

Jane James

"When I found myself in Jersey with no career and a lot of time on my hands two years ago, I would have never have believed that I would now be seeing my work featured in *craft&design* magazine, promoting my coastal ceramics," says Jane James.

It all started when Jane's husband took up the post of Jersey's Chief Fire Officer in June 2007, "One minute I was a successful press and PR manager with 15 years experience under my belt and next I was unemployed, living on a small island in the middle of the channel," she explains.

"I have always been interested in art," she continues. "I studied Art and Design at Colchester, Essex and then Photography at the Kent College of Art and Design, although on leaving college I embarked on a career in Press and PR. My interest in ceramics started in 2005 when I bought my first kiln. I started by using pre-made bisque to glaze and produce personalised tableware, but because I was a very busy working mum, I never really had the time to make it into more than a hobby." Shortly after arriving in Jersey, Jane signed up for an evening class at Jersey Pottery. "The trouble was, I was useless at throwing pots! But I quickly realised I loved playing with clay, especially slab work."

It was when she began combining driftwood with the slab work that things started to come together. Jane explains, "In Jersey we are very lucky because lots of driftwood gets washed up on our beaches. Its form and appearance fascinate me, I kept picking it up and taking it home, hoping to use it for something, and in the end my husband told me to either do something with it or put it in the woodburner!"

"So, to cut a long story short, I started making things with a coastal theme for my house, by combining the driftwood with the ceramics. Then one day I found the courage to try to sell at a local market and to my great joy my work went down a storm. Now, only eighteen months later, I have a full time job keeping up with demand."

Jane's work is exceptionally bright and happy in character, every piece is hand cut and formed into different types of fish, sea birds, beach huts and boats. She says, "I love it when someone comes up to my stall looking very serious and then, as they cast their eye across my work, a smile appears on their face - it is at that point that I know I have a potential customer."

"Jersey has a beautiful coastline and I am very fortunate to live next to the beach, this provides plenty of inspiration and an endless supply of driftwood". Jane explains that one of the main reasons for not continuing with her work in PR after moving to Jersey, was so that she could dedicate more of her time to being

a mother to her eight year old daughter, Tegan.

"Looking back, I suppose I was forced into living my dream of starting my own business - and I am extremely happy to say it has worked out better than I could have ever hoped, I get to be a mum and my own boss."

Jane first exhibited her work in the 'Starting Out' exhibition at the Harbour Gallery in St Aubin, Jersey and has just finished her first very successful solo exhibition at the same Gallery, where it all began.

"Now I'm hoping that more galleries and shops in the UK will start stocking my work," she says.

To find out more about Jane's work and where she will be exhibiting:

www.jane-james.co.uk

(See page 41)

