



# mudlark

May 2020

South of the River Potters' Club Newsletter

## COMING EVENTS:

- **Saggar Firing Workshop**  
- Shabbi Phelps at SORPC  
**TBC**
- **Empty Bowls -**  
ChristChurch Grammar **TBC**
- **Pit Firing - Chris Rogers'**  
place. July 4 or 11 **TBC**
- **MCAA Awards TBC**
- **(Naked) RAKU Firing -**  
Atwell house **TBC**
- **Pop-Up Exhibition - Atwell**  
Gallery September **TBC**
- **Lunch in the Gallery -**  
Graham Oldroyd 'Fire'  
Wednesday Sept **TBC**
- **Glorious Mud - 'FIRE'**  
September 14 - 20
- **Atwell Christmas Bazaar**  
- November 20<sup>th</sup> onwards

Check the Atwell Gallery website for updates on gallery activities - things are slowly returning to normal with some limitations on numbers.

## May Meeting

The May committee meeting was again held via Zoom and the technology allowed us to get together and update the business of the Club in the style of the times. By now you will have received a copy of the minutes of the meeting from Chris.



## Empty Bowls Project

The Empty Bowls project is NOT cancelled but the organisers are hoping to schedule a new date, hopefully in September. So there's still heaps of time to get your bowls made and if they aren't used this year, they will certainly be a great start for next year's event.

Remember that the soup bowls should be of a generous size (suggested 14-16cm wide x 6-8cm deep) and, of course, food safe. Our goal is to contribute at least **50** bowls!

Our contact person for the project is Geff Gomez  
[geffandjeannie@gmail.com](mailto:geffandjeannie@gmail.com)

## South of the River Potters' Club

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Secretary – Chris Rogers 9453 1401

Treasurer – Peggy Stacy 9331 2507

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## *Glorious Mud Exhibition*

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The committee has been looking forwards and discussing contingency plans for our biennial exhibition, “Glorious Mud”. The theme this year will be ‘FIRE’. The planned date in September seems like a long way off and who knows what the virus situation will be by then. At the moment we hope to be able to have the exhibition as usual, in the gallery and as restrictions are being lifted, it may turn out to be possible. Otherwise an online exhibition may be the alternative option.

So ‘Glorious Mud’ IS happening so keep the ‘fire’ theme in mind and get potting!

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## *Covid19 protocols*

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Hand sanitiser and surface wipes have been provided in the Club work shed - please use them in addition to the usual cleaning procedures when working in the shed. Let’s keep the workshed limited to no more than two people at a time.



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## *Saggar Firing workshop Shabbi Phelps*

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The saggar firing workshop with Shabbi Phelps did not happen on the planned date in May. Shabbi has agreed to put it on hold and hopefully re-schedule for a suitable date later in the year. In the meantime she is encouraging everyone to keep preparing pots suitable for the saggar firing and is looking forward to seeing us later in the year.

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## *Kiln*

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If you have pots for firing, feel free to leave them in the kiln room on the appropriate shelf and Graham will fire them when there are sufficient for a load. Please contact Graham to tell him that you have left pots for firing - and don’t forget to mark them with your ID stamp or signature. When paying for your firing or your share of a group firing, don’t forget to put your name and the firing number in the ‘narrative’ in the bank transfer page so that Peggy can identify where the money has come from and which firing it relates to.

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## *Naked Raku*

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A number of members have expressed interest in having a naked raku group firing. The idea is to prepare some pots with terra sigillata that is burnished and bisque fired to 900 (lower than our usual 980°) and we may organise a group bisque firing. Once this is done we can arrange a firing day.

There are a few options available, in particular whether one uses a glaze over the slip or just slip alone to cover the pot before the final firing. Peggy suggests that the glaze helps to keep the slip on the pot while the pot is being transported (don’t forget that the burnished surface doesn’t provide much for the slip to hold on to), so it sounds like the best option if you are not firing on the spot.

Check out the naked raku videos in the list below. These guys use only slip and there are some interesting comments on how the thickness of the slip influences the density of the crackle pattern that results.

Here are some recipes and tips from Peggy, Narayani and Barb:

LGH is a suitable stoneware clay and pots should be ribbed to be as smooth as possible on the wheel. Narayani also uses white raku clay which is burnished. As an alternative to burnishing, terra sigillata can be applied. When turned and dry (preferably not bone-dry) the pot should be cleaned of all dust and at least three coats of terra sigillata applied with a brush on a wheel. Do not allow to completely dry between coats. Once the terra sigillata has lost its sheen (it should still look moist but not shiny wet) it can be buffed with a soft cloth or plastic bag.

