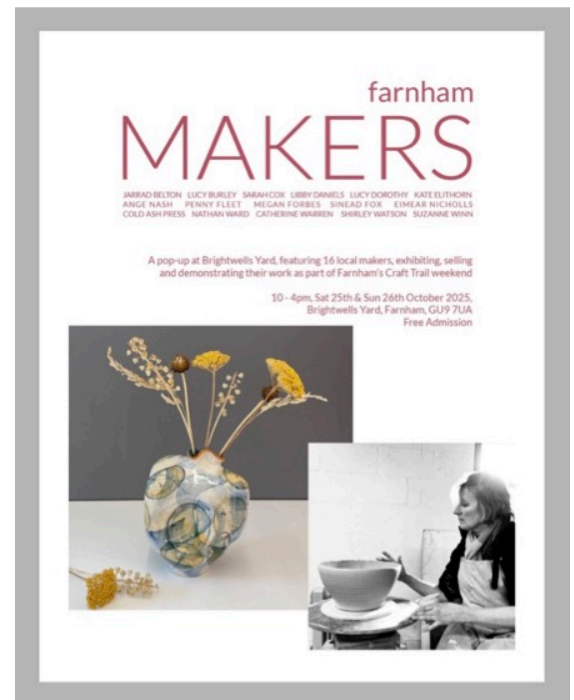
www.csc.uca.ac.uk/programme

<https://farnhammaltings.com/events/festival-of-crafts>

<https://www.thefarnhampottery.co.uk/farnham-craft-town-events>

I will be taking part and will be showing and selling my work at a craft event called "Farnham Makers" on 25 and 26th October, 10am-4pm, Brightwells Yard, Farnham GU9 7UA

Libby Daniels



Tips, Tricks & Tech.

At the last edition we thought we would try a new series of items in the newsletter called **Tips, Tricks & Tech**. Mainly but not exclusively short items outlining a method or a tool that that you find invaluable and which may be of use to others, or an unusual technique from another creative discipline that you have adapted for your ceramic work. Some of you may already know about these but others may not. So, if you have a cunning technique that you find invaluable and you think others might find useful or as with this edition's contributors how they advance an idea then please share it. And include an image or two. We hope this will become a regular section of the newsletter.

THE EDGE OF ABSTRACTION - Kevin Akhurst

In 2023 I started using seashells and interestingly shaped stones to texture the surfaces of pots. I was pleased with the results, especially when using transparent glazes which flowed and darkened in the texture. However, when I started looking for new shapes to use in this way I had difficulty finding other objects which made impressions in clay that appealed to me. I decided to make my own carved shapes which I could use in the same way.

I have always been interested in the way that simple, apparently abstract, shapes such as runes can seem to carry some hidden meaning, and are able to act as powerful prompts for the imagination. During the quiet spells on my open studio days in 2024 I carved a series of abstract or semi-abstract shapes in small blocks of porcelain. By the end of my open studio weeks I had over twenty differently-shaped porcelain stamps (see photo opposite).



cont. on next page



THE EDGE OF ABSTRACTION - cont

I decided that I would make a series of large jar-like pots of similar size and shape, each using a different stamp, pressing the stamp in repeatedly to cover an area of the surface.

In my earlier pots, using a seashell, I had divided the surface into areas that had been textured in this way and other areas which remained smooth. In the new series of pots I did the same, and introduced a new element of design by relating the shapes of the textured and smooth areas to the shape of the stamp used for that pot. For example, if the shape of the stamp made me think of a flower I developed a design of textured and smooth areas which reflected this, but in a way which tried to maintain some ambiguity. I wanted a design on the edge of abstraction which hinted at meaning in a way that tickled the imagination without forcing it in a specific direction.

The textured areas of my pots make me think of the rough peel of a fruit, and the smooth areas the interior of the fruit when the peel has been removed. To enhance this impression I slightly

indented the smooth areas when the pots were leather hard, so the textured areas look as if they overlay the smooth ones.

