



NOTTINGHAM CALLIGRAPHERS

Newsletter Number 11 December 2013

Committee News

Nottingham Calligraphers Committee met in Southwell on 15 November to review our position and to start thinking about our programme for 2014-2015. We hope it is of interest to members to have a summary of our meeting.

Nottingham Calligraphers Constitution

The Committee agreed the wording of the constitution and that a copy should be circulated to all members for information. You should have received a copy by e-mail by now. It is our plan to adopt the constitution at our next AGM. We also felt that it would be sensible to hold our future AGMs in September each year. This would allow us to finalise the year's accounts before the AGM and so save having to provide a second financial report at our financial year end (31 August).



We continue to get positive feedback about the Newsletter (thank you!) and are pleased that people make contributions in the form of workshop reports. It would be great if we had more contributions from members (e.g. an item for the **Thing of Beauty** section, a short report (or even just a photograph!) from an exhibition you have attended, or just any calligraphy related snippet!). Don't be shy - it's your Newsletter after all!

Envelope Exchange

See note from Kate on page 6 in this edition of the Newsletter.

Competition or Group Project

See note from Kate on page 6 in this edition of the Newsletter.

Copies of The Edge - CLAS Magazine

See panel on page 2 in this edition of the Newsletter.

Programme 2013-2014

Workshops so far have been well attended and we have had some positive feedback from attendees. The accounts are in a good position for this stage in the year and we have a small running profit from workshop income, which is good news.

Programme 2014-2015

We will need to start booking tutors early in 2014 for the programme starting in September! We have several ideas for topics but would like your ideas too! See note from Kate in this edition of the Newsletter.

Sue Sinclair - Chairman
Kate Hall - Secretary
Gwen Vine - Treasurer

Workshop News

Finding Inspiration

Tutor Sue Sinclair

Date 7 December

This workshop is about how you can develop ideas to tackle a piece of calligraphy and will be a combination of slide shows and practical work.

2014

January - no meeting

Gothic Rotunda

Tutor Horace Staniland

Date 1 February

A bold and decorative hand and another delightful and instructive day with Horace. Not to be missed!

Chinese Lettering

Tutor Peter Millward

Date 1 March

Peter is a specialist in Chinese painting and will introduce us to techniques which can be applied in both lettering and pictures.

Screen Printing

Tutor Steve Delaney

Date 22 March

Return of a favourite. There are limited places for this workshop, so book early - especially if you missed it last time!

The Edge

Through our Group Membership of **CLAS**, we receive 3 copies of the magazine **the Edge** which is published 5 times per year.

These are offered to Nottingham Calligraphers members for £15 (plus postage) for the year starting in January, 2014.

That works out at a mere £3 per edition! **The Edge** is a great source of ideas and news about calligraphy exhibitions and new books.

If you would like to subscribe at this very reasonable rate, then please let Gwen know as soon as possible. First come first served basis!

A Thing of Beauty.....



The Illuminated Sketchbook of Stephan Schriber (1494)

These are extracts from the sketchbook of the 15th century monk Stephan Schriber. Don't you wish your own sketchbook pages looked like these?

It comes from the website <http://publicdomainreview.org> - which is an Aladdin's Cave of all sorts of interesting things in the public domain - a project of the Open Knowledge Foundation - there is a section on Manuscripts - not very full, but worth a look when you have a few moments to spare!

Sue Sinclair

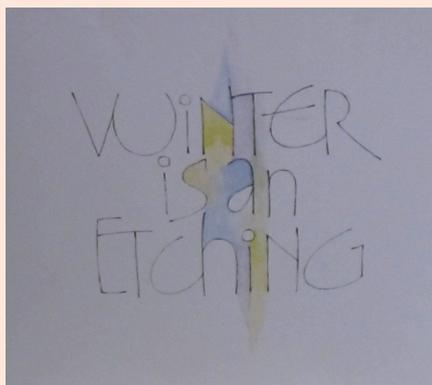


Workshop Reports

Pressure and Release with Angela Dalleywater

In September we were privileged once again to welcome Angela Dalleywater to teach us. She has visited us on many occasions to teach foundation hand, uncial and Carolingian hand. After an embarrassing start with us not being able to get into the building, hectic phone calls and nervous looks we