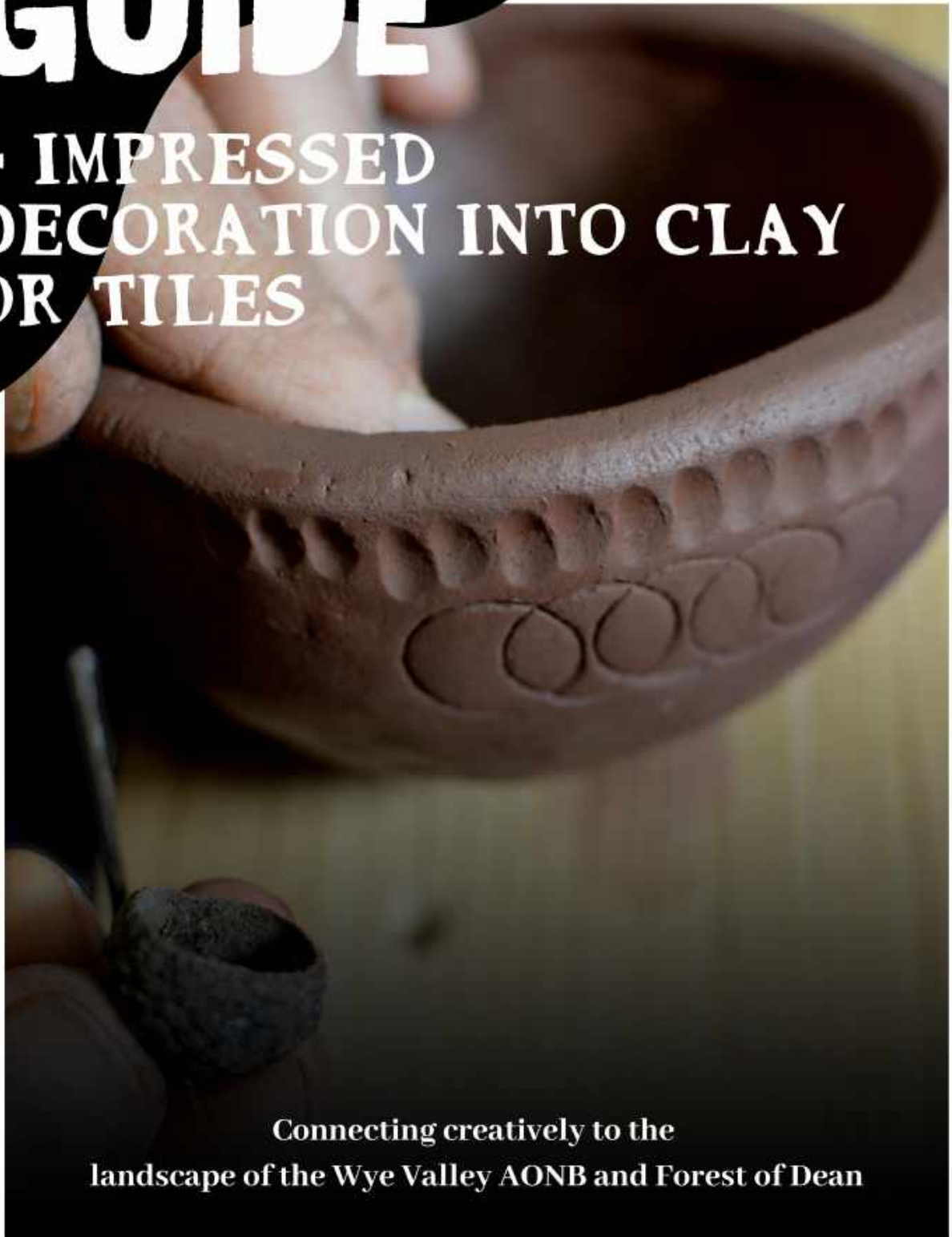


ACTIVITY GUIDE

- IMPRESSED
DECORATION INTO CLAY
OR TILES



Connecting creatively to the
landscape of the Wye Valley AONB and Forest of Dean

IMPRESSED DECORATION INTO CLAY OR TILES



Prehistoric people used the natural landscape around them to produce highly decorative pottery. They would use, pebbles, sticks, acorns, bones to gently impress (stamp) into the surface of the clay along with their fingers and finger nails to make an attractive repeat pattern. This effect can easily be achieved using air dry clay formed into simple thumb/pinch pots or flat rolled out tiles.

Activity rating

Suitable for most people. Some participants may be able to form a pinch pot whilst others may benefit from rolling out a small flat section of clay.

Preparation time

Preparing the table with the resources should take 10 minutes but some of the objects will need to be sourced beforehand. This could be partly done as a group task where participants explore the garden looking for suitable objects to 'stamp' or impress into the clay.

Time required for activity

20 – 60 minutes.

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Shopping list

- o Air dry clay – from most art/craft shops or online.
- o Natural objects such as pebbles, stones, pine cones, small animal bones, seed pods like acorns, small sticks. Be imaginative and explore what marks different objects and participants own fingers make upon a small test piece.
- o Protective table cloth.
- o Rolling pin.
- o Blunt knife to cut tile shapes.

Step by step instructions

1. Decide if you would like a small pot or a flat tile.
2. A pinch pot is quite easy to make. Place a small ball of clay the size of a tangerine into the palm of your hand and with the other hand press your thumb into the middle to create an indent. Now slowly turn the ball of clay around clockwise, whilst slightly squeezing what will be the outside of the pot. Continue this for a couple of minutes, until the outsides are much thinner, and it has formed a vessel like structure.
3. The tile format is easiest and requires a piece of clay to be rolled to about 1cm thick with a rolling pin. Aim to make tiles approx. 15cm square. The edges can be cut straight using the knife.
4. This is the fun part where you can experiment with the different objects by gently pressing them into the surface of the clay. Don't push so hard that it goes straight through, but do explore what pressure works best for each item. Repeat patterns create a strong visual design.

Top tips!

- Once dry, it is possible to paint over the air dry clay with a dilute wash of paint. Take a dark colour and loosely brush the paint over your design and then wipe it off again. The paint should collect in the recessed/stamped areas enhancing the impressed designs.
- Leftovers from the natural hanging decoration could be used to make the impressions.