

# Sector Special: Ceramics



# Sector Special: Ceramics



## Editorial

There is a great deal to be optimistic with regards to the ceramics industry in 2013. Moorcroft celebrates 100 year of production and we have an exclusive interview with their Senior Designer, Rachel Bishop, who is also celebrating 20 years at the firm. Rachel is pictured on the front cover of this report.

The British Ceramics Biennial is back and runs from 28th September until 10th November. The BCB will happen on three main sites: the original Spode factory in Stoke, The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery in Hanley (<http://www.stokemuseums.org.uk/visit/pmag/>) and the Airspace Gallery (<http://www.airspacegallery.org/>) also in Hanley. An event is also being planned for Burslem.

The Middleport Pottery (<http://www.middleportpottery.co.uk/>) continues its renaissance under the Prince's Regeneration Trust working with a lot of local stakeholders including colleagues from across the university. Steelite International (<http://www.steelite.com/>) has been expanding sales and employment as well as recently winning a Queens Award for Enterprise in overseas markets.

It is not just the large firms that have been doing well; there has been a groundswell of micro and small ceramic firms established in recent years, many set up by graduates of Staffordshire University who have stayed on in the area.

Finally, Ian Jackson provides some detailed academic research on the ceramics industry from the last few years.

Thanks to Tom Ward for doing the DTP work for this special report.

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### **Middleport Pottery: a unique heritage attraction – Paul Williams**

When J B Priestley's 1930s *English Journey* brought the novelist and playwright 'to the Potteries' where he penned his now immortal words:

May the orders pour in...; may cups and saucers and plates and teapots run like magic out of the clay; may the ovens never grow cold...

little could he have imagined that almost 80 years later a charity founded by HRH The Prince of Wales would put together an £8.7 million private and public sector funding package to acquire a truly unique model pottery and embark on an ambitious restoration project to ensure that its ovens would not grow cold.

Middleport Pottery was purpose-built on the banks of the Trent and Mersey Canal 125 years ago for Burgess, Dorling and Leigh, then a flourishing ceramics company, by the Burslem-born architect Absalom Reade Wood. Dating from 1888, the site with seven bottle ovens was originally designed to ensure optimum process efficiency linked to the experience of the skilled workers who used rare and precious skills at each stage of the process. This level of craftsmanship, passed down through generations, brought an attention to detail and quality unmatched by other machine-intensive pottery manufacturers and it was considered crucial to the unique character of Burleighware.



At the time of the site acquisition in June 2011 Middleport Pottery with its Grade II\* listed buildings was at serious risk of closure which would have meant a loss of much-needed employment and the traditional inter-generational hand-production techniques, which would have gone forever. Thankfully,

The Prince's Regeneration Trust (PRT) recognised that Middleport is a uniquely important part of the UK's industrial heritage and pottery history, and set about saving what English Heritage called a 'national treasure'.

In its December 2012 biennial report to the Friends of the Prince's Regeneration Trust, the charity clearly set out why it embarked on this impressive heritage tourism-led regeneration project:

Occasionally, when we believe that a building is so precious to a community it cannot be lost, we will work to acquire it ourselves – to ensure not only its survival but an active, engaging and relevant future.

In essence, Middleport Pottery's unique composite heritage, which is derived from the significance of the buildings, the industrial process for which they were built and the associated machinery, collections and archives, is now the key to its future prosperity.

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### *A new heritage tourism Vision*

Fielden Clegg Bradley Studios, the consultants appointed by the trust to lead this ambitious and long-term conservation project, set out their vision for Middleport in a Heritage Statement in March 2012:

The Middleport Pottery site will be a hub of craftsmanship and enterprise that houses, preserves and promotes the last working Victorian pottery in the UK. The site will be a key tourist attraction that celebrates Stoke-on-Trent's heritage and supports the social and economic future of Burslem and beyond.

While it is an absolute imperative to keep pottery manufacture as a going concern in order to boost jobs and economic growth, and thereby preserve local traditional skills for the future, Middleport Pottery's long term future is linked to its industrial heritage and appeal to the local community, and domestic and international visitors as an industrial tourism attraction.

