



Paul Bohanna Ceramics

Ceramics Artist

Studio Pottery Classes Guide

Welcome to the Sweeney Pottery.

This document contains important information about the pottery classes and workshops I run from my pottery studio. If you are already familiar with the all the basics of working with clay then feel free to skip to the '**WORKSHOP RULES, GUIDLINES, INFORMATION & TERMS**' section at the end.

This is intended to be a brief guide to get you thinking ahead and preparing yourself for the classes you will be attending. It is a good idea to start thinking now about what you would like to make and maybe even making drawings (they don't need to be works of art), as this can be a really productive way to develop your ideas. Your final pots may look nothing like your drawings (they might) but the process of drawing will certainly help you to explore more ideas, and it's nice to start a class with ideas already in mind.

Pottery is not a competition, it is not about being better than anyone else or being judged, it is about being true to yourself. Everyone is different, and pottery is one of the very best ways to express your individuality.

CLAY

Clay is a form of stone. It is created naturally over millions of years by various weathering processes upon volcanic rocks, followed by natural grading into the finest particle sizes by sedimentation along river deltas etc. Clay is made of Silica, Aluminium, and Water, but is usually also 'contaminated' by other ingredients it picked up along the way. The commonest of these is iron, which stains clay a red colour. Red clay is the commonest clay available and therefore the easiest to obtain.

Using a very powerful microscope the particles of clay can be seen to be roughly hexagonal shaped flat discs which slide over each other, which is what makes clay so 'plastic'. Of all the materials available to artists and craftspeople, clay is probably the most 'plastic' (it can take any shape and hold it for a while or forever). It is extremely variable in its various working states, for instance it can be a liquid (called slip) when mixed with extra water, a dry powder, soft clay, and hard clay, and finally an irreversible stone-like or glass-like material we call ceramic.



Spray booth, extruders and electric potter's wheel.

As clay dries, by losing water, it becomes progressively stiffer and less plastic. When it has become firm but not completely dry, this is called the 'leather-hard' state. It can still be worked on in this state but its character is now completely different to earlier softer stages and requires other methods of working. Pots which have not yet been fired at all, regardless of their state of dryness, are called 'greenware' or 'green-ware'.

When clay is apparently completely dry it becomes much lighter coloured and is now extremely fragile, so it should be handled with extreme care and as little as possible at this stage. This state is called 'bone-dry' and is the state the clay must have reached before it is put into a kiln and fired. If it is still damp when fired, even slightly, then the water will turn into trapped steam and cause the pot to explode during the firing. This can also destroy other work and even damage the kiln.

Clay shrinks as it dries and then again when it is fired. It is important to be aware of this. A pot may shrink by as much as 15% from when you started making it to when it finally emerges finished from the kiln.

FIRING

Firing takes place inside a potter's kiln. This is essentially a box which is built with materials that will withstand tremendous heat and keep that heat inside the box. The fuels used to 'fire' kilns can range from gas, oil, wood or electricity.

Not all clays are able to withstand the same high temperatures, some clays (especially some red clays with high iron content) will literally melt into a glass-like glaze at relatively lower temperatures (and are therefore often used as ingredients in glazes). Some clays will withstand over 1400°C (e.g. porcelain), but the usual firing ranges are 'earthenware' (around 1000°C to 1150°C) and 'stoneware' (around 1200°C to 1350°C). Note that these temperatures are rough guides only.

Pots are fired inside a kiln twice. The first firing is called the 'biscuit' or 'bisque' firing, and this turns the clay into ceramic, a process that cannot be reversed. It is now a porous, dry pot which is fairly strong for handling and ready to add a glaze.

The second firing is the 'glaze' or 'glost' firing. The glaze which is applied to the bisque fired pots dries on the surface as a hard powder. The glost firing melts the glaze onto the surface of the pot and transforms the hard powder into a kind of glass we call glaze.

GLAZE

Glaze can be a fairly complicated subject, one which many potters avoid by buying ready-made glazes from potter's suppliers. Many of the ingredients used to make glazes are basically finely ground-up rocks of various types, but there are other rarer and more valuable ingredients too, especially in earthenware glazes. Some ingredients used in glazes are poisonous.



Front loading electric kiln.

