

The Twisted Shard a multi-sensory brick design

After reading an article in the Daily Echo about a local artist exhibiting at City College Southampton, Bursledon Brickworks Museum commissioned Joe Taylor to create a brick art design entitled 'A Twisted Shard'. Museum staffs discussed the design with their retired brick makers and were impressed with the artistic merit and technical aspect of the design. They decided that the location should be accessible to all visitors to the museum, taking pride of place in their courtyard, prominently standing adjacent to the play area. The brick museum were keen to promote inclusivity, inviting partially sighted, blind and disabled visitors to the museum to learn about the history behind the brick making industry. Part of this project involved inviting children from various schools and adults from the community with visually impaired units, to take part in workshops, firing their own multi-sensory bricks, to be integrated into the design. Recognisable by shapes and words imprinted into the bricks, visitors will be able to take textural rubbings and allow participants to feel and experience the natural material.



In support of these educational values MBH PLC worked in partnership with Joe Taylor and the Museum, offering 1000 bricks, raw clay to fire the special bricks from its Romsey factory and a generous donation to cover other material costs.



Digging and pugging clay

A handful of workshops took place to mould the bricks during the first few months of 2015, involving participation from students at City College's bricklaying course alongside special education adult groups. The bricklaying students incorporated digging the foundations of the sculpture, moulding their own personalised bricks and a museum tour into an educational day trip. Further workshops took place including visually impaired school children making braille bricks for the sensory design. A time capsule will be built and incorporated into the design featuring information about the local area and the Museum, whilst revealing the creators and supporters of the Twisted Shard. The grand unveiling is due to take place in July when Bursledon Museum will host a 'celebration of brick day' where over 100 participants and visitors who gave their creative input, can experience the finished artwork. Joe Taylor stated, "The process took one month for the bricks to dry, allowing them to then be fired so that they would stand the test of time, before being used on site for the construction to begin. The sessions were a success with learners particularly enjoying its educational value and the chance to get their hands dirty, digging and pugging clay."

Frank Hanna, Group Commercial Director at MBH PLC said, "It has been a pleasure for us to work with Joe and the Museum on this project, delivering an exciting and rewarding learning environment, resulting in a multi-sensory sculpture that future museum visitors can experience. These workshops incorporated historical knowledge, practical skills and creative educational experiences for the local community and we hope this innovative and inclusive approach to learning can be practised across the country."



Family Mosaic group workshop, throwing clay