In addition to a factory tour where visitors will be able to see the inner workings of an authentic operational Victorian pottery, these plans include creating a community and education space, workshops for local businesses and creative enterprises, a cafe, a gallery and a heritage visitor centre which will allow residents and visitors



alike to engage with the history of Middleport and the world renowned industrial heritage of Stoke-on-Trent. It is expected that the various visitor offers will increase tourism numbers from 8000 to 30,000 within 5 years whilst simultaneously showcasing the very best of the city's heritage.

### *Opportunities for Staffordshire University*

In addition to Executive representation on a joint University-PRT working forum, colleagues from across the university meet regularly with the Operations Director and Communications Executive from the

PRT in order to ensure that we optimise the opportunities for students and staff to engage with current and future activities planned. When HRH The Prince of Wales visited the site in January the Executive Pro-Vice Chancellor was invited to join the visit party to provide an overview of how the project links with the work of the university and ways in which we can also contribute to the wider regeneration of Middleport.

University colleagues are currently contributing to the following work streams:

- Cataloguing of the pottery's moulds and archives
- An oral histories project
- Filming projects
- Community engagement
- Capturing the project in words and pictures
- Mobile phone applications and web development
- Sustainability schemes.

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Jon Fairburn and I attended a subsequent meeting with the Operations Director to outline further opportunities for Faculty of Business, Education and Law students and staff to engage in running the proposed cafe development as a social enterprise, providing volunteering and other opportunities linked to the Staffordshire Graduate programme, providing triple bottom line evaluations, assessing the attitudes of residents and the business community to the regeneration work, and establishing how tourism and events management students might support the visitor experience work.

In many ways the university's key role in this type of community engagement work with the trust is going a long way towards ensuring that:

the site is not a relic to be viewed from behind a red rope, but instead a traditional British pottery being developed to restore pride, create possibility and unlock the area's potential for growth.

To view Stephen Moore's excellent short video on the Pottery's mould archives go to [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXEU3vpn6tc&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXEU3vpn6tc&feature=player_embedded)

Middleport Pottery  
Port Street, Burslem  
Stoke-on-Trent  
ST6 3PE



<http://www.middleportpottery.co.uk>  
<http://www.princes-regeneration.org>

Paul Williams is Head of the Business School in the Faculty of Business, Education and Law. He is also the Chartered Institute of Marketing's Senior Examiner for the Tourism Marketing Diploma and is an active member of the Tourism Management Institute's CPD Group. His consultancy and research interests include employability and enterprise; sustainable tourism development; the visitor economy; tourism market segmentation; place marketing and destination branding; heritage and tourism-led regeneration; and special interest tourism. His recent work has focused on industrial tourism with particular reference to Stoke-on-Trent's ceramics tourism offer, festivals and cultural tourist trails. Contact Paul at [paul.williams@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:paul.williams@staffs.ac.uk) or on +44 (0)1782 294064.

### **Courses in tourism and events management**

The Faculty of Business, Education and Law at Staffordshire University offers the following tourism and events management courses:

BA Events Management formally accredited by the Tourism Management Institute – <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/course/08N74600.jsp>

BA Tourism Management – <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/course/08N75600.jsp>

BA Tourism Management (Top-up) – a 12 month programme aimed at those students holding a BTEC HND in Travel and Tourism, Leisure Studies, Tourism and Leisure or equivalent qualification who wish to obtain an honours degree – <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/course/tourism-management-topup-tcm4213331.jsp>

BA Tourism Management (Fast track two years) – <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/course/tourism-management-2-years-fasttrack-tcm4264086.jsp>

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Tree of Life

### **Interview with Rachel Bishop, Senior Designer at the Moorcroft Design Studio, Moorcroft Ltd – Jon Fairburn**

Rachel achieved her degree in Ceramics from Staffordshire University. She joined Moorcroft in 1993 aged 24 as only the fourth Moorcroft designer in 100 years. The interview took place in the Moorcroft museum.