Colouring of glazes is achieved in various ways, but primarily by adding various metal oxides either in raw form or as 'fritted' compounds called 'stains' (this is where ingredients are melted together to form a glass in a crucible then rapidly cooled and finely ground). The commonest metal oxides used for colouring are cobalt for strong blues, copper for green, and iron for yellow or brown etc. (however under special circumstances many more colours can be achieved from the same oxides and many others).

In the same way that clays have different firing temperatures, glazes are also designed for different temperatures. If they are fired too hot they may flow off the pot onto the special shelves ('kiln furniture') used in the kiln – and destroy the shelves in the process.



The General Pottery Classes will be provided with a choice of glazes which are lead-free and 'food safe', as well as the opportunity to use some raw oxides for more effects / colours. I make my own glazes for my own work, which use fritted-lead as an ingredient and are therefore not 'food safe' and not available to the General Pottery Classes.



Clay storage bins (on dollies for easy moving around).

WORKING WITH CLAY

The clay in the studio is stored in plastic bags which are in turn stored inside lidded plastic bins. The bins are all different colours and labeled to avoid any confusion. The clay is stored this way to stop it drying out or getting mixed up with different clays. Therefore when you take clay from the bag or bin you are expected to:

- Always close the clay bag after you have taken clay from it.
- Only take as much clay as you need. You can always come back for more, but if you take too much it may dry out before you use it.
- Clay is ALWAYS removed from the bag of clay by cutting through with a clay cutting wire called a 'cheese wire'. DON'T tear lumps off as this creates rough surfaces that dry out

faster and are also more likely to cause trapped air when clay is returned to the bag.

- DON'T put clay that has dried out too far, back into the clay bag – check with me if in doubt.
- Always put clay back in the correct bag – ask if in any doubt.
- Always check and be ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN that you do not accidentally put contaminated clay back into the bag – including 'lost' tools.

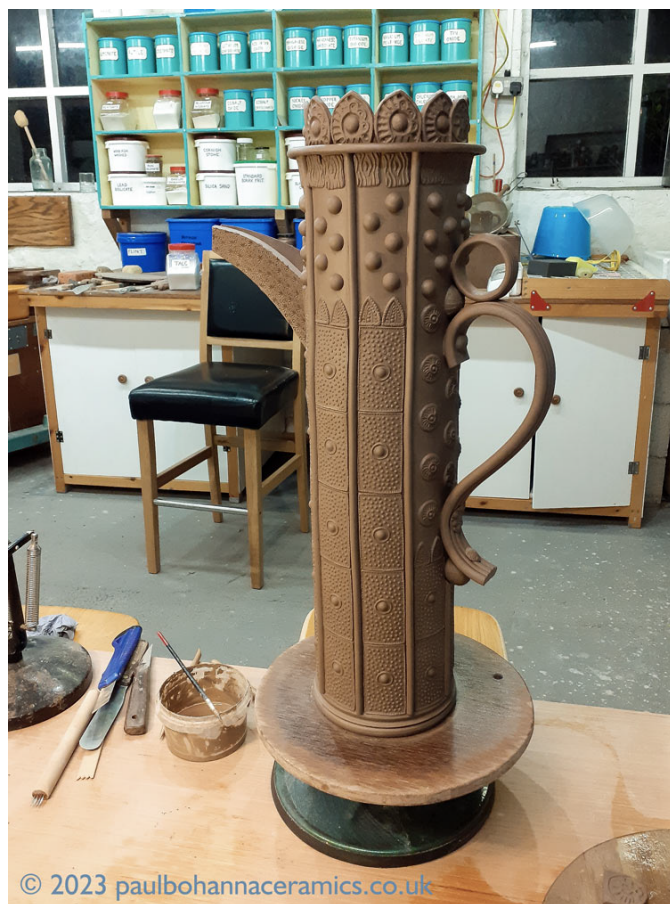


Teapot on bat. Sweeney Pottery. Paul Bohanna.

It is good working practice to use a 'bat' to keep your work on. A 'bat' is a small round or square piece of wood, usually plywood. The bat means you can move a delicate pot around without handling it. Bats are also used on the potter's wheel (usually with mounting pin holes) to make removal of soft pots from the wheel easier. The studio has plenty of bats available.

'Whirlers', or banding wheels, are manually rotated wheels (a bit like cake stands) that you place your pot on (on a bat) so that you can rotate your work whilst working on it.