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## Pottery Information Online

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### YouTube Videos -

Hsin-Chuen Lin - a Chinese potter in California who has produced a series of outstanding videos showing his gentle and meticulous throwing and decorating techniques. They are wonderful to watch and learn from. Subscribe to his YouTube channel and get notifications of new videos - there seems to be a new one every couple of days.

Here are just a few of them:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5fwWilj3YA0&fbclid=IwAR20wkcmbgzQgnLg7xAwuSDPeMmuekWQ7KfnG-0KpaGLAW16iepo-KKx5rw>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80rtdEGPP78&app=desktop&fbclid=IwAR1WP5jMk1YBiLU1XpntFQBcq\\_Bn6kg4nP0-MuUvIWnJASGs3ZiVnlp9rrA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80rtdEGPP78&app=desktop&fbclid=IwAR1WP5jMk1YBiLU1XpntFQBcq_Bn6kg4nP0-MuUvIWnJASGs3ZiVnlp9rrA)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xP4kC2Cf02w>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pzL44dTwnDU&fbclid=IwAR0JOLXZjMTw0ITxAtQJgUcw-gqLiH14eyDHL7ha\\_b6sIH9tHER4QcmwoI0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pzL44dTwnDU&fbclid=IwAR0JOLXZjMTw0ITxAtQJgUcw-gqLiH14eyDHL7ha_b6sIH9tHER4QcmwoI0)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWhN\\_wslprY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWhN_wslprY)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0m9AJ40t888&fbclid=IwAR2W8WpGISWhNch4ZfK4jV\\_4HVgPOniR-51Lk-G0M5cVNKVbn9pU0ppUL1M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0m9AJ40t888&fbclid=IwAR2W8WpGISWhNch4ZfK4jV_4HVgPOniR-51Lk-G0M5cVNKVbn9pU0ppUL1M)

If you thought you were confident in how to throw a basic bowl, have a look at this one - superb, slow, precise throwing with total control. And lots of useful tips along the way -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GS2ZjuANbko>

More videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tkw14F18ZZ8>  
Terra Sigillata and horsehair

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5OS2Zsw6FgU>  
Pit Firing - Jane White UK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iof4xwRUW8s>  
Pit Firing - Chris Dunn NZ

Because some of the sheen is lost in the bisque firing, Peggy prefers to fire to 900°C rather than 950°C. Wax the pot as usual and do not glaze the interior if smoked black is desired. Cover the pot with prepared slip allowing about 4 thick coats or more and making about 1/4 inch thick. It can be brushed or dipped but it needs to be very thick.

Allow the slip to dry for a short while and then cover with crackle glaze, brushing on a couple of coats but not too much as then glaze and doesn't come off. Do not allow glaze to touch any un-slipped parts of the pot! Narayani recommends three layers of slip and the same of glaze and suggests that dipping is the best method of application. She also mentioned that freshly made slip adheres to the pot best.

Leave the pot to dry completely- at least a week or could explode in the kiln.

The pot is handled carefully to avoid losing the glaze/slip covering and is fired in the raku kiln until the glaze looks molten. Firing too high may cause slip to adhere to the pot.

Place in reduction chamber with shredded paper and sawdust. Leave to burn for a couple of minutes before putting on more sawdust and lid for maximum blacking. Cover with lid and damp cloth.

Allow to smoke for about 10 to 15 minutes before removing and spraying with water. The slip and glaze should flake off readily and an old credit card is a good way to remove the resistant bits without damaging the sheen on the pot.

Barb's recommendation for terra sigillata:

Recipe:

250 grams ball clay  
1 teaspoon sodium silicate  
¾ fill a 1 litre plastic bottle with water

Add ball clay to water, shake and add the sodium silicate and shake again. Let sit for an hour or longer until distinct layers can be seen. Stand the bottle in a receptacle and cut a slit just above the heavy sediment layer at the bottom. The terra sigillata will flow out, leaving the grit and sediment behind.

Naked Raku:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRy6TKPGZ4A>

Naked Raku - 'go to whoa' demo by Simon Thorborn

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1MbszzZKXU>

Naked Raku without glaze - Randy Brodnax and Don Ellis

Here are a couple of recommendations from Geff:

Blog from NZ potter Peter Gregory - mostly about Cone 10 and crystalline glazes with loads of information and FAQs -

<https://opopots.blogspot.com>

<https://opopots.blogspot.com/2012/01/cone-6-glazes-bowls-tiles-and-tomato.html>

**Next meeting: Back to 'normal'!!**

**The next meeting will be held on  
June 10<sup>th</sup> in Room 2/3 at Atwell House  
at 10.00am (we are limited to 7 people in the  
room so may meet outside)**