

BRIEF HISTORY OF POTTERY IN HAWKES BAY.

Starting with some of the early settlers making and firing their own bricks for fireplaces and some buildings, clay has been a part of Hawkes Bay life since early times.

For many years Dolbel's operated a large brickworks in Hyderabad Road, at the base of Napier hill. It was closed down in 1958 and was demolished soon after.

John Fulford, who came from a family with a long involvement with pottery, arrived in Napier in 1875 with his son, John Junior, to work at Dolbel's brick-yard. In the 1880's John Junior moved to Havelock North. In Te Mata Road, and later in Joll Road, he made pipes, urns and glazed ware until 1914. His son Huelin continued to make and fire earthenware in Fulford Road, where he manufactured flower pots until 1970. His grandson, David, also produced thrown ware until the late 1970's.

From 1905 to 1959 Samuel Eves and his son Reg operated a brickworks in Campbell Road, Havelock North. Both the Eves factory and the Napier brickworks suffered severely from the decline in brick construction following the 1931 earthquake.

Elizabeth Matherson, who was awarded the BEM for her services to potting in New Zealand, worked in Havelock North in the 1930's producing Paka Pottery. In 1940 she moved to Wellington, taking that name with her.

It was in 1955 that studio pottery began to flourish in Hawkes Bay. May Smith and Connie Verboeket, with the help of Leo Bestall, then Director of the Hawke's Bay Art Gallery and Museum, founded the Art Gallery Pottery Group in Napier. This group operated initially in an old office building next to the museum. Mary Hardwick Smith gave the first class, and for some years all the work produced by the swelling membership was of Fulford's Te Mata clay. This was well suited to ~~the~~ lead glazed slipware and it wasn't until the commercial stoneware clays became available that studio pottery really became established.

From the 1950's through to the 1990's the interest in pottery has grown and the Napier group, like the Keirunga and Taradale groups, now have their own well equipped club rooms. In 1975 the Hawke's Bay Association of Potters was formed with the intention of giving overall liaison between the local groups and

the New Zealand Society of Potters and in co-ordinating visits by overseas potters to the area.

These visits include many very distinguished international potters starting in 1962 with a visit by Bernard Leach, from England, and in 1964 Takeichi Kawai from Japan. In 1965 Shoji Hamada and his son Atsuya demonstrated in Napier and later the same year Ivan McMeekin, from Australia, visited and lectured. 1968 saw a demonstration by Michael Cardew at the Wool Exchange building in Napier - their carpet had to be well covered with tarpaulins to protect from the flying clay. Kenneth Clark, from England, was next to visit in 1970 followed by Alan Caiger-Smith in 1975. From Japan came Professors Yutaka Kondo and Zenji Miyashita who demonstrated at the Hawke's Bay Community College in 1979. Harry Davis and Alan Peascod both demonstrated at Havelock North and other well known potters have also given freely of their knowledge and skills to local potters.

Hawke's Bay hosted the 3rd. New Zealand Society of Potters exhibition during its provincial centennial in 1958, at McLean Park in Napier. The 18th. was held as the first major exhibition in the then newly constructed Hastings City Cultural Centre (now the Cultural Trust Exhibition Centre) in 1975. And in conjunction with the 1985 'Potters and Pots' convention of the New Zealand Society their 26th. National Exhibition was shown at the Hawke's Bay Art Gallery and Museum in Napier. Also held there this year was the Society's Domestic Ware exhibition.

This present exhibition brings together a group of ten Hawke's Bay potters with a wide diversity of styles and firing techniques. Kilns range from electric, gas, diesel to pit fires and very long wood-firings in a traditional anagama type kiln. Most are now using stoneware clays even though these do not occur naturally in Hawke's Bay and have to be brought in from other areas.

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Bruce Martin 1991.

Acknowledgement is given to the H.B. Cultural Trust for information on early pottery in Hawke's Bay.