



VOLUNTEER APPLICATION PACK

MIDDLEPORT POTTERY & HARPER STREET



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HELLO

Thank you for enquiring about becoming a volunteer with Re-Form Heritage. The role of the volunteer is essential to the sustainable future and ongoing success of Middleport Pottery and Harper Street.

We value our volunteers without whose freely given time and effort we could not operate as effectively and efficiently. Volunteers help to enhance and enrich our visitors experience and provide valuable support for the whole site.

Re-Form Heritage is committed to providing equality of opportunity to all persons and believe that volunteers should reflect the

diversity of communities they volunteer in and have the right to volunteer in an environment which is free from discrimination.

We hope that the enclosed information is both useful and informative. If you would like the opportunity to volunteer with us simply complete the enclosed application form and return it to us.

If you have any further questions, you can contact us on **01782 499766** or by emailing info@re-form.org

Once your application has been received we will be in touch with you soon to discuss your application.

Thank you.



ABOUT RE-FORM HERITAGE

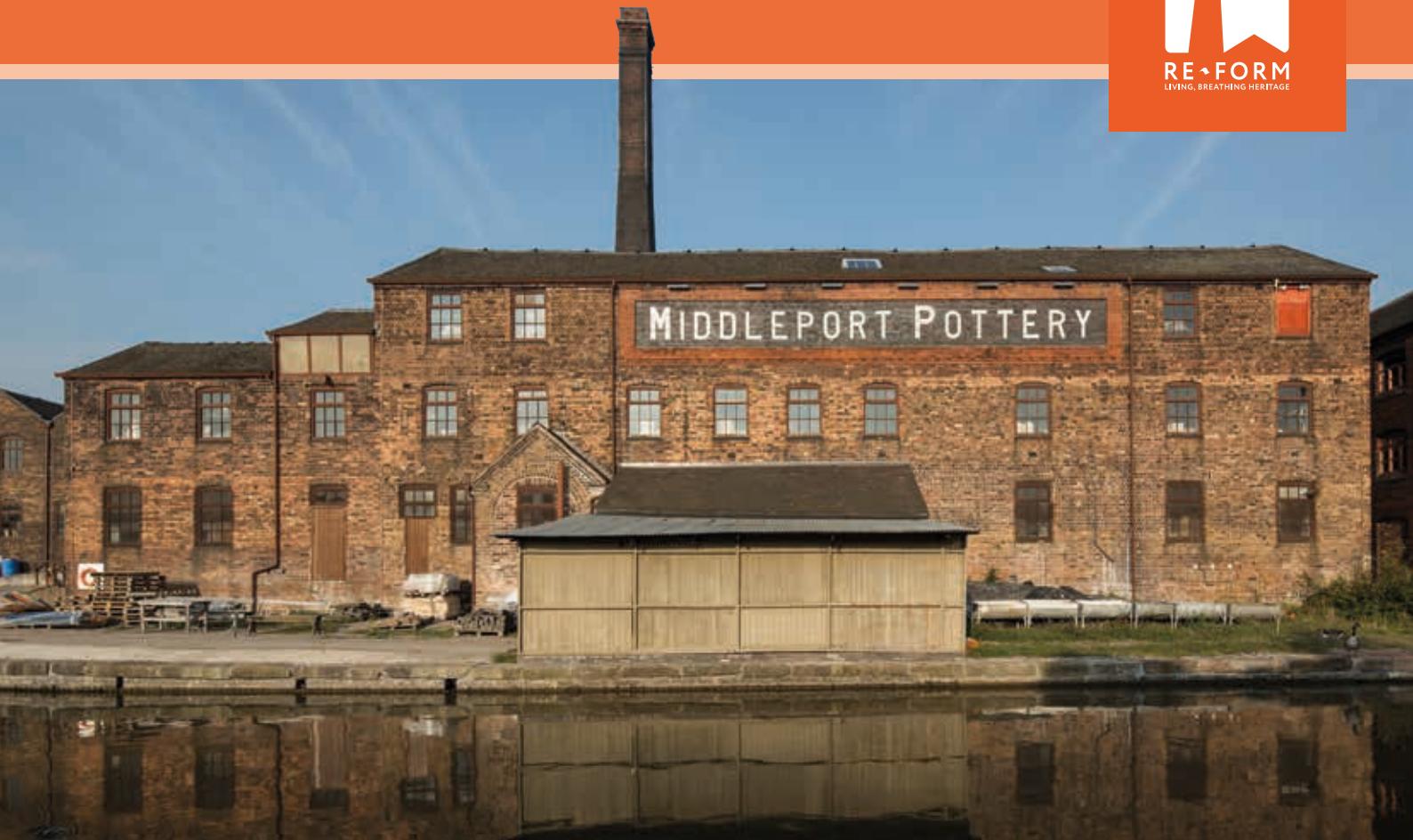
Re-Form Heritage is a registered charity which specialises in revitalising communities through the regeneration of their historic buildings. We restore heritage buildings at risk of decay and demolition where the resurgence of an existing use, or the introduction of a new use, will have beneficial effect on the local community.