*Rachel, it is 20 years since you started working for Moorcroft. Any plans to celebrate?*

I've done some designs to celebrate the 20 years and I am going around the country doing some events, but because it is also our centenary as a company, some of it is getting merged with the main events. We have more events than normal this year to celebrate the centenary, plus we have also designed a table top for Stoke-on-Trent's Story of Transformation garden at the Chelsea Flower Show.

*You had to get off to a flying start with Moorcroft as the previous design team just left. What was it like in those early months?*

It was crazy! I was given a brush and some paint and told to get on with it in the museum. It was quite daunting.

*Where did you think it was going to lead you?*

I didn't have a clue at the time. I started and just kept working and all of a sudden you are 20 years on. It has just flown really. Being creative for 20 years is quite difficult.

*What were some of the unexpected benefits of that time? I often find that some people thrive under pressure.*

No, not at all. I am not good under pressure. I work at home in my shed studio and that's where I am happy, with no-one else around me. You need to zone in on your work and get as one with it. So pressure is not good. At the start it was very stressful. I think that some of my work that I came up with in the first few years was some of my best, but I would have preferred it to be less stressful.

*You seem to draw inspiration for your designs from a very wide range of influences – I have noted poetry (Queen Tatiana), William Morris, childhood memories, visits to different parts of Britain, even your dog. What are your current inspirations?*

I love my dogs (laughter). At the moment we were asked to look back at William Moorcroft's work to tie in with the centenary, e.g. the floriant ware which I love. So that has been quite nice actually. I also love a pattern and have just done the Tree of Life – sort of mad, intense pattern work. What I really like is getting stuck into a pattern. I am much more floral as well; for my 20 year collection I also did a vase on the Jurassic coast as I come from there. We used to go fossil hunting and so I have done a Jurassic vase.

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*In general how long do the different parts of the creative process take, e.g. inspiration, creating the watercolour, creating the design on the clay...?*

Well I go the other way; I draw on the clay first. The lines are more important to me. For the creative process it really is 'how long is a piece of string?'. Sometimes you can just have an idea and it works. I think last week I did about eight pots; this week I sat in my studio and was just stumped. That's the problem with designing, you have to be in the mood; you just can't do it all the time.

*What part of your job is the most satisfying and why?*

The design part, the bit where I am sitting with the clay pot drawing and I am just in that zone. I don't enjoy water colouring at all. After that everything is secondary really. You have a feeling when you are creating, when you are really absorbed in something and everything else doesn't matter.

*If I put a CD on when I am working and if it is going well I will just hit repeat over, because I don't want to lose that feeling.*

*What sort of music do you listen to?*

When I am designing it's got to be something quite calming, I quite like folk music really. So it can't be up and down too much.

*So it can't be The Pogues?*

No, nor New Model Army; that's for driving.

*How do you measure success in your job?*

All I am concerned about is creating great design. It is not the commercial side that I am interested in. Knowing you could be part of this museum, that these pots created could be timeless. I want to be successful in the sense of longevity more than anything else.

*Which range or piece of work are you most proud of?*

Tricky question. I know there is one piece I love called Bullers Wood. I am a great admirer of William Morris and they found one of his carpets in the outback and they brought it to Phillips in London. I was able to do a vase based on it. I prefer the small version as it is very compact and intricate. If they said you could have a piece I would have a Bullers Wood pot. *[Note: in 2008 one of only ten large Bullers Woods came up at auction at Bonhams and made £6000.]*

*If you could change anything about your career what would it be?*

Er, the only thing I would change (I probably shouldn't say this) is not having to travel so far from my roots. It has been quite a sacrifice to leave everyone quite so long away. I wouldn't change my job or anything in any way.

*If you hadn't become a designer what might you have done?*

I can't think I would have done anything else. When I was growing up it was all I wanted to do. I knew it would be art. It has been the perfect job for me really.

The other love of my life is animals so maybe an animal sanctuary.



Monarch's Crown

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*How does the design studio work in practice? For example, does the team approve all designs? Do you work on designs together ever?*

We did on the Chelsea Flower Show table theme, because there were five segments for the five of us, but generally we all work totally independently. We keep out of each other's pocket.



