



# WPA Newsletter October 2020

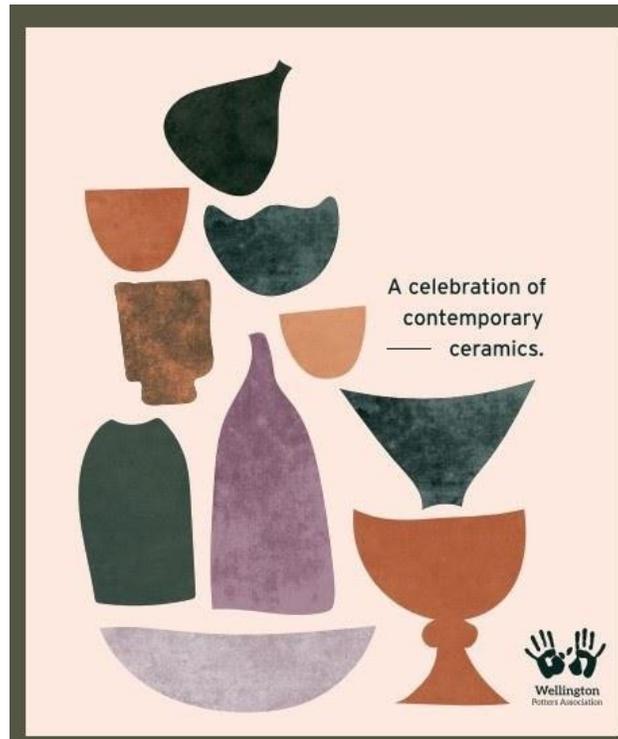
## Editor's Note

Spring is upon us and I hope the creative juices are flowing through our little community. The anagama opening certainly confirmed how much talent there is in the club. The next event coming up on the WPA calendar, our annual exhibition Ceramicus will no doubt showcase even more stunning creations. I hope many of you will participate both as artists and as volunteers!

Until then, be well and happy potting!

Annax

## Ceramicus 2020



**Saturday 24 October – Sunday 8 November 2020**

Academy Galleries, Queens Wharf, Wellington

- **Receiving Day:** Saturday 17th October, 10am-3pm at WPA Rooms (*main studio closed*)
- **Selection Day:** Sunday 18th October, 10am-5pm (*main studio closed*)
- **Opening Night:** Thursday 22nd October, 5:30pm-7.30pm
- **Selector:** Debbie Pointon ( (<http://www.debbiepointon.co.nz/>) )

**Entry:** An electronic entry form will be on its way to members soon, but in the meantime, below is a list of the amazing awards available this year:

- **Wellington Museum Premiere Acquisition Award for Excellence in Ceramics, \$1,000.** Wellington Museum will keep the work in exchange for the prize money of \$1000, and the winning work will be part of the Museum's collection, to show the best of Wellington ceramics. Note that you can opt out if you wish and still be eligible for the other awards
- **Abbots Glaze Award for Excellence in the Use of Glaze,** \$500 voucher from Decopots
- **Primo Clays Award for Excellence in Wheel-Thrown Ceramics,** \$500 voucher from Decopots
- **CCG Excellence in Hand Built Ceramics Award,** \$500 voucher from CCG

- **Nelson Pottery Supplies Award for First Time Exhibitor**, \$150 voucher
- **Vessel Award for People's Choice Award**, \$250
- **Park Hotel Award for Innovation in Ceramics**, \$100

### **Help Needed to Get the Show on the Road**

Ceramicus is going to be a great event; we have an excellent selector in **Debbie Pointon**, a great place to hold it at the Academy Galleries and some exciting awards for your work. But as there is still a lot to do, we need your help to make it happen.

We are currently recruiting for volunteers to help with the important tasks below. Have a read through and please email [exhibitions@wellingtonpotters.org.nz](mailto:exhibitions@wellingtonpotters.org.nz) with details of your availability and what you are interested in helping out with. It's always a fun event to be involved in and we would greatly appreciate your support.