When making pots you will soon find the need to stick bits of clay together. They can just be squished together, but this is usually bad practice and may lead to bits falling off or cracking later when the pot dries or is fired. Luckily there is an excellent glue for clay called 'slip', which is simply watered down clay, so that it is a thick liquid. Slip is used between pieces of clay to be joined (brushed on or dabbed on with fingers etc). For a really strong join it is also recommended that each surface to be joined is gently 'scored' (cross hatched) with a potter's needle or a potter's knife, before adding the slip. For example handles are usually attached in this way.



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Large jug on bat and banding wheel (whirler), with slip for joining. Paul Bohanna.

Whilst on the subject of joining bits of clay, be aware also that adding thin pieces to thick pieces can also cause problems because of the different rates of shrinkage as they dry (thicker clay dries more slowly), similarly, joining pieces of clay which are in different states of hardness (dryness) will lead to cracking and other problems (see the note about clay shrinking above).

One of the ways potters control the drying time of clay or pots we are working on, is to spray them lightly with a water mist at regular intervals (don't overdo it though, or you'll end up with a puddle of slip).

A tip for joining together complex pots with several parts, is to 'anneal' them. Not in the sense of letting the temperature stabilise, but by storing the pieces together in a stable environment (such as wrapping together in plastic or putting overnight in a 'damp cupboard'). This allows all the parts to reach the same moisture level so that they have the same shrinkage rate when they are joined and left to dry.

When a pot is unfinished and you want to put it away to be worked on later (such as your next class) then it is usual to give the work a spray with water and gently wrap it in plastic or put it inside a covering plastic bag. The other method is to put them (ideally also wrapped) inside a 'damp cupboard'. There are two damp cupboards in the studio, both are re-purposed fridge freezers (which work very well). One is for classes use (the yellow freezer) and one is for my sole use (the white freezer). However a place in the damp cupboard is not necessary if your pots are well wrapped.

Whilst working with clay you will usually have lots of small bits of clay which may have been trimmed off your pot etc. and it is best to squish these back into your lump of working clay straight away to stop them drying out.

If you drop clay onto the floor DON'T USE IT. Depending on the size of the piece it may be possible to wire cut away the surface which touched the floor, but any surface which hit the floor must be considered as contaminated (the tiniest fleck of dust may be a grain of metal oxide which is enough to cause a blemish to appear on a pot that took many hours to make). The clay becomes non-reclaimable (please don't put it in the rubbish bin or back in the clay bag, let me know if you drop clay).

MAKING A POT. Type 1: Thumb Pot (or 'Pinch' pot).

Probably the simplest pot to make is a 'thumb pot'. Although it is a very simple method, it has still been made for thousands of years, and often to create astonishing pots.

1] Form a small ball of clay in you hands, maybe a tennis ball size or smaller.

2] Holding the ball in the palm of one hand, use the thumb of the other hand to gently start pushing in towards the centre of the ball.

3] At the same time as pushing your thumb downwards, you rotate the ball whilst all the time using your fingers to gently squeeze against the clay. You effectively squeeze the clay between thumb and fingers whilst rotating the ball of clay.

4] The walls will gradually become thinner. Try and be aware of how thick the base of your pot is and try and keep the thickness of the wall similar to the thickness of the base and keep them all even thickness. You decide how thin you want the walls.



Pots by Duncan, Kieran, Lara and Sam made in classes

5] You could alter your thumb-pot in many ways. Maybe shape the rim, or add other pieces to your pot, or decorate the surface with indented tools and impressed patterns (shells?), maybe add a base ring (called a 'foot ring').

6] The surface could also be smoothed out and even polished (often done by rubbing the back of a shiny spoon on the clay when it is 'leather hard') instead of being glazed later.

MAKING A POT. Type 2: Coil Pot.

Coil pots also have a very long heritage, going back thousands of years. They may have originated by being inspired by the coiled form of woven reed baskets.

1] The idea is very simple. A flat base is formed by pressing a piece of clay into flat shape (by hand or with tools).



2] Clay is rolled by hand into long round-section 'coils' (or made using a coiling hoop tool or an extruder). Thin coils will make thin walled pots and thicker coils for thicker or bigger pots.

3] The coils are attached to the base by gently pushing the coil down onto the base edge and working around (a 'whirler' is ideal for making coil pots). Remember to score and slip the base and the coil before joining them.

