

# POTTERS in KENT

DOVER'S EXHIBITION

23 NOV '96 - 26 JAN '97

— JOHN GOODING —

AN EXHIBITION OF SELECTED WORK by Members of the Kent Potters Association in Dover Museum will run between the above dates and there will also be demonstrations of pottery making by members of KPA in the museum gallery on Saturday 11 January at 11am and 2pm.

The Kent Potters Association was originally formed in 1974 as an association of full-time potters, but two years later the membership was broadened to include anyone who was practising as a potter in Kent - including professional potters, amateurs, teachers, students and members of the pottery trades.

It has expanded geographically since then to include potters from outside Kent, particularly S.E. London but even including overseas potters from time to time. A grade of Associate membership was introduced to cater for people interested in ceramics and in attending some of the events and lectures. In addition several ceramics material suppliers became members and supported some events.

The Association holds monthly meetings and arranges lectures, workshops and practical demonstrations of all aspects of ceramics. The subjects covered have included kiln construction, glazing, mould making, marketing, making large pots, ceramic sculpture and Japanese calligraphy. Also frequent lectures are given to members by KPA members and internationally known potters and many of these are day-long 'Master classes' which go into the technical aspects of their work in depth.

Visiting lecturers have included Ian Byers, Tessa Fuchs, Siddig El Nigoumi, Jane Hamlyn, Emmanuel Cooper, Henry Pym, David Roberts, Nigel Wood, Peter Stoodley, Colin Pearson, John Pollex,

Angus Suttie, Takeshi Yasuda, Sandy Brown and Elizabeth Fritsch - representing a very wide range of contemporary ceramics.

Group visits of members have been arranged to some of the priceless ceramics collections in museums such as The British Museum, The V & A, The Percival David Foundation of Oriental Ceramics and many others, usually under the guidance of a specialist to investigate and learn from the lessons of history.

These visits have given us respect for some of the ancient potters' methods. In this connection, on one Saturday at the Bore Place Arts & Crafts Centre near Sevenoaks, we built a wood-fired Roman Kiln as a project from the local Weald clay and on the following day in nine hours fired sixty earthenware pots in it at temperatures up to 1000°C.

I have kept the pots I made and fired in this kiln and they will be on view at the Dover Museum exhibition together with photographs showing the kiln being constructed.

The KPA also visits potters' workshops - in fact they came to my workshop in Walmer a few weeks ago.

Most of the monthly meetings are at venues in Mid-Kent, in the Maidstone/Sevenoaks area and two or three exhibitions a year are supplemented by a KPA-run gallery in Bank Street, Maidstone which has members' work for sale.

A bi-monthly Newsletter is circulated to members giving details of future events,

other exhibitions, potters' tips and items wanted and for sale. Trade discounts are often available from some of the ceramic equipment and material suppliers.

Visitors to the Dover Museum Exhibition will find out more about the Association and also details of how to join should they wish to do so.

JOHN GOODING, a member who lives in Walmer, wrote a most interesting article on his craft for the January 1992 *Newsletter*. EDITOR

There will also be a chance to see the different types of typical thrown and hand-built ceramics made these days by craft potters, i.e., stoneware, earthenware, porcelain and raku, with an explanation of the methods used, and much of the work on display will be for sale in what should be an interesting exhibition for everyone.

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## *The Dover Bronze Age Boat*

URSULA CORK

AT THE INVITATION of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT), a number of members visited Old Park Barracks to hear of the progress being made in the restoration of this internationally important vessel, and the reconstruction experiment.

In what was the old gymnasium, and now used by CAT as a workshop and for the storage of timbers and artifacts from the excavated site, the assembled guests including the Lord and Mayoress of Canterbury, were addressed by Dr Frank Pantoe, Chairman of Dover Bronze Age Boat Trust, followed by Paul Bennett, Director of CAT, and Peter Clark of CAT who is directing the six-year programme of analysis, and the construction of a replica of the central section of the Bronze Age Boat. This £300,000 project is being funded by English Heritage in order to conserve and study this remarkable vessel.

Christine Waterman, Curator of Dover Museum, outlined her proposals explaining how the boat, associated artifacts, visual displays etc, would be accommodated in the Museum. Because of the dimensions of the boat it will be necessary to make alterations and to re-site various museum exhibits. This will be expensive and at this point Miss Waterman introduced Mr David Ryeland, a Director of George Hammond Ltd. Mr Ryeland said that to assist the Museum and the Trust, his firm would be donating £10,000 over the next four years. He was followed by Mr Shapley of Arjo Wiggins, Buckland Mill, who also made a

substantial donation on behalf of his company and reminded us that Arjo Wiggins had been part of the fabric of Dover for well over one hundred years. He expressed the view that this exhibit would be a great attraction which could not fail to benefit Dover. The audience expressed its appreciation for these generous donations, but Miss Waterman emphasised that further funds would be needed to do justice to the project.

We then made our way to the area where members of CAT and helpers were working on a replica of the central section of the boat. From a recently felled oak tree, using wooden wedges and Middle Age tools – all of which had been made by the members – they explained the problems associated with interpreting the original design. Details of how the vessel was kept watertight with moss and stitch holes sealed with beeswax and how the transverse timbers were secured, were patiently explained.

And so at the end of the morning we felt that our knowledge of the boat had increased but we were still left with a few of the mysteries of construction to be unravelled. With the dedication of CAT and helpers we are sure that by the time the boat is ready for display at least some of these questions will be answered.