

## **ART & SOUL: A Festival Preview!**

Esme McConnell, Arts Development Officer, Dover District Council

**D**OVER DISTRICT COUNCIL is launching a brand new visual arts and community festival for the new Millennium. **Art & Soul** promises a packed programme of events and activities across the whole Dover District and runs from Saturday 27 May through to Sunday 4 June. The festival will have something for everyone, catering for local people and visitors alike, as well as families with children, by providing something creative and entertaining to do during the half term week.

As the name **Art & Soul** suggests, the visual arts will be strongly featured, with an Open Studios and Artists' Houses Scheme, a gallery focus and exhibitions being held in unusual places. There will also be concerts of jazz, blues and swing music, creative workshops for young and old, story telling, street entertainment and much, much more!

Starting on 6 May and leading into the Festival, a special celebratory **Art & Soul** Exhibition will be staged in the Deal Library Gallery. The exhibition brings together work by professional artists who live and work in the East Kent area. There will be a range of work in mixed media, but with an emphasis on painting. This will be a chance to discover some of the professional artists in the district who do not usually exhibit locally.

The Festival week will be launched on Saturday 27 May with a day of colourful and exciting street entertainment in Dover High Street and Market Square. Comedy cabaret, visual theatre and walkabout groups will entertain, providing laughs and the occasional surprise as they perform amongst the Saturday shoppers.

The following day the 'Picnic in the Park' will be held in Kearsney Abbey. 'Picnic in the Park' will also include the annual and very popular Teddy Bears Picnic along with the newly launched Art

in the Park activities. It will be an opportunity for the whole family to enjoy a mixture of creative arts-based on workshops and traditional popular family entertainment in the beautiful Kearsney Abbey Gardens. Puppet shows, live music, circus skills workshops, art exhibitions, the teddy bears picnic, environmental dinosaur sculptures and model boats on the lake, all combine to provide a full day of entertainment - and it's all free!

There are three main musical events taking place during **Art & Soul**. The first is an R&B and classic blues concert held in partnership with Kent County Council's Guitar Festival. This will feature Geoff Achison & The Soul Diggers in concert at the Landmark Centre, Deal on Saturday 27. Geoff is not only one of the world's great blues players, he is one of the genre's most eloquent ambassadors. On Bank Holiday Monday the swing band, The Hofners, will be entertaining audiences at the Astor Theatre in Deal. The Hofners will be swinging their way through music from the classic eras of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. To finish the week in style, an evening of jazz music will be held, in association with Deal Summer Music Festival, at the Astor Theatre in Deal on Saturday 3 June.

Running throughout the week, live music with a jazz, blues or soul emphasis can be enjoyed at pubs in and around Dover, Deal and Sandwich. There is also a programme of musical lunches and dinners on offer at The Churchill Hotel on the Dover Seafront, featuring piano music, Brass on the Grass and a night of songs from the 1940s.

Story-telling afternoons will take place in Dover, Deal, Sandwich and Aylesham libraries. These will feature international storytellers and artists. Special events held at Dover Museum and the White Cliffs

40 Experience include the popular Pavement Picasso street art competition, Victorian Stained Glass and World War II Rag Rug Making workshops.

Saturday 3 June will see an afternoon of art and music in the Guildhall Square in Sandwich. The carnival street band, Brew Ha Ha, will entertain passers by, while artists exhibit their work in the open air.

Throughout the festival week, the Open Studios and Artists' Houses scheme will be running. You will be able to explore the wealth of hidden artistic talent behind the scenes and even see artists' work in progress. A guide to the Open Studios and Houses, along with photos of the artists' work, will be featured in the *Art & Soul* Guide. Running along side this will be a gallery and exhibition programme, highlighting local galleries and exhibitions taking place across the district.

*Art & Soul* will coincide with the Dunkirk Sixtieth Anniversary Weekend, which takes place in Dover Town Centre and on the seafront over the May Bank Holiday Weekend. Among the attractions taking place will be a series of commemorative events including open-air concerts, a vehicle rally, fireworks, an evacuees' reunion and World War II re-enactments at Dover Castle. There will also be a chance to see the Dunkirk Little Ships in Dover Marina for most of the week.

A full Festival programme will be available from mid April at all local outlets, including libraries and Tourist Information Centres. However, if you would like to register for your advance copy of the programme, please call the Festival Hotline on 01304 375192.

# 'FERRY FOCUS'

## REPORT

*Christopher Burrows • East Kent Ferry Club*

### P&O STENA LINE

Dover-based P&O Stena Line which is Dover's biggest employer laid off some 290 employees from its Dover-Calais service during the course of January. The first to go were 140 employees on the company's flagship *P&OSL Aquitaine* in early January, whilst another 160 employees lost their jobs in late January, when the *P&OSL Picardy* was withdrawn.

P&O Stena has revealed that it is conducting preliminary investigations into the replacement of existing tonnage in the next couple of years by two 30,000-ton ferries. If ordered the new ferries will be the first new tonnage for Dover services since P&O European Ferries' 1993-built *Pride of Burgundy*, now the *P&OSL Burgundy*. The order for the new tonnage would most likely go to a German yard and the ferries would be in service by 2004. The introduction might see the demise of the *P&OSL Kent* and *P&OSL Canterbury* which are now the company's oldest fleet units.

### SEAFRANCE

By the time you read this report, Seafrance should have completed the annual refit programme for its four passenger ferries, the Nord-Pas-de-Calais, the Cezanne, the Renoir and the Manet.

The French government has increased Seafrance's subsidies to enable the Paris-based company to counter any adverse affects, resulting from the loss of duty and tax free sales, as Seafrance derived some 40% of its operating income from the tax perk. Seafrance is also considering ordering new tonnage for its Dover-Calais service, provided the French government approve a Fr2 billion investment programme. In the meantime there is speculation as to the replacement of either the *Seafrance Renoir* or *Seafrance Manet* this summer by 'second hand' tonnage, Irish Ferries' *Isle of Inishmore* being a likely candidate.