4] Once the coil has gone all the way around, make sure you score and slip the coils before continuing to add coils on top of coils. If the coils are very soft and you make sure you do number 6 (below) thoroughly, then you might need to use less scoring and slip – or possibly even none, but I would recommend scoring and slipping to be certain.

5] The pot will get higher as more coils are added. The shape can also be made to vary by becoming wider or narrower or changing shape. At a certain point the wall may feel too soft to add more, which is the perfect point to do the next bit.

6] Once a few coils have been put in place, you can use a modelling tool (or pointy stick) and work the coils into each other.

7] Once the coils have been worked together on the outside then do the same on the inside.

8] Once the coils have been 'properly' mashed together then they can be worked on and given a more decorated or smoothed finished surface later (just remember to spray water mist if the pot starts to dry before you finish working the surface). By now you may find your upper coils have dried a little so that they are less soft and ready for you to add more coils... and so on.

9] Once the coiling is finished you can consider how to finish the pot. Maybe add bits such as handles, ornate rims, engraved or impressed surface decoration or whatever takes your fancy.

MAKING A POT. Type 3: Slab Pot.

Slab pots, as by now you may have guessed, have also been around for thousands of years. They have been found in many diverse places, including inside ancient Egyptian tombs.

1] The slab pot is built using 'slabs' of clay. By slab we mean a flat sheet of clay.

2] A slab may be any thickness, depending upon the intended use and pot size. Generally a slab will be between 4mm to 8mm thick when making average size pots.

3] Slabs can be made by pressing out a sheet of clay by hand, or by using two sticks of equal thickness - one each side of your clay as guides for a rolling pin to roll the slab to a fixed thickness, or a slab-roller can be used. In all cases it is ESSENTIAL to roll slabs out on sheets of heavy cotton fabric (otherwise they will stick to the table and be extremely hard to lift or move).

4] The slab-roller is more suited to rolling larger slabs (the studio slab-roller is a very wide model designed for making very large slabs). There is also a comprehensive range of slab rolling stick guides in the studio for hand rolling slabs of most sizes, and plenty of slab cloths.

5] The slab could be used as a single slab which is wrapped around a form (such as a tube or bottle) and a slab base added. Slab lids are easy to make too.

6] Slabs can also be draped into, or over, moulds (you can use an existing shape such as a bowl and cover it with cling-film before then slumping a slab into it or draping it over it – there are countless objects which can be used as moulds in this way – feel free to bring your own 'mould' to the classes).

7] Several slabs can be joined together to form limitless shapes. A simple design would be a square pot with a base.

8] All joins must be made with scoring and slip. Once slipped together the joins can be worked smooth with modelling tools or 'kidneys' (kidney shaped tools that have a variety of smoothing and scraping uses and come in flexible and stiff rubber as well as flat steel).

8] Slab pots can provide good flat surfaces for decoration. You might even impress patterns into slabs before using them to make pots.



Slab made box dish. By Kieran.



Slab dish, mould formed. Paul Bohanna.

MAKING A POT. Type 4: Throwing a Pot on the Wheel.

Modern variable-speed electric potter's wheels have made learning to throw on the wheel much easier. But it is still far from easy. Most potters take years to learn to throw a good pot. The basics can be grasped in a few hours but it really must be appreciated that you may not be able to throw a beautiful vase on your first attempt. If you make a pot at all then you have done well.



Bowl. Wheel-thrown. By Lara.

1] Before even getting to the wheel you must prepare your clay. You will need an apron too as well as a small water bowl and any other tools you'll need all prepared in place.

2] To throw successfully your clay needs to be the same consistency throughout and free of air bubbles. This is achieved by 'wedging' the clay. A process a bit like kneading dough except that the idea is to mix the clay whilst eliminating air pockets. It probably needs to be demonstrated rather than described. I strongly recommend that you search Youtube for videos on wedging clay (and tips on throwing too).

3] Once your clay is wedged it is cut into pieces big enough to make a pot with. Don't begin by trying to make anything large. A lump the size of an orange or small grapefruit is a good place to start. Make a few lumps and shape them in your hands until they are cone shaped with a rounded bottom (like a space rocket re-entry module with the parachutes).