Re-Form Heritage owns and manages Middleport Pottery in Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent. Middleport Pottery was built by Burgess and Leigh in the late nineteenth century and is the home of Burleigh pottery. It is the oldest working pottery in continuous production in the United Kingdom. The pottery was acquired by the charity in 2011 through a mixture of public and private funding and was fully restored and opened to the public in 2014.

The business developed by Re-Form Heritage ensures the long-term sustainability of the site, which, in addition to the production of the Burleigh pottery range, encompasses heritage and craft operations, including a visitor centre, Tea Room, and other activities. Middleport Pottery is a model for future regeneration and preservation projects, having a significant and beneficial impact on the local community. A recent addition to the charity is Harper Street. The Harper Street: Engagement in Heritage project is

the renovation of eleven Victorian terraced houses adjacent to Middleport Pottery. The project will see the transformation of these original workers' houses into a new heritage attraction, studio & workshop space, publicly accessible archive and community centre for Middleport's residents. The project significantly grows Middleport Pottery and Burslem's reputation as a major visitor heritage destination.

Re-Form Heritage also owns and manages the Grade I listed building, the Old Duchy Palace in Lostwithiel, Cornwall. Over 700 years old, it once formed part of a much larger complex central to the management of the Duchy of Cornwall and the country's tin industry. Following a sensitive restoration, the building was opened by their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall. Re-Form Heritage's project partner, the Cornwall Buildings Preservation Trust, oversees the day-to-day operation of the building, which houses an independent business.



MIDDLEPORT POTTERY A SHORT HISTORY

In 1851 Messrs Hulme and Booth established an earthenware business at the Central Pottery in the heart of Burslem. In 1862 William Leigh and Frederick Rathbone Burgess took over Central Pottery calling their new business partnership Burgess & Leigh. Eventually the founders' names would be combined to form the brand name Burleigh.

The mainstay of their production was utility, toilet wares and dinnerware. Later they developed a more complex range of tableware with intricate patterns in their characteristic underglaze tissue transfer print.

As production increased rapidly Burgess & Leigh needed more space and moved to Hill Pottery in 1868. Two decades later they moved again, this time to their state-of-the-art, purpose-built site beside the Trent and Mersey canal at Middleport in 1889. The new Middleport Pottery was the vision of William Leigh who sadly died the same year, shortly before it was completed.

Middleport Pottery was described as the 'Model Pottery of the Staffordshire pottery industry' when it was first built. It was designed to make all production processes more efficient and to improve conditions for the workforce.

The layout of the buildings, in parallel ranges with ovens

incorporated into the line of production, was designed to minimise the distance travelled between each process. This was an attempt to partially mechanise an essentially handmade craft.

Middleport Pottery had three biscuit ovens (used first to fire the pottery) and four glost ovens (used to fire the pottery after it had been glazed). It was therefore known as the 'Seven Oven Works'. Today only one biscuit oven survives.

Local architect Absalom Reade Wood designed Middleport Pottery, and nearly all the machinery was provided by local engineer William Boulton. The same firms of architects and engineers worked over the years with Burgess & Leigh's staff to adapt the fabric of the factory to introduce new machinery and processes as technology developed and production increased.

Following difficult conditions in the 1990s, the Dorling

family purchased the business and became Burgess, Dorling and Leigh. Trading during this time was challenging and investment into the upkeep of the site was becoming an increasing priority. In 1998, Middleport Pottery was included on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register.

