

# *The Barton & Barrow Claypits* **HERITAGE TRAIL**



Original artwork by  
Cheryl Cullingford

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## **Kilns Used to Fire the Bricks & Tiles**

Open-top kilns were built on a hard clay base large enough for ten fire holes. Each fire hole could produce temperatures of 1,000 °C. The bricks of the kiln were laid on the ground without foundations. The corners were built first, then the outside walls and finally the inside wall. When the building was finished, the fire holes were lined with firebricks. When the burner (usually the foreman) decided the contents were burnt correctly the fire holes were extinguished with pug: a mixture of silt (warp) and sand. The silt was collected after each tide. Pug was also used in building the kilns. The kilns were almost always burnt from Monday to Friday. On Saturdays, the burner would prepare the new fires for Monday. The kiln was allowed to cool for some time to prevent damage to the wares.

Arch/updraught kilns appeared about four years after the open-top kilns. These were similar in design and operation but had two extra fire holes. They were wider at the base with the outside wall sloping inwards towards the top, but the inside wall would be vertical. The burning cycle of these kilns was much the same as the open-top kilns.

In downdraught kilns, instead of the heat being pulled upwards, it is forced upwards into the domed roof by the bag wall. This allows the flues to pull the fire down through the products with help from an outside chimney. Downdraught kilns did not need large numbers of unwanted bricks to fill out the bottom and were cheaper to build because they were lower in height.

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