



Jane Lloyd Francis

May 22

The Vessel

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In my initial proposal I suggested that to value the water of the Leri I would like to make the carrying vessel myself, as a gesture of respect to the source. As a river pilgrim it seemed appropriate to draw on previous pilgrimages for inspiration. I suggested working with ceramacist Meri Wells who would not only provide materials and a kiln but much needed guidance and mentoring.

During the mediaeval times when pilgrimages were very popular most pilgrims would carry their drinking water in a costrel.

“Costrels – while they vary a little in shape are basically rounded with two distinctive lugs, one each side of the bottle like neck. These lugs have pinched, pie crust edges, making the costrels look a little like owls. They are beautifully suitable for their purpose- taking cold tea, beer, cider or weven water for drinking while working in the outdoors, a sort of cold thermos. The narrow neck takes a cork, and the two pierced lugs are there to take carrying strings or leather thong. Their almost spherical shape is very strong and it is very unusual to find one broken except on the vulnerable nack and lugs.”

From Dorset Country Pottery by Jo Draper with Penny- Copland Griffiths.

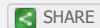
Costrels were the favoured vessal for carrying water, because of the ability of clay to sweat a little and therefore keep the water cool, they only really fell out of use in the 1920's when they became replaced by glass.

My attempt to reproduce a costrel was made using a coiling technique and we experimented with terracota clay and with white stone wear clay which was easier to use as it retained its shape more and did not sag as much.

The costrels were painted with a china and ball slip and in an effort to link with the immediate landscape and the Leri decorated witha slip made from the clay found in the drowned forest off the coast of Ynyslas near the mouth of the Leri. We also experimented with a splash of copper oxide, cobolt oxide and manganese.

The costrels were then biscuted to 1000degrees before being glazed with diluted honey glaze, a clear white glaze, lead bisciliate glaze for diffeent effects before being fired up to 1100 degrees.

These experiments resulted in a variety of different effects but in the end I chose the white costrel to carry water from Craig Y Pistyll to the sea, after fashioning a cork stoper and leather carrying strap and I can confirm that it kept the water beautifully cool throughout the three day journey.

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And I can confirm the source water left waiting for me in vessels at the crossing points was also still beautifully cool!
Diolch o galon xx



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