4] A bat which fits the wheel is placed onto the wheel head firmly. If the bat is very dry then a very slight water mist – but don't get it too wet – is sprayed and wiped across the board. This helps your clay to stick to the bat.

5] Now your lump of clay is thrown directly down into the centre of the bat (round bottom first) in a controlled but firm motion.

6] Make sure the wheel is switched on. Press your foot down gently on the pedal to rotate the wheel head (not too fast). You should see immediately how good (or not) your aim was when you threw the clay down. If it's wildly off centre then you may try nudging it into the centre with gentle thumps or trying again. If you nudged it then make sure you also push down or slap it from above to make sure it's really stuck down. Your clay may fly off the bat later if you don't do this.



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IMPORTANT NOTE: Never take your foot off the pedal too quickly, instead remove it carefully, otherwise you can upset delicate settings in the wheel stop / start controls and also sudden stops can distort your pot.

7] When you are ready to start, you need to wet your hands from your bowl of water and sprinkle a small amount of water over your lump of clay. This is for lubrication. As you try to throw you will notice if your hands are sliding easily over the rotating clay or instead dragging it, and you should add a little more water to your hands or the pot each time the friction and dragging can be felt. Try not to use too much water or you'll end up with a very soft mushy lump of clay and slip.

8] Use the rim of the wheel basin to steady your arms, maybe tuck your elbows into your body to brace them. The idea now is to place both hands on the clay whilst spinning the wheel fairly quickly (but not top speed). The heel of the right hand pushes against the clay. The other hand acts to steady the right hand, maybe by locking thumbs (but don't push against the clay with both hands at the same time).

9] You are trying to centre the clay so that it rotates smoothly on the bat without any wobble. It is a battle of wills (and the clay will win at least the first round). The clay will bobble your hand backwards and forwards unless you can hold your hand palm heel steady against the clay.

10] There are many ways to centre a lump of clay and again I recommend viewing videos on Youtube for some great demonstrations and suggestions. The important thing to know is that you cannot even start to try and throw a pot until that piece of clay gives in to your will and becomes centred. Any tiny deviation from centre when you start, will very quickly grow into a wobble if you try to throw a pot. I will be able to show you how I do it, but seeing and then doing are very different things.

This guide is not the place to go into further depth on throwing, but hopefully by pointing out what is needed to get started you will take some time to read or view other sources in preparation (there are excellent videos on Youtube). Once you get your clay centred, you will find the process of actually throwing a pot is a process of practice and development and possibly a little easier than centring. Obviously I will help and demonstrate in classes as needed, including how you go from centring to throwing and finishing a pot.



Wheel-thrown parts drying a little before turning and assembling into bigger pots.

GLAZING A POT

Once your pot(s) have been thoroughly dried and bisque fired then they will be ready for a glaze. Before applying a glaze you have the option of painting onto the surface with various under-glaze effects. These may be simple metal oxides, mixed with a little water, painted or dabbed very thinly onto the pot, or commercial glaze colours painted directly onto the pot which may be a glaze in themselves or are then covered over with another glaze (typically a clear glaze). Alternatively you might use a single coloured glaze for the whole pot. I will try and discuss options in the classes.

Glazes are usually applied to pots by one or more of the following methods:

- Dipping the pot into a large tub of liquid glaze.
- Pouring the glaze over the pot.
- Painting the glaze directly onto the pot.
- Spraying the glaze onto the pot.

Dipping requires very large quantities of glaze to make sure the dipping tub is big enough. It tends to be used in pottery factories or potteries that bulk produce pots in a very limited range of glazes.

Pouring can be a very effective glazing method, and also useful if using more than one glaze.

Painting glaze can be tricky because the bisque-ware literally sucks it off your brush and dries it very fast. This can be overcome in several ways, including adding additives to the glaze or using commercially produced brush-on glazes. I will supply a small range of these but you are free to speak with me about buying your own to use if you want to use something specific (I'll need to check if it is suited to my firing range and kiln atmosphere).



Loving cup with glaze in spray booth. Paul Bohanna.

Spraying is a great way to glaze a pot which is particularly useful for larger or very complicated pots. However a lot of glaze is wasted because it misses the pot when sprayed. Glaze spraying is also a skilled process and it can be very difficult to know when too little or too much glaze has been applied. Spraying must be done whilst wearing a suitable facemask, and as these are 'personal' items, for hygiene reasons you must provide your own facemask if you want to use the spray booth.

