

Spirit of Sutterby

Kiln day 1

I was asked by Denise to make a record of our Kiln Day, Here goes.

Sunday 25 October we gathered at Beth's House, Dalby, The Sutterby Horde and Andrew the Potter.

Our aim was to make some pots and Objets d'art to fire on our next Kiln Day, also we were going to build a Clamp Kiln and refire some of the pots that we had made on our Anglo Saxon pot making day.



- The day started making pots under the guidance of Andrew. This time we were adding “temper” to the clay to make it easier to hold its shape when formed into pots and not slump as it had on “pot making day”
- The “temper we used was sand, chopped straw and grass cuttings.
- Any clay left over was made into Objets d'art so as not to waste it

We could not fire the pots we had just made as they had too high water content and needed to dry out for sometime, or the water in the clay, when fired would turn to steam, rapidly expand and crack the pots, if not blow them to bits.

To get round this we were going to refire some of anglo saxon pots in the clamp kiln

We built our Clamp kiln, very much akin to a bonfire, with our pots placed in amongst the wood, straw and paper.

A prayer was said to the Saint of Potters, and the fire lit.



The fire was fed with more fuel, and you could start to see the pots in the fire going red.

It was a nice day, and fine, so we were quite happy to stand around a bonfire, swapping stories, the smell of smoke would eventually wear off?

After a time we let the fire die down, and the pots were clearly visible in amongst the embers



Finally we raked away the ashes and embers, and removed the pots to cool down

Conclusions

Hindsight is a wonderful thing.

We were constricted by time, we only had the one day.

Maybe if we built and lit the Kiln first and then made the pots, we could have allowed more time in kiln.

Maybe if we could have let the pots cool down longer by removing them from the fire after lunch.

As we used prefired pots this time we will never know if we got a good pot from the firing..

One thing for certain was ,we all had a great time, lots of fun, and learnt a lot.

Many thanks to Andrew MacDonald for his time, guidance and patience.

Many thanks to Beth for letting us use her land and providing us with a wonderful lunch.