

Marion Miller's Bursary Journey



My workshop on Stronsay. On the left can be seen my enamelling kiln I bought in 2018. I had hoped to start working with. I had done enamelling at Art college in the mid 90's but not done it since!

My trials weren't going how I wanted, and I really wanted to do some sort of course.

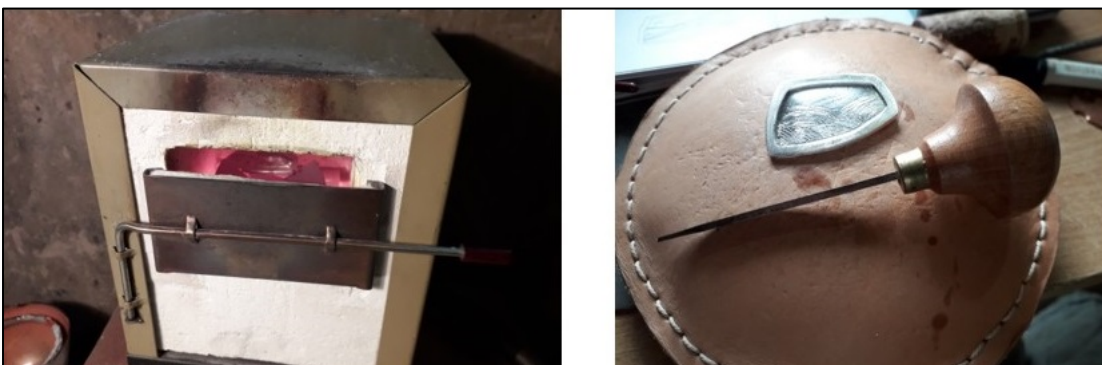
I saw the arts fund advertised and I thought here is my chance to do this properly and to my delight my application was successful.

I had hoped to do a weeklong course in Cumbria, but it was fully booked. It proved very hard to find the kind of course I wanted but by chance I got in contact with 2 lady enamellers living in Edinburgh and who did one to one teaching.

January 2020

At the end of January, I set off to Edinburgh on the plane. So excited! What an opportunity!

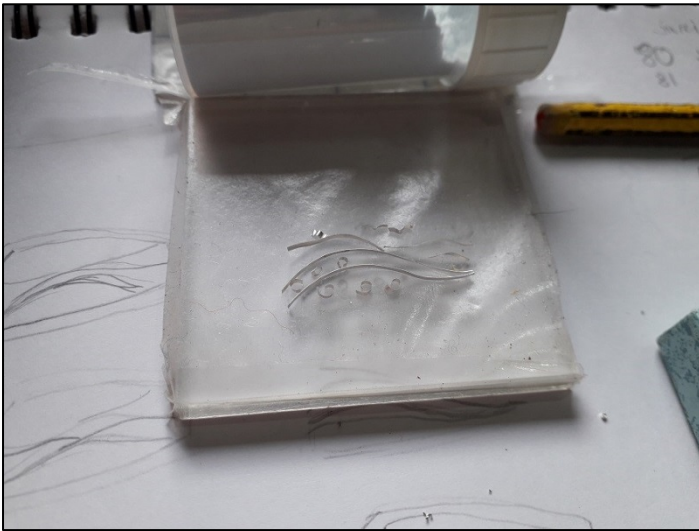
I arrived at the wonderful Dorothy Cockrells studio near Edinburgh zoo. Dorothy a retired teacher has a wealth of knowledge and I spent 2 days with her learning so much. I could ask all the questions I wanted, and we went back to basics completely.



Gas kiln and texturing a prepared piece.



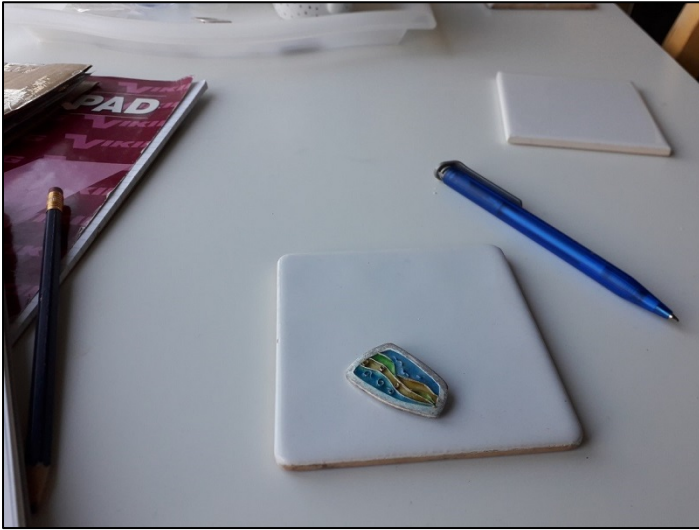
Load of gorgeous colours to choose between.