From approximately 2008 onwards, national heritage organisations were raising significant concerns about the condition of the Middleport Pottery buildings. Solutions to enable investment into the site were sought as Middleport Pottery was at serious risk of closure because of the site's very poor state of repair.

A solution was found through a site purchase and regeneration plan undertaken by the United Kingdom Historic Building Preservation Trust (the Prince's Regeneration Trust heritage regeneration subsidiary company). This regeneration would not have been possible without the encouragement and endorsement of HRH The Prince of Wales.

In 2010 the Burleigh pottery business was bought by Denby Holdings Ltd, who remain the current owners. Through the United Kingdom Historic Building Preservation Trust regeneration plan, £9 million was invested to regenerate and revitalise Middleport Pottery through a complex funding

package comprising public and private support. Upon completion, Middleport Pottery was opened to the public in 2014 and the site was removed from the Heritage at Risk Register.

Burleigh pottery is still made on site in much the same handcrafted way as it was in 1889. In December 2016, the United Kingdom Historic Building Preservation Trust was formally separated from the Prince's Regeneration Trust. HRH The Prince of Wales became the Founding Patron of the United Kingdom Historic Building Preservation Trust, which was renamed Re-Form Heritage in late 2019.





VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

To support the vision of Re-Form Heritage the charity envisages the following roles for volunteers at Middleport Pottery and Harper Street.

- **Administration Volunteers:**

Volunteer support helps with communications and administration in the office working alongside paid staff.

- **Dane Crew Volunteer:**

The crew support staff with the regular maintenance of the boat as well as day trips and events on board.

- **Event and Site Support**

Volunteer: Event and Site Support Volunteers work alongside event staff to provide a safe, structured event and to ensure that the site looks its best.

- **Factory Tour Guides:**

Guided tours of the factory involve taking groups through the working factory explaining and interpreting the process, whilst ensuring safety and minimising production disruption.

- **Heritage Site Guides:**

Volunteers in the heritage areas provide the option of a guided tour, or someone on hand to answer questions for visitors doing a self-led tour to offer interpretation and additional content.

- **Learning Team Volunteer:**

Complementary to paid staff, volunteers help deliver a structured and expanding education programme on site and within the community.

- **Middleport Pottery Collection**

Volunteer: Volunteers are a key element of support with collections management and digitisation and the ongoing work in increasing access to the collection for researchers and members of the public.

- **Retail Volunteers:**

Retail volunteers welcome customers and support the upkeep of the Middleport Pottery retail area.

- **Steam Team Volunteer:**

The steam team look after and run the 1889 William Boulton steam engine and boiler and run and support events when the steam engine is in full steam.

- **Individual and Temporary Volunteering Projects:**

From time to time, we may look to engage particular individuals with specific niche skills and expertise to work on defined projects. This could involve individual engagement for a limited period to complete a specific task.



APPLICATION PROCESS:

1. Register an interest with Re-Form Heritage regarding volunteering at Middleport Pottery and Harper Street.
2. A Volunteer Application Pack is sent out.
3. Meeting arranged to:
 - Discuss roles and logistics of volunteering
 - Take a site walk
 - Introduction to on duty volunteers
 - Complete application form
4. Attend an informal interview. A reference will be requested from the nominated person.
5. Arrange the first day for volunteering and complete Volunteers induction which includes the following:
 - Be given lanyard with name card
 - Site induction – Health & Safety, expenses etc
 - Be given a volunteer handbook and role description
 - Sign Volunteer Terms and Confidentiality Agreement
 - Go on first heritage tour (with volunteer if available)
 - Be given information on the history of Middleport Pottery and Burleigh plus any relevant information for role chosen
 - Agree volunteering availability
 - Assign a mentor
 - Complete the volunteer information sheet
6. All volunteers are subject to a DBS check and will complete safeguarding training.
7. Additional notes and support to be given during training. As far as possible new volunteers will be put on to the rota with an experienced volunteer. A meeting will be arranged one month after the first volunteering day to check how things are going.
8. Regular volunteers' meetings are held to keep volunteers up to date with activities and events on site and to discuss other matters regarding volunteering at Middleport Pottery and Harper Street.



CONTACT US

Middleport Pottery
Port Street,
Burslem,
Stoke-on-Trent,
ST6 3PE

Tel: 01782 499766
Email: info@re-form.com
Website: <https://re-form.org/middleportpottery/information>

