

PLAY WITH CLAY

Blisworth Pottery Group

We started in February 2017 having been kindly given plenty of pottery equipment including a kiln and a kick wheel by June Hawkins who was looking for a home for it and wished that it be used in the Blisworth community. Other equipment was moulds of differing sizes and shapes, tools, kiln furniture and clay. Unfortunately the clay was too old and not salvageable.

Blisworth Baptist Chapel kindly said we could use their facilities as a meeting place for the pottery group. The Leisure hall was the right size for the group and the cellar for storage and to house the kiln. We needed to ensure that the ceiling and beams in the cellar were protected against fire before the kiln was used. Fireproof sheets were put up on the ceiling as was suggested by our kiln specialist Bob from Corby Kilns. Bob also checked the kiln for us and advised on the kiln we have that is in disrepair. The working kiln was donated by Di Burgoyne.

When the group started we had 12 of us, mainly from the village and we have had a steady 12-15 people attending although some have left and others joined in their place. It is felt that 15 is the most that we can have at any one time in the group as the number of tables we have to use is limiting and also we are restricted by the small kiln for the amount of pots we can fire even with 2 firings a week.

During the year we have had two tutors come in to give fresh advice and encouragement. Sarah from Swanpool Ceramics helped us with the pottery- wheel. She demonstrated making a basic vase and helped some of the members with first steps in throwing clay! She also helped us to fire and glaze our work at her studios which of course have a large kiln, larger than ours. The other tutor who has kindly helped us is Marcella who teaches art and ceramics at Pitsford School. She helped us to make slab pots, plaques, coil pots and funny shaped animals.

We have been out on visits to Swanpool Ceramics and had a delightful evening with Sarah looking round her studio and she was able to help us with many questions about using and firing clay.

We went to Corby Kilns in Burton Latimer one evening and could see all the variety of clays and glazes to be had. We came home with bags of goodies which have proved to be inspirational especially the glazes, what joy!

This term we are going to Stoke on Trent to the Middleport Pottery for a tour around where 'The Great Throw Down' was filmed for the television.

What will another year bring? More happy people being creative and enjoying life? This group enhances lives and gives a feeling of wellbeing to all concerned. Hurray