We urgently need volunteers to help with:

- **Receiving day on Saturday 17th October (10 am – 3 pm)**. We need volunteers to help with paperwork and sorting submitted works ready for selection., and making sure that the Roster for minding the exhibition is filled out
- **Packing up pots ready for transportation after selection on Sunday 18th October (4 pm – 6 pm)**
- **Preparing and transporting plinths and pots on Tuesday 20th October (4-6pm) and Wednesday 21st October (morning)**. You do not need to be available all day or both days – just let us know your interest in helping and your availability and we'll let you know what's needed.
- **Setting up the exhibition on Wednesday 21st October 10am - 5pm, and Thursday 22nd October (during the morning, if needed)**. This task will be led by our guest artist and selector Debbie Pointon. You can volunteer for one day or both.
- **Managing the exhibition from 24th October to the 8th November**. All exhibitors are expected to do at least one shift looking after the exhibition, but we also need members to organise the roster, keep track of the sales, and ensure the exhibition is running well.
- **Opening night Thursday 22nd October**. We need volunteers to help with preparing nibbles, serving drinks, managing sales, looking after visitors and tidying up at the end of the event. Catering volunteers would need to be available in the afternoon to prepare the food and platters in time for the opening at 5:30 pm. Those who wish to serve food and drinks and help at the event are needed from 5-8 pm.
- **Packing down the exhibition on Sunday 8th November (evening, 4-6pm) and Monday 9th November (during the day)**. This involves packing up sold items for buyers collecting them, and packing up pots and plinths and transporting them back to the rooms.

We look forward to hearing from you - please contact us at [exhibitions@wellingtonpotters.org.nz](mailto:exhibitions@wellingtonpotters.org.nz)!

## 2020 AGM and New WPA Committee

Thanks to everyone who came out and attended our AGM & mystery pot swap on 6 September!

It was wonderful opportunity to thank our outgoing committee for their hard work, particularly Kate Ford who has stepped down from the Secretary role after nine years of service. **Thank you Kate!!!**

We also elected a new committee for the 2020-2021 year. Unfortunately, with all the activity, we forgot to take a group photo but welcome to the new members and hello again to those who have been re-elected.

Many thanks to all these people for volunteering their time to help run our Club!

### **2020/2021 WPA Committee Officers:**

**President:** Nicole Gaston

**Vice-President:** Elaine Marland

**Secretary:** Anna Castelle

**Treasurer:** Sophie Hathaway

### **Elected committee members:**

Steve Moate

Karla Marie

Judith Belin

Peter Rumble

Martin Henty

James Dickman

### **Co-opted members:**

Tamyra Matthews

Gordon Sinclair

## 16th Annual Anagama Firing: An Interview with a Pot

*Article by Danielle Castle*

After several months of preparation, six days of loading, five days of firing, and five days of reduction cooling, the wicket came down on September 13 for the big reveal: was WPA's 16th annual anagama

firing a success or failure? To get the low-down, we interviewed a participant who was intimately involved in the firing: a pot.

**Interviewer:** So ... pot. I gather that this was your first anagama experience. How did you get interested in woodfiring, and what were your first impressions?

**Pot:** Thank you for having me, Patrick. I was intrigued by the woodfire anagama-style kiln because of the rich history, melted ash effect and prospect of jewels. It has that allure where you don't fully understand what you're getting into, but when you come out you'll never be the same. I felt like I needed that kind of transition in my life, so I got bisqued and signed up.

As for first impressions, I honestly had my doubts after the introductory meeting. The Makers spoke a great deal about not getting "too attached" to us, showing collapsed shelves, silica-laden wadding, and other horrors I prefer not to repeat here. It's like they didn't even consider that we were sitting *right there*. That's not quite the pep talk we really needed before going into this thing, you know?

**Interviewer:** Ah, right, I can see how that could be alarming. For a pot. I heard this year had the most pieces the WPA ever loaded into the anagama kiln. Nearly 600 of you lined up! What was your experience like with the loading?

**Pot:** Yes, one Maker seemed particularly dedicated to get most everyone in. We were strategically placed into the kiln based on our shapes, sizes, glazes and textures to best channel the flame and capture the ash. The procedure is a melding of art and science, to which I believe the technical term is "Jiggery-Poke."

**Interviewer:** And the firing? The kiln is fed *Pinus radiata* around the clock for five days, and I heard it exceeded 1300 degrees Celsius. What goes on in there?