*All of the designers also seem to be involved with attending events around the country. How important are these to the company?*

Incredibly important to me because you can just get lost doing things day to day. But when you get out there...the customers are very loving and loyal. It reminds you what you are doing it for. Collectors are such lovely people, it gives you a boost really. Not everyone can come to the factory so we have to take our trade around.

*What are the future plans for yourself and Moorcroft?*

Just to keep going until I drop (laughter). For Moorcroft we just want to continue the legacy really. We still have a lot of designs in us collectively. I love the pots, I love doing the designs. As long as the inspiration keeps coming I'll keep going with it.

Moorcroft events around the country –

<http://www.moorcroft.com/Site/Events/>

W.Moorcroft Ltd  
Sandbach Road,  
Burslem  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Staffordshire ST6 2DQ

Tel: +44 (0)1782 820500

E-mail: [enquiries@moorcroft.com](mailto:enquiries@moorcroft.com)

Web: <http://www.moorcroft.com>



# British Ceramics Biennial

Stoke-on-Trent, England  
28 Sept until 10 Nov 2013

[britishceramicsbiennial.com](http://britishceramicsbiennial.com)

## British Ceramics Biennial returns to Stoke-on-Trent for the UK's biggest celebration of ceramics

This autumn, the British Ceramics Biennial (BCB) returns to Stoke-on-Trent for its biggest line-up to date. Running from 28 September to 10 November, this festival of the best in contemporary ceramics will bring together 150 artists through exhibitions, installations and events that draw on the heritage and creative edge of Stoke-on-Trent.

The 2013 festival will celebrate the role of the individual artist, inviting them to explore, create and curate making visitors' encounter with ceramics all the more special, entertaining and meaningful. Alongside this, a working ceramic studio and programme of hands-on workshops will make sure everyone leaves the Biennial with at least some clay under their fingernails.

The former Spode factory site in Stoke Town will form the creative hub of BCB, with artists and their work animating different areas of this post industrial space. A focal point will be the CHINA HALL PAVILIONS, a series of bespoke structures created with artists in direct response to their work with key ceramic industries and with the City, including Lawrence Epps and Ibstock Brick and Simeon Featherstone with Johnson Tiles.

New this year the exhibitions will extend beyond Spode's main China Hall. An international group of 30 researchers from the Bergen Academy of Art and Design (KHIB) in Norway will inhabit other buildings and spaces that have not previously been open to the public, with a specially mapped out site tour revealing their sensitive and remarkable interventions and installations.

In EXPLORING SPODE, commissioned artists will make personal responses to the factory space. These include poet and writer Holly Corfield Carr's texts embedded in the building, and Stephen Dixon's archaeological study of the value of historical artefacts.

Nine ceramicists from the Crafts Council's Hothouse Programme will collaborate by creating individual site-specific works which visitors will encounter as a unified group using a specially designed map.

Phoebe Cummings, winner of the AWARD prize in 2011, has been specially commissioned by BCB to create a large-scale installation based on a 19th century Spode plate design, which will be a major feature of EXPLORING SPODE.

To add to the international flavour and profile of the festival, rising star Chinese artist



*Beauties of Stowe 2012 by Katy West, artist selected for 2013 Award exhibition*

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Wan Liya will present a new body of work created during his residency in Stoke-on-Trent, underlining the message that the city sits at the centre of a global industry.

The China Hall programme will again feature the popular FRESH exhibition showcasing the best of the current crop of UK ceramic graduates, launching careers and highlighting the importance of higher education in ceramic futures.

Other new features for the former Spode factory site include a dedicated FILM ROOM, which will screen a specially-curated programme that highlights the value of moving image in the appreciation of ceramics, and the first GALLERY SHOP, which will sell work by many of the artists exhibiting at BCB.

Heading-up the BCB 2013 exhibition programme in the City Centre, the AWARD exhibition will return to The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, the UK's only regular survey of leading contemporary ceramic practice. This year's AWARD will bring together new works by 22 ceramicists who are competing for the £10,000 AWARD Prize. Over the road, AirSpace Gallery will present exhibitions, and host canal-side guerrilla interventions and even an artist soup-kitchen event.