Learning about shaping wires for outlines. This technique is called Cloisonné.



Starting laying the colours.

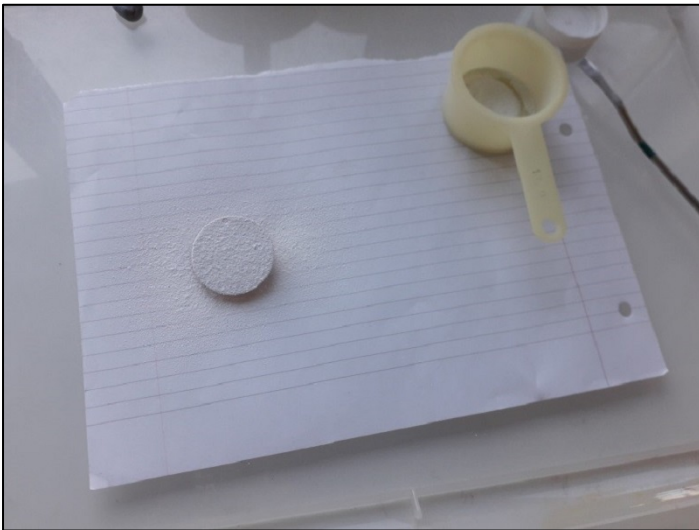


More colours going in.

I learned so much from Dorothy and what a character!

The last 2 days I spend with another experienced teacher called Sheila MacDonald.

Sheila wanted to inspire me to try out different techniques.



This time instead of wet packing with a brush I used tiny sieves and sifted the enamel on dry.

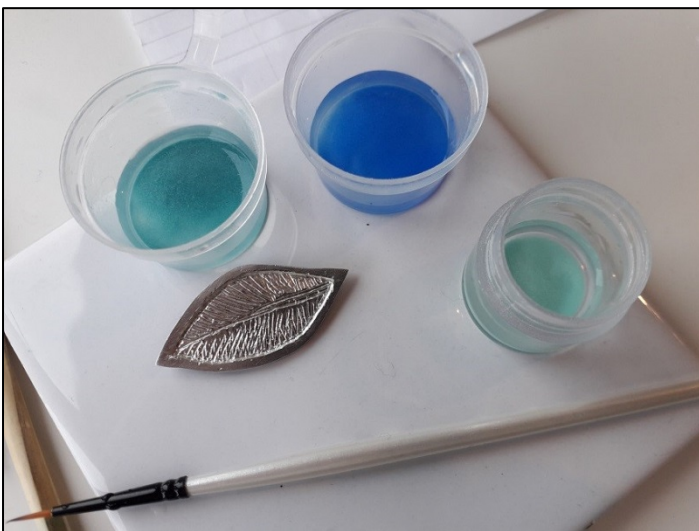


I had done some etching with Dorothy, and now it was time to try out my design.

More texturing with hand engravers. This time a feather pattern underneath.



The finished sifted piece.





An abstract seascape.

After I got home the world had just started talking about Covid 19. Little did anyone know our lives were set to change.

The plan as to spend the spring experimenting and then exhibiting some pieces.

I wanted to produce some colourful pieces inspired by the maritime landscape, sea and shore.

Unfortunately for several weeks in the beginning of lockdown I was unable to go to my workshop.

After some weeks I got sorted out and I was able to start experimenting.

After several months I came up with a range of pieces I felt represented my style but also showcased all the things I had learned.

I got a fantastic response on social media. In August I got an opportunity to have a window space in the Longship in Kirkwall.



It was great finally seeing the pieces exhibited.

I now have a range I am happy with that consists of some simpler pieces and some more complex.

I do of course plan to learn more and develop my designs all the time.



Without the funding I would not have been at the stage I am now. It has been a fantastic journey and I have learned so much!

Thank you!

Marion Miller.

2 November 2020.