



The Midlands Regional Branch Of The British Polymer Clay Guild

Newsletter March 2010

Hi Everyone - I am very pleased to report that we had an excellent Open day at The Conservatory on Saturday 6th February 2010. Twenty two members made it, with the prize for the person having to travel the most distance going to new member Sheila Smith from Skipton in Yorkshire. Well done, Sheila, Please read Sheila's first hand report of her experience with us.

We can never please all of the people all of the time and so had many apologies from Midlands Regional members that were unable to attend. Penny Vingoe discussed the new web site with us and was able to answer many queries. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Coby Schrijver for using her own computer, dongle and mobile phone to illustrate Penny's explanations. Very generous of you Coby.

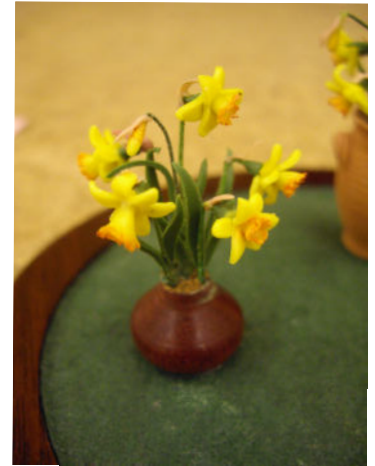
Penny also brought some supplies for sale which many people found helpful for boosting stock. Allan Marshall brought the video/DVD library now with additional titles. He gave us details on how the new system will run and members took advantage of this opportunity.

Angela Smith, the new membership secretary, was able to let everyone know exactly where we stand with our membership and how we renew if it has expired.

Several members brought along examples of their work for our display. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Rachel Warren for taking photographs for me and I am sorry that, at present, the size of the photo. files prohibits their inclusion in this report. If anyone would like these photos. they can be emailed individually on request.

I was very pleased to announce the "miniaturists" and "jewellers" programme for 2010. Everyone present had the first opportunity for booking the workshops.

A two hour lunch break gave us just enough time to recover from lunch and also have a look around the excellent variety of craft units on the farm site before afternoon demos and practical sessions with Pat Goodall McIntosh, Bonnie MCGough, Angela Smith and Rachel Warren. My sincere thanks to them all for finishing our day having fun playing with clay and learning lots too.



Pic. Daffodils by Ann Griffin



We meet again on Sunday 14th March with workshops for miniaturists and jewellers so please check the programme to see whether you can join us then or later in the year.

For further information or booking forms, please contact me :- Gaynor Fryer

Email - gaynor.fryer@talktalk.net

Phone - 01543 264997

Midland Region 6th February Meeting – from Sheila Smith, a new member.

Having read the Midlands Group own page on this site, I plucked up courage to e-mail Gaynor Fryer the group organiser. I have been involved with various groups over the years and found it can be quite difficult to join an established one; it was a nice surprise, therefore, to receive Gaynor's very warm and friendly reply first thing the next morning. With Gaynor's encouragement and all the information I needed about what to take, the lunch arrangements (bring your own sandwiches, or a meal in the adjoining cafe) and the directions I needed, I felt that it would be nice to visit this group and see the polymer clay that would be on show. I have been making PC jewellery for over a year now but had not met anyone else who had.

With some apprehension we (my other half and I) left home at 7am from Yorkshire, for the two and a half hour drive to Lichfield. Can you tell that I was desperate to meet other clayers and see their work? As Geoff and I walked into the room a lady near the door instantly welcomed us and offered us a coffee. Coffee in hand we met Gaynor, again with a very warm welcome. As Geoff went to leave, she assured him that he would be most welcome to stay reading the newspaper and relaxing in the lounge area at the end of the room. I chatted to several girls, some new to the group and some very experienced clayers, it was so nice to be able to share our interest, it was one of the things that I was most looking forward to. There was much to see with displays of lovely jewellery, beautifully made in wonderful colours. Dragons and animals and sweet little girls all dressed up. And then there was the miniaturists: a table with the most amazing tiny, tiny plates of food, and a beautiful dresser made by Allan; the workmanship was incredible.

The AGM was short but very interesting with much information on how the web site is now set up and updates on the membership arrangements. Allan, who organises the Video/DVD library gave an up date and was very helpful when I borrowed 2 of the DVDs. The coming years programme was also announced.

The afternoon was filled with mini workshops and demonstrations, making a pineapple, for the miniaturists, and in the jewellery section with a mini workshop by Angela on Makume Gane and then on the Skinner blend technique, she made it all look very easy. Bonnie was mean while doing a mini workshop on her delightful little girls, and Rachel taught us how to do the wire work needed to make a pair of earrings, and how to do those fiddly wire wraps which look so good on pendants and earrings. My attempts were not very even but Rachel assured me I will improve with practise.

Penny from ClayAround.com had brought lots of lovely clay and bits and bobs with her, it was so nice to be able to see the real colours and to put shades together in my hand before buying, and I love my new 'Texture maker'. Thank you Penny.

Several more cups of coffee were drunk and a great deal of chatting went on before the end of the afternoon and people started heading for home, many from quite long distances like myself.

I can now understand why Gaynor says if you come from Scotland, Cornwall, or anywhere in between they will welcome you as a Midlander to their meetings.

I can say without a doubt that the Midlands Group and Gaynor kept her word when she said (in her first e-mail to me) "you will be so very welcome". I was and so I signed up for several classes.

Thank you all for a lovely day.

Sheila (a Midlander)