A major new part of the six-week festival will be a range of BIENNIAL EVENTS designed to inform and inspire visitors. These will include 'get-involved' workshops for young people, families and adults alike,



*Human Resources by Lawrence Epps, winner of the 2011 BCB Fresh Award. Photo by Joel Chester Fildes*

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*Salt Pots 2011 by Jonathan Keep, artist selected for the 2013 Award exhibition*

two days of activity in the Mother Town of The Potteries in Burslem (with partners Steelite International, The Prince's Trust and Clayground Collective, winners of one of this year's National Skills Awards), and the BCB conference and specialist seminars, which will articulate research processes and encourage critical debate. Work created locally through workshops and partnerships in the run-up to the festival will also be on show.

Barney Hare Duke and Jeremy Theophilus, Co-Directors of British Ceramics Biennial, comment: 'For this third British Ceramics Biennial, we want to encourage, provoke and engage our visitors. As well as a

world-class line-up of exhibitions, creative collaborations and interventions, for 2013 we've increased the number of events that encourage hands-on involvement with the material itself as a way of getting people really engaged and experiencing the creative potential of ceramics.'

Further BCB announcements, including news about a major partnership, will be announced in the next few weeks. The full programme can be viewed at <http://www.britishceramicsbiennial.com>.

The 22 artists selected for AWARD are: Christie Brown, Matthew Chambers, Claudia Clare, Zachary Eastwood-Bloom, Edith Garcia, Malene Hartmann Rasmussen, Ikuko Iwamoto, Jonathan Keep, Jin Eui Kim, Aimee Lax,

Nicholas Lees, Andrew Livingstone, Nao Matsunaga, Ian McIntyre, James Rigler, Lara Scobie, Louisa Taylor, Tamsin Van Essen, Andrea Walsh, James & Tilla Waters, Katy West, Connor Wilson.

EXPLORING SPODE artists: Phoebe Cummings, Holly Corfield Carr, Stephen Dixon, Monica Patuszynska, Megan Randall.

EXPLORING SPODE Hothouse artists: Grant Aston, Jane Cairns, Miche Follano, Fay Jenkinson, Anne Laycock, Kim Norton, Naomi Robinson, Jill Shaddock, Keith Varney.

THE CHINA HALL PAVILIONS: Simeon Featherstone @ Johnson Tiles, Lawrence Epps @ Ibstock Brick

Details about other CHINA HALL PAVILION partnerships to be confirmed shortly.

Additional artist partnerships include: Peter Jones at CERAM, Sue Pryke at Contemporary Applied Arts, Gayle Simmonet at Flux/ Bernardaud.

### *Clay Foundation*

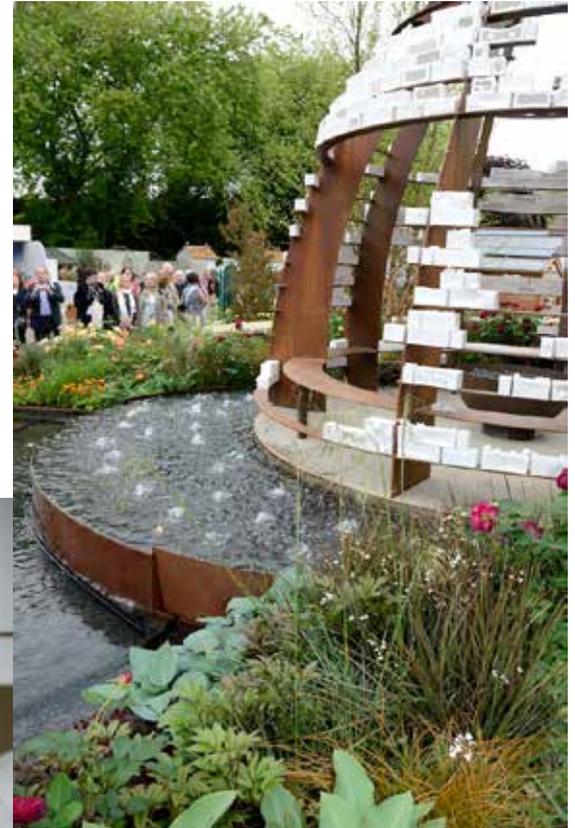
The work of the BCB will be taken forward from 2014 by the Clay Foundation, a newly formed charitable organisation based in Stoke-on-Trent. The Clay Foundation will be central to the City's continuing rebirth as the internationally recognised home for ceramic ideas, research and innovation. Through the delivery of the British