**Pot:** It's pretty much a raging party the whole time. It takes a while for some of us to really warm up, but eventually everyone feels the heat and gets loose. Some pots handled it better than others. There was a cup two shelves up who was a nice, simple form, but mostly kept to himself. We never suspected he was a mid-fire guy, ya know? It was made exceedingly clear that only cone ten bodies were permitted into the anagama, but there's always a few optimists who slip in.

What they don't realize is that they're physically incapable of handling the heat. A 1260 body just isn't going to cut it. The kiln can get well above 1300 degrees, which is what happened this round. Remember, there is no auto-regulator that tells the kiln to slow down because it's just a bunch of monkeys out there shovelling dead trees into a firebox.

**Interviewer:** What happened to the cup?

**Pot:** He couldn't hack it. Poor guy ended up a puddle on the shelf for some unpaid Maker to chip off. It was merely luck that he didn't fuse with the fellow next door! Perhaps the Makers left just enough sake for the kiln god to keep the puddle unto himself.

**Interviewer:** That is ... unsettling. What happened after the wicket came down?

**Pot:** A fabulous occasion, celebrated with grandeur and sausage! Each pot was carefully removed from its shelf, then passed from Maker to Maker down a long line of hands to be photographed and admired. We ended up displayed in a somewhat orderly fashion so the Makers may be able to recognize patterns in the kiln and perhaps learn something from year to year. Personally, I'm quite satisfied with my new look; very flashing, although I'm a bit on the dry side. My lip is chapped.

**Interviewer:** It sounds like the firing was an overall success! Is there anything else you'd like to say about the anagama experience?

**Pot:** You know, Pat, this firing is truly special to Wellington, and that is because nobody else is as dedicated to the cause as Graham, June and the volunteer Makers at the WPA. The wood hauling, wood cutting, wood stacking, shelf cleaning, brick dipping, grog grinding, cat-herding, pot making, pot receiving, financial accounting, food prepping, shift coordinating, kiln loading, kiln firing, food eating, shift leading, kiln unloading, brick cleaning, pot grinding, pot cleaning,... it's an endeavour that only a nutter would take on, or people who don't know any better. And none of it could happen without Graeme and June who so graciously opened up their land and home to allow humble pots such as myself to be transformed into something truly unique and inspirational to others.

## Anagama 2020



The Anagama Brains Trust met recently to conduct a post mortem on the 2020 firing and to plan for the next firing. There were five new faces around the table who all brought concrete (shouldn't that be "wooden"?) ideas to the discussion. It's exciting that such a surge in interest in this unique form of ceramics is taking place.

A record 97 members contributed just on 600 pots weighing some 430kg. (Compare that with previous averages of about 65 contributors and 400 pots). Varied results were obtained from the 2020 firing. Much has been learnt....and a lot of wood burnt. Our photographers are working on organising a shared drive with all anagama photos, but for now you can see them clicking on these links: [Gallery 1](#), [Gallery 2](#) (requires download) and [Gallery 3](#). Special thanks to James Dickman, Kirsten Johnstone and Helen Barden for documenting this special firing.

Depending on the agreement of our anagama hosts, Graeme and June Houston (to whom heartfelt thanks for their ongoing generosity), the next firing will be conducted late September through early October 2021.

### WPA History Lessons: Part 3



1 - Barmen at the 1993 Exhibition. From left: Mike Atkins, Roger Brown, Alan Reynolds



2 - Ma I Sole and Maureen Irving at "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" exhibition in November 1996.

### **Bygone Days of Wellington Potters - *The Move Upstairs***

*Article by Vera Burton, originally published in the WPA Newsletter July 2008*

We had been looking for somewhere else. The rooms on Grant Road were not in any danger of being lost, but we had about the same membership as now and all our activities were crammed into what is now the glaze room!

The hall upstairs belonged to the Musical and Drama Society (MADSOC), and was sited on Town Belt land leased from the Wellington City Council at a "peppercorn rental". How did we fit! We occasionally rented the upstairs space for functions – we once had our AGM there and the noise of rain on the roof was such that "...27 people full of mulled wine in MADSOC's kitchen made for a rather intimate AGM". We were also known to book the hall if we had an important meeting or school; it was necessary to ensure there was no tap dance class above if we wanted to hear ourselves/each other.