Finally, I wanted to emphasise the surface design by using different glazes on the smooth and textured areas. This involved the use of latex and/or wax resist at different stages of the glazing process. The glazes or slips used were chosen to develop interesting complexity in my salt/soda kiln – maybe crystallisation during cooling, or flow effects. It all adds to the layers of detail which give interest to the final pot.

After a year of making and firing I ended up with eighteen different pots, between 20 and 25 cm tall, which some of you may have seen if you came to my open studio this year. Three of them are shown below. All eighteen will be on display (and for sale) at an exhibition in the Runway Gallery of The Base at Greenham, from October 2nd to November 9th.



For more details see [The Edge of Abstraction – The Base Greenham](#)

Kevin Akhurst. August 2025

Tips, Tricks & Tech. cont. on next page



POTS AND THEIR LIDS - Paul Randall

Pots with lids. Here is how I go about making the combination. The pot and its lid should be made at the same time, from the same batch of clay and subsequently exposed to the same environment conditions whilst drying ready for turning and grinding ('grinding': see below) before biscuit firing. And both components are then glaze-fired in the same firing so as to reduce the chance of them somehow 'drifting apart' in terms of their colour and texture which can often happen even in 'identical' separate firings.

Which comes first, the pot or the lid? It's up to you. Is it easier to fit the pot to the lid or vice versa? You might have a lid which is more complex to make than the pot, so in that case you could make the lid first, take measurements and then make the pot accordingly. And vice versa.



Whatever the pot-lid type, the principles are always the same, encapsulated by the words 'vertical' and 'horizontal' and the principle that the lid must know its place; if the lid is given a choice as to where it can rest on the pot, that's no good, it will wobble. There's no room for democracy when it comes to lids.

vertical: does the lid bed down perfectly, supported on the pot?

horizontal: is the lid gently constrained from being able to wiggle 'sideways'? The gentle constraint can be on the outside of the lid or from the inside (photo below shows two examples of each).



Get both these vertical and horizontal requirements right and you have a successful lid-pot combo. The photographs show a range of different types of lid which all fit nicely on to their respective pots - you may not think much of my design of the combo, but that's a different matter!

And what do you notice about the finished pot-lid combination? Yes, the pot-lid parts which come into contact with each other are not glazed; some potters may have a thin clear glaze on parts which touch but I prefer no glaze, partly because I don't like the idea of minuscule flecks of diamond-hard, razor-sharp glaze being 'chipped off' as the parts clunk into one another and also of course, if you have managed to create a firm well fitting combination, glaze on one or both of the components may spoil the fit.

cont.on next page



POTS AND THEIR LIDS - cont.



Talking of a creating a satisfying fitting lid, have a look at this photo where you see that the lid has deliberately been made just a bit too large for the pot, it won't quite fit; both the lid and the pot have sides which are sloped, ready for match-making; when the clay is perfectly dry, the lid and the pot can be carefully ground together (with a sort of pepper grinder movement), with the lid gradually becoming a tighter fit until you have achieved a rather good 'ground glass' match between the pot and the lid.

Very satisfying, providing of course you don't end up smashing the very brittle clay. And then the ground-together pot-lid will be fired and then glaze fired; it's not a good idea to fire the pot with the lid in place, glaze may run, slight differential expansion as the kiln heats up could end in cracking; so fire them separately in the same firing.

So, that's how I make lids that fit on pots; next up, one of the greatest challenges a potter may face - a satisfying cup and saucer combination; and remember that a cup on its saucer is really a sort of upturned lid, with the same principles. So, I'll say "goodbye" with more of my pots ...



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Newsletter Publication - Dates and Guidance

Please send contributions to: scg_newsletter@southernceramicgroup.org.uk

NEWSLETTER DUE	1 February 2026	COPY DEADLINE	17 January 2026
	1 June 2026		17 May 2026
	1 October 2026		16 September 2026

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.

Article Ideas. I would be pleased to discuss ideas you may have before drafting. Generally 5-600 words would be the ideal with a maximum size of 1000 plus photos.

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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<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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