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Ceramics Biennial every two years, the Foundation will provide a showcase for the best of contemporary ceramic practice. This will be supported by an annual public engagement programme working with local communities to open up new opportunities in learning, routes to employment and training.

The British Ceramics Biennial would like to say a huge thank you to their funders and sponsors without whom the Biennial would not be possible: Arts Council England, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation; Staffordshire University, Steelite International, Johnson Tiles, Ibstock Brick, Ceram, Potclays (Materials and Equipment) and our Media Partner Ceramic Review, and coverage on BBC Radio Stoke.



*Above and below right: Bone china flower bricks provided by the British Ceramics Biennial; Above right: Transformation - the Stoke-on-Trent Garden Partnership garden for Chelsea Flower Show*

### **Transformation – Stoke-on-Trent Garden Partnership garden at the Chelsea Flower Show 2013**

Stoke-on-Trent Garden Partnership exhibited its first garden at this year's centennial RHS Chelsea Flower Show. The British Ceramics Biennial (BCB) was one of many partners contributing to the garden – Transformation – which won a silver award at the show.

Ceramic flower makers Rita Floyd and Jeanette Seabridge worked with BCB artists to make the hundreds of bone china 'flower bricks' and a dramatic two metre swag of ceramic flowers displayed within the garden.



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### Coming to the Potteries – where to stay and eat – Jon Fairburn

#### *Accommodation*

The best place to stay in the Potteries is The Graythwaite (assuming you can get in there). I have been placing visitors in here for ten years and everyone loves it. It is also within a very short walking distance to most of the good restaurants (The Blue Chilli, Jalsa, Brunswicks) mentioned below. <http://www.thegraythwaite.co.uk/>

The Westfields is rated excellent by the vast majority of reviewers on Tripadvisor. It is a few miles outside the Potteries in a more rural setting. <http://www.westfieldsbandb.co.uk/>

The Kenwood Guest House is generally very well rated on Tripadvisor and within easy walking distance of the main railway station and the main BCB sites. <http://www.kenwoodguesthousestoke.co.uk/>

I am not much of a fan of chain hotels, but if you like that kind of thing the Premier Inn at Trentham Gardens has been getting very good reviews on Tripadvisor and lots of people like the shopping village and gardens that are on the site. It is also very easy to get to from the motorway. <http://www.premierinn.com/en/hotel/STOTRE/stoke/trentham-gardens>

The Best Western Plus Stoke on Trent Moat House is centrally located and incorporates some of Josiah Wedgwood's original house.

<http://www.bestwestern.co.uk/hotels/stoke-on-trent-moat-house-stoke-on-trent-83862/hotel-info/default.aspx>

If none of these appeal then you are strongly recommended to check Tripadvisor before booking.

[http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Tourism-g186378-Stoke\\_on\\_Trent\\_Staffordshire\\_England-Vacations.html](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Tourism-g186378-Stoke_on_Trent_Staffordshire_England-Vacations.html)

#### *Places to eat*

The Blue Chilli Restaurant – great food, try the Thai Massaman curry.

9 Berkeley Court, Newcastle under Lyme, ST5 1TT, tel. 01782 715 885, <http://www.bluechillithai.com/>

The Jalsa – for good Indian food try the Nowabi Chicken, Baza Lamb or the shashlik dishes.

19-21 George Street, Newcastle under Lyme, ST5 1JX, tel. 01782 611551, <http://thejalsa.co.uk/>

Brunswicks – British dishes and international classics.