But we had no money, and couldn't find a suitable place even if we did have. Then around April 1995 we heard a few rumours that MADSOC had virtually ceased to exist and we consulted the City Council about the status of the hall. A theatre group, Stagecraft Theatre, in the way of the motorway, were keen to have the hall as a back-up if the council couldn't find them new premises, and one of the MADSOC members was very keen for it to go to a theatre/dance group (especially because it has a beautifully

sprung wooden floor). Enter the foresight of those who signed the lease. As a quid pro quo for MADSOC signing an illegal lease, they had agreed to pay WPA \$10,700 (the money WPA spent on improvements) should the lease be changed. MADSOC did not have that money and so were keen to assign the hall to us.

The Council was agreeable – they were involved, of course, because the building is on leased Town Belt land. They were to vote in October 1995 to reassign the lease to WPA with effect from 1 September 1995 but at the very last minute the item was withdrawn from the agenda because of a technicality. The catch was that MADSOC was deregistered as an Incorporated Society because they had not made any returns over a period of some years. They could not legally assign anything! There was a very small group of them. The person we had to deal with could only be reliably contacted by joining the queue at the ticket office in the Opera House, and when you reached the counter, arranging to meet for coffee when she had her lunch break!

At the Cultural & Recreation Committee of the WCC in October, it was moved and seconded that as long as we were able to persuade MADSOC to reconstitute itself formally for the purpose of tidying up its own affairs and handing over the lease to us, the City Council will approve us taking over the lease without any further recourse to them. We were especially grateful to councillors Ruth Gotlieb, Ken Boyden and Frank McKinnon who battled on our behalf. As it was in WPA's interest rather than MADSOC's to get things sorted, we had to shepherd them through the process of re-registering, collecting enough members for a quorum and passing the necessary motion. Then it went back to council, but the officer dealing with it was away for 6 weeks.



3 - Liz Mirams, President 91/92, who set a new standard for our exhibitions with the 1992 Festival Exhibition in the BNZ Centre.



4 - Gulie Dowrick receiving an award from Mayor Fran Wilde at the 1993 Exhibition.

In the meantime we had been working upstairs. It was a blackhall with a stage at the end; a narrow hallway running from the back of the hall and mezzanine to the stage; no windows in the roof or walls; a barely functional kitchen. The 'destruction' exercise was completed in August and we could move on to the more exciting construction phase. There was plenty to be done – as always a core of members putting in a huge effort. Special mention to Clinton Davis (Treasurer) for everything but especially the electrical wiring to the wheels and elsewhere, Sheila Brown (President) for the library renovation, Mal Sole for the laser lights, and Val Schultz (Rooms Vice-President) for endlessly overseeing and ensuring food was aplenty. Vinyl was professionally laid to protect the wooden floor and allow for easy cleaning. The sluice area was created and toilets made usable, old unsafe stairs removed and new ones created, walls lined, lockers, skylights, kitchen upgrade. And then there was paint, paint, paint and more paint.

The Change of Use document was signed off with WCC in September, and finally we held a grand opening on 20 October 1996. For a while, Opera Technique retained their wardrobe in what is now the storeroom. But eventually that also became ours and was ribbed and sealed to keep out the resident possum and rats. Originally we had never dreamed of obtaining such a space; then when the possibility was there, we never dreamed it would take us 18 months to accomplish. Can I quote from my first article in the newsletter as President (November 1996): "Anyone who was at the AGM on Sunday 20, or at the lunch or raku afterwards would have been delighted (I hope) with the amount of space we now have and the way it has opened up all sorts of possibilities for us. All this was built on the back of those who worked so hard 10 years ago to make the basement space into a club rooms. In the wake of their disappointment in losing the Newtown rooms, they poured concrete, built walls, and cupboards, put in a toilet, and in short, put in a lot of hard labour. Because of them we had a claim on the MADSOC space today.

But it goes back further than that - the basement builders used the knowledge and experience built up at the rooms in Newtown where again a group of potters cleaned, painted, built shelves, etc, and transformed an old hospital laundry into the first club rooms. And they gave public raku firings to raise money! Any group such as ours owes a debt of gratitude those previous members with energy and foresight.

I hope your new committee will build on what we have and open further opportunities for the future. These rooms belong to you - use them, enjoy them, browse in the lovely new library, make coffee in the "real" kitchen. (Yes, the oven will produce scones!) Enjoy the space to pot, handbuild, read, chat - but always leave things at least as good as you find them, and maybe you can even improve things for the next user!