Ceramics is a truly vast subject that is impossible to cover fully here, but hopefully this little guide has given you a useful start.

Now it's time for the inevitable rules.

WORKSHOP RULES, GUIDLINES, INFORMATION & TERMS.

- 1.** By signing up for and joining a General Pottery Class or Special Workshop, you are agreeing to abide by the following rules and terms and conditions.
- 2.** You enter the pottery workshop (The Sweeney Pottery) entirely at your own risk. I do not accept any liability whatsoever for any harm that may occur to you, or damage to your possessions that occurs, during your use of the pottery and its facilities, or whilst on the premises surrounding the pottery workshop.
- 3.** If you damage any equipment in the workshop through your negligence then you become liable for the cost of fixing or replacing it. I don't expect this to ever be necessary as most people can be relied upon to not wilfully ignore instructions. But be aware that I will enforce this if you make it necessary, and pottery equipment can be very costly. If in any doubt about using anything in the workshop please ask for help.
- 4.** All classes are open to anybody aged 16 or over only. If you have special needs or use a wheelchair etc. then please check with me before booking a place to make sure my workshop space is suitable. There are no steps into the workshop. If you need a helper to attend with you then they must also pay for a place in the General Pottery Classes or Special Workshops.
- 5.** A basic toilet facility will be available if needed (in my home next to the workshop), but this is not wheelchair accessible.
- 6.** Clay is messy, so wear old clothes or an apron. This applies especially to throwing on the wheel. Plastic aprons are much better than natural fibres because they are waterproof and don't create dust. Avoid long sleeves if possible.
- 7.** Tie back long loose hair. Hair can be a real pain to get out of clay and you don't want to get caught in any machines, or be wiping hair away from you face with clay covered hands.
- 8.** I recommend that if possible you remove jewellery from your hands because rings can make it harder to work with the clay, they may also get lost in clay. Again this is especially important if throwing on the wheel. Be aware also that clay can damage or abrade your jewellery.
- 9.** Eating and drinking is NOT allowed inside the pottery workshop because of the risk of poisoning. Some of the materials used for making pots can be poisonous. Some glaze ingredients are very toxic and must be handled with proper care (dust masks and plastic or rubber gloves). I will give guidance on this when needed, but you will not normally come into contact with these during General Pottery Classes. The workshop is a safe environment if basic rules are followed.
- 10.** Please read the 'WORKING WITH CLAY' section above to understand the procedures for taking from and returning clay to the clay bags and clay bins.
- 11.** Clay is a very safe substance, especially when it is wet. However clay dust is hazardous because it contains silica. The amount of silica dust that you will be exposed to will be so small that it is of no consequence (certainly much less than a day at the beach). However I am at risk because of my much longer continuous exposure as a working potter. Therefore clay is never swept but is instead wiped and mopped with wet sponges or mops and every attempt is made to avoid creating clay dust.

(Washing your tools, bats and work places is part of this strategy). Thank you for considering my health.

- 12.** Always wash your tools and any equipment that you have used in the 15 minutes allocated to this at the end of each session.
- 13.** Try not to wash clay down the sink. Waste (uncontaminated) clay (such as dried lumps or slip from the wheel etc.) can be added to the reclaim bucket so that it can be re-processed and used again.
- 14.** The sink has a plastic washing-up basin inside, full of (usually) mucky water. This is used to do initial cleaning of hands and tools so that as much clay as possible settles in the washing-up basin, rather than going down the sink. Only then is clean water from the tap used, sparingly please, to rinse everything clean after the first wash in the basin. The aim is to avoid blocking drains and to conserve water use as much as possible.
- 15.** Hands are dried with disposable paper hand towels for hygiene reasons and also because cloth towels create dust.
- 16.** There is a draining board for drying bats etc. but please dry small tools with the paper towels and return all small tools to the places they came from if they are not your own personal tools – it is also a good idea to put your name or initials on your own tools.
- 17.** ALWAYS put your name or initials on your work (usually by inscribing under the base with a pointy tool or needle). There are a lot of people using the studio and it is easy to lose track of who made what.
- 18.** Please be aware that there is currently nowhere in the studio to hang coats etc. so please leave them in cars if possible. I am looking into another solution for this (such as a small mobile clothes rail).
- 19.** Parking space is very limited outside the pottery but if we all park tidily and close together then there is just enough space using the yard in front as well as outside the yard on the small grass areas. My neighbours are farmers and very reasonable people, but may need access through the field gates or up the lane – so be prepared to move your car if asked or make sure the field gates or lane are not blocked when you park. If you can share a car or get dropped off or cycle then even better and extra brownie points.
- 20.** Please DO NOT touch the kiln. Do not touch the kiln controller. Do not touch the kiln furniture (shelves and props). Unless you are part of a Special Workshop on kiln technology then there should be no reason for you to ever touch the kiln. The kiln is a 17kw electric heater hooked up to a 3phase supply – it is both delicate and dangerous, it may get hot enough to burn you if touched even on the outside. And kiln furniture is strong but extremely fragile and costly to replace. I understand your curiosity and will be happy to give a 'tour' of the kiln.
- 21.** DON'T touch other people's work. This is a basic and fundamental rule of all potteries everywhere. If you touch (even a gentle careful prod) you have no idea of the current state of the work and could easily damage it. You will not be popular if you damage someone else's work, to put it mildly. So, again, DON'T touch!