10 Brunswick Street, Newcastle under Lyme, ST5 1HL, tel. 01782 635999, <http://www.brunswicksrestaurant.co.uk/>

If you would like a drink after visiting any of the three restaurants mentioned above then I would recommend The Greyhound which is owned by the local Titanic Brewery. This is a 2-3 min walk from any of the restaurants, just head straight up the road towards Hanley. <http://www.titanicbrewery.co.uk/c/our-pubs/the-greyhound-pub>

The Med Bar – easily the best Italian in the conurbation. I am a big fan of the pizzas, but it is all good here. Very good and reasonably priced Italian wine menu.

28 Cobridge Road, Hanley, Stoke on Trent ST1 5JQ, tel. 01782 269955/07779 641716. <http://www.medbar.co.uk/>

Badsha Indian Restaurant – very popular Indian restaurant, they do a mid week special 4 courses for £8.95.

6 Swan Square, Burslem, ST6 3EA, tel. 01782 833755, no website.

The latter restaurant is close to a number of excellent real ale pubs such as The Bull's Head (<http://www.titanicbrewery.co.uk/p/titanic-pubs/the-bulls-head.html>) or The Leopard (<http://www.burslem-leopard.co.uk/>). General visitor information for the area including ceramic and factory tours can all be found on the Visit Stoke website at <http://www.visitstoke.co.uk/>.

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### Anita Harris Art Pottery

Anita Harris Art Pottery is entirely decorated by hand in Stoke on Trent, using wonderfully vibrant reactive glazes. Anita Harris and Samantha Johnson have a wealth of experience in the pottery industry, having worked for Poole Pottery, Moorcroft's Cobridge Stoneware and Black Ryden. Since 2006, Anita and Samantha have produced designs for many leading retailers including Selfridges, Bloomingdales, Tiffanys, Harrods and John Lewis. Both bring with them a host of glaze knowledge and painting skills and continue to push the boundaries of glaze effects and lustres to produce new designs. They produce commission and one off pieces.

Anita Harris Art Pottery Ltd  
5 Clewes Court  
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Stoke on Trent  
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E-mail: [anitaharris78@hotmail.com](mailto:anitaharris78@hotmail.com)  
Web: <http://www.anitaharrisartpottery.net>



*Below right: Anita Harris (right) and Samantha Johnson*



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### The Potteries – past, present and future

Arnold Bennet wrote in *The Old Wives' Tale* (1908) that 'You cannot drink tea out of a tea cup without the aid of the Five Towns, you cannot eat a meal in decency without the aid of the Five Towns', such was the importance of Stoke-on-Trent as a world centre of ceramics production throughout the 19th and much of the 20th centuries. Today, although the mass industry is greatly reduced, there is still plenty of remaining pottery production in Stoke-on-Trent as well as evidence of the glorious tradition in the past.

There are many places that tell the story of the city's contribution to ceramics production including The Wedgwood Visitor Centre and Museum, The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Gladstone Pottery Museum, the Moorcroft Heritage Visitor Centre and the Dudson Museum to name a few. In terms of existing production, Middleport Pottery, Emma Bridgewater and Portmeirion amongst others are worth a visit including the factory shops and cafes at these locations. There is a Ceramics Trail that encompasses these places and many more from an industrial past that prove Stoke-on-Trent was and remains a truly world-class centre for ceramics. Details are at <http://www.visitstoke.co.uk/ceramics-trail/>.

One trend amongst the ceramics industry in recent years has been the emergence of an increasing number of micro and SME ceramics businesses many of which are referred to as studio potters. In some cases these were the result of workers being made redundant from larger firms; in others it has been graduates from Staffordshire University staying on to set up their own business. This part of the high industry is often characterised by highly skilled individuals, selling high value or niche pieces and keeping many of the arts and skills of the area alive.

The Creative Stoke website maintains a very useful list of ceramics firms across the different sectors from individual makers, designers, services to larger manufacturers at <http://www.creativestoke.org.uk/ceramics.html>. Barewall Gallery in Burslem supports and sells the work of many ceramic artists: <http://www.barewall.co.uk/>.