## Interesting Reading



Thanks to Tom Hawley for sharing a link to an interesting [article](#) about a rather special ancient pot.

## Changes to Club Firing Charges

The cost to fire your pots will increase from 1 October. Increasing costs and the need to put money away for the "rainy day" (that is, when a couple of our aging kilns finally give up the ghost) make this increase inevitable. If there's a bright side to any increase, it is just 50 cents per kilo.

Thus the cost for bisque increases to \$4.50 per kilo and for mid-fire glost \$7.00 per kilo.

## FINAL WARNING!!!

Club glazes **not to be used** if:

- you sell, or promote for sale, any of your pottery fired at WPA you must not use Club glazes; or
- you fire offsite.

WHY? It's hardly reasonable to be using the volunteer labour of the glaze making team for your own commercial gain.

**Private Firings:** If you do not sell, or promote for sale, any of your pots but you do use Club glazes **you must add 10%** to the Kiln Hire charge. The Club glaze price per kilo includes the cost of glazes. Using the Club glazes and then firing privately makes no such contribution, thus the 10% extra that's required.

**Warning system:** Despite constant reminders about this, there have been repeat offenders who use the club glazes for commercial purposes. WPA will therefore begin issuing formal warnings to anyone who contravenes the policies outlined above. A third strike will result in your membership being cancelled.

## Handy Info

**Website:** <http://wellingtonpotters.org.nz/>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/wellingtonpottersassociation>. If you have any pottery inspiration, cool videos, articles, or upcoming exhibitions, message us on Facebook or Messenger.

**Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/wellingtonpottersassociation/> If you have any pottery inspiration, cool videos, articles, or upcoming exhibitions, send us a DM.

**WPA Newsletters:** PDF versions of our newsletters, as well as past editions can be found on the [WPA website](#).

**WPA Newsletter deadline:** Articles for the September 2020 newsletter need to be emailed to the Editor by Sunday, 20 September 2020: [newsletter@wellingtonpotters.org.nz](mailto:newsletter@wellingtonpotters.org.nz)

**Payments:** Please pay using the eftpos machine in the kiln room (no other form of payment is accepted at the Rooms). If you are unable to come in person, our account number is: Wellington Potters Association, 02-0568-0024590-00

**Clay Purchase:** WPA has clay for sale to members, but the process does rely on availability of a few of our hard-working volunteers. For more information check out the [WPA website](#) or to organise a purchase, contact Peter Rumble (021 067 8099) who is often at the rooms.

**Membership Costs:** As a club we try to keep our fees down while still covering costs. If for financial reasons you feel excluded, please contact the President.

**Concerns:** If members have any complaints/issues/concerns they are welcome to approach any of the Committee members at any time.

## WPA Committee

### President, Workshop Coordinator:

Nicole Gaston, [president@wellingtonpotters.org.nz](mailto:president@wellingtonpotters.org.nz)

### Vice President, Librarian:

Elaine Marland, [elainejmarland@gmail.com](mailto:elainejmarland@gmail.com)

### Secretary, Newsletter Editor:

Anna Castelle, [newsletter@wellingtonpotters.org.nz](mailto:newsletter@wellingtonpotters.org.nz)

### Treasurer:

Sophie Hathaway, treasurer@wellingtonpotters.org.nz

**Committee Members:**

Karla Marie, myladyknz@gmail.com (Education Portfolio)

Martin Henty, hentymartin@gmail.com (Events Portfolio)

Peter Rumble, sales@rumbles.co.nz (Rooms/Operations Portfolio)

Steve Moate, steve.moate.nz@gmail.com (Finance Portfolio)

James Dickman, jdwickman@gmail.com (Communications Portfolio)

Judith Belin, belin.judith@orange.fr (Membership Portfolio)

**Co-opted members:**

Vera Burton, veraanddave93@gmail.com

Tamyra Matthews, tamyra.matthews@gmail.com

Gordon Sinclair, gordonsinclair10000@gmail.com

## Contact Us



Wellington Potters' Association

130 Grant Road, Thorndon, Wellington 6011

PO Box 850, Wellington 6140

Phone: (04) 473 3680 | Email: [wellingtonpotters@gmx.com](mailto:wellingtonpotters@gmx.com)

Website: <http://wellingtonpotters.org.nz/>