- 22.** There are very obvious things like not throwing clay or tools or running in the workshop, that I'm sure I really don't even need to mention but just in case...
- 23.** Please ask before using any machine or tool that you have not used before or not been given permission or training to use. This is for everybody's safety as well as to protect equipment from damage.
- 24.** Sometimes you may have unfinished work at the end of your block of classes. If you are unable to book another block of classes then I will try and arrange a time when you can come into the studio to finish your work if you wish. Extra sessions are charged at £10 per hour (or part of an hour) and are by individual arrangement with myself only – you cannot just turn up at the studio on the off chance.
- 25.** All fired work must be paid for before being collected. (See the prices on my website 'Pottery Classes' page).
- 26.** All fired work **MUST** be paid for even if you are unhappy with the results or don't want to keep it for any reason. I am hoping that I can trust people so that I don't need to impose a pre-payment deposit system. It costs money to fire my kiln (with today's electricity prices it is a significant cost) and of course materials (clay and glaze etc.) are also costly. I try and charge a fair amount that reflects the actual cost, therefore if you don't pay for your work then I make a loss, and as a self-employed artist losses are not easy to absorb.
- 27.** Work that is damaged during firing must still be paid for. Once inside a kiln it is impossible to guarantee what the effect of 1120°C will be on any work. All potters are forced to accept this risk and they learn from any unexpected results. My kiln is modern and high quality. It is precisely electronically controlled and I use firing programs that are slow and as gentle as possible on the pots inside. But the risk remains. The commonest reason for failures in pots is faulty workmanship, human errors in materials choices and low quality clays (which I don't use). Treat faults as lessons and you will improve.
- 28.** Don't touch any electrical switches with wet hands.
- 29.** Please don't play any amplified music in the workshop. There is a CD player or Radio 3 in the workshop (but these will only be played if EVERYBODY agrees – take note that I absolutely cannot and will not listen to radio with adverts).
- 30.** DO NOT take any photos in the workshop unless you have been given explicit permission to do so. Taking photos of your own work is fine, but please don't take photos of my work or ask to do so as I will refuse. Making videos of the classes is NOT permitted. If this is a problem then please discuss it with me (I have good reasons).
- 31.** Contaminated clay must also be paid for. 'Contaminated' refers to any clay which has been on the floor, or where different clays have been mixed, or where coloured slips or glazes or other ceramic materials have been mixed with or added to the standard clay for any reason and not used in your pots. The charge is very low (see my web site page 'Pottery Classes' for prices and details).

32. I reserve the right to cancel any workshop at any time. Obviously I would never do this except under extraordinary circumstances, in which case I would refund unused classes or try and arrange to reschedule.
33. I reserve the right to ask somebody to leave the workshop at any time. I also reserve the right to refuse to accept a person onto a course of classes or any Special Workshop. Obviously you'd have to do something really bad to annoy me that much!
34. Please respect the starting and end times of your classes. The last 15 minutes is set aside for clearing up, cleaning tools and workspaces, as well as cleaning any equipment you have used.
35. And finally, make sure you enjoy yourself. Pottery is seriously good for the soul. By all means invite me to your groovy parties or take me to the pub afterwards. I surely deserve it!



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