Good reads for those interested in ceramics and the Potteries include Arnold Bennett's novels, many of which were set in the Potteries such as *Clayhanger* and *Anna of the Five Towns*. There is also a literary society for him, the Arnold Bennett Society – <http://www.arnoldbennettsociety.org.uk/>.

In addition, there is *The Lunar Men* by Jenny Uglow which is a brilliant book and includes Josiah Wedgwood and the development of the Potteries from the pioneering days of the Industrial Revolution. In fact, Wedgwood's association which the likes of Erasmus Darwin and Matthew Boulton not only accelerated entrepreneurship and commercialism in the 18th century but it also helped define the age more generally.

Dudsons short film, 'Defining Dining', gives a flavour of the processes and people involved with modern ceramics production: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=JJs\\_zi5rPul](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=JJs_zi5rPul).

'Blood and bone china' is a vampire film set in Stoke on Trent in which ceramics plays a central role in the plot: <http://www.bloodandbonechina.com/>.



*Parasol Dance by Kerry Goodwin at Moorcroft*

## Sector Special: Ceramics



### **Academic peer review research into the ceramics industry – Ian Jackson**

Ian Jackson is Enterprise Reader in the Faculty of Business, Education and Law at Staffordshire University. He has written extensively on the ceramics industry in books and peer reviewed journals, and has provided commentary in the local and national press and broadcast media. If you would like a full copy of any of the following papers please contact Ian at [i.jackson@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:i.jackson@staffs.ac.uk) or on 01782 294211.

Ian Jackson and Philip R. Tomlinson (2009) 'The role of cooperation in a creative industry: the case of UK studio pottery', *International Review of Applied Economics*, 23, 6: 691-708.

#### *Abstract*

In this paper, we explore the role that cooperation plays in a small-scale creative sector, namely that of UK studio pottery. Drawing upon data from a survey of studio potters, we examine the extent to which these artists cooperate with others in their production activities and then assess the impact of this cooperation on their sales performance. While our results suggest that studio potters can and do benefit from establishing stronger cooperative ties, the nurturing of such ties is not always easy and significant barriers to cooperation exist. Overcoming such barriers depends very much upon the nature of dyadic relations between actors, which is something we suggest reflects the governance structure of the network.

Jose-Luis Hervas-Oliver, Ian Jackson and Philip R. Tomlinson (2011) "May the ovens never grow cold": regional resilience and industrial policy in the North Staffordshire ceramics industrial district – with lessons from Sassuolo and Castellon', *Policy Studies*, 32:4, 377-395.

#### *Abstract*

In the aftermath of the recent global recession, the concept of regional resilience is becoming increasingly important in regional policy circles. This paper seeks to add to the debate by exploring resilience and recent policy initiatives in the context of the North Staffordshire ceramics district. A key issue here has been the economic governance of the district, which has had a significant impact upon its current trajectory. Drawing upon a series of interviews with local actors, we examine the district's 'adaptive capacity' to move onto a new trajectory. In particular, we note the importance of district firms developing wider networking opportunities, particularly external ties; insights here are garnered from the relatively successful links between Castellon and Sassuolo ceramics districts.

Philip R. Tomlinson and Ian Jackson (2011) 'Cooperative Ties and the Impact of External Factors upon Innovation in an Industrial District: Some Insights from the North Staffordshire Table and Giftware Sector', *Regional Studies*, 47, 4: 1-17.

#### *Abstract*

Cooperative ties and the impact of external factors upon innovation in an industrial district: some insights from the North Staffordshire table and giftware sector, *Regional Studies*. Drawing upon a sample of 118 firms, this paper explores the impact of cooperative ties and the role of institutions upon innovation in the UK ceramic table and giftware sector. It is found that locational economies are important for aiding innovation, with firms in the North Staffordshire industrial district holding an inherent advantage vis-à-vis non-district firms. However, while close vertical ties enhance innovation, recent concerns have arisen that horizontal collaboration between district and Asian firms is having a detrimental impact upon innovative capacity within the district. Finally, institutions also appear to play an important role in facilitating the innovation process.