

## Editorial

In this issue, it is a pleasure to continue the series of occasional columns in which the different national ceramic societies in Europe have the opportunity to introduce themselves. We welcome:

### The Institute of Ceramics

The Institute of Ceramics is the focus in the United Kingdom for those engaged in the science and technology of ceramics. It provides a comprehensive range of learned society activities and is the professional body for ceramists.

It is also a Registered Charity, seeking to promote the advancement and development of ceramics in the public interest. This objective is achieved through many activities such as the provision of courses and educational meetings, the publication of books and periodicals, the reporting and communication of relevant research and development work, and the setting of professional standards through qualifications. *British Ceramic Transactions and Journal* is published bi-monthly, and the Institute has also published many Proceedings, some of which are still sought after as textbooks.

The present Institute of Ceramics was formed in 1985 by the merger of the British Ceramic Society, which dates from 1901, with the Institute of Ceramics which was founded in 1955.

The term 'ceramics' covers a wide spectrum. Consequently, the Institute embraces a broad field extending from the well-established clay, glass and cement industries to the very latest non-metallic, inorganic materials used in high-technology electronic and superconductor applications. Thus it deals with the geology and winning of basic raw materials, their properties and their processing into consistent starting materials for the industries they serve; the technology of manufacturing processes and its continuous improvement, together with the development of advanced techniques for applying the new products of research to practical use.

Because the subject of ceramics is so highly interdisciplinary, members of the Institute have many differing backgrounds. They may be ceramists, specialists in glass or cement, materials scientists or technologists, engineers, chemists, physicists, geologists or mathematicians. Yet all are involved in the production or exploitation of ceramic materials, in research or development or in the teaching of the theory and practice of the technology. They are united by a strong common interest in the subject. Entry into the professional grades of the Institute depends, in the first instance, on educational qualifications or on success in an Institute examination. Advancement to the higher grades is achieved by providing evidence of experience and responsibility at the appropriate level.

The importance of the Institute has increased in recent years reflecting both the growing national emphasis on professional development in engineering and related fields, and also the rapid advance and diversification of the subject of ceramics. In 1988, the Institute was accepted by the Engineering Council in the UK as an affiliate body to register members for Chartered Engineer, Incorporated Engineer and Engineering Technician.

The Institute is strongly supported in its work by industrial organisations, government establishments, universities, polytechnics and colleges working within the field. Its continuing education programme is designed to be complementary to that provided by the teaching institutions, and is supported by a large number of speakers from industry.

At home, the Institute maintains close contact with other professional organisations. It is a Founder Member of the Federation of Materials Institutes, the other members being the Plastics and Rubber Institute and the Institute of Metals. It works closely with relevant British government agencies and plays its part in the work of the Watt Committee on Energy and the Materials Forum. Abroad, the Institute keeps in touch with other ceramic societies and was a Founder Member of the European Ceramic Society.

The Institute is governed by an elected Council of which the chairman is the President. He serves for one year. Council appoints committees and sub-committees to deal with such matters as finance, education, publications and programmes, and health and safety education. The Council keeps in touch with the membership through geographically orientated Branches which have their own management committees and office-bearers. They arrange regular meetings of members within their areas. These meetings usually include several technical lectures and a visit to a relevant factory or establishment.

The main event in the calendar of the Institute is the Annual Convention, a 2–3 day event normally held at one of the Universities. In addition to the plenary session and the Annual General Meeting, there is a full programme of concurrent technical sessions arranged by the Sections of the Institute, e.g. Basic Science, Refractory and Industrial Ceramics, Pottery, Chemical and Physical Testing, Building Materials, and Cement and Concrete. The Convention is also the occasion for the Mellor Memorial Lecture, delivered each year by an eminent lecturer in honour of the late Dr J. W. Mellor. This year's Lecture, the thirty-fifth in the series, was delivered by Prof. E. D. Hondros, F.R.S.

**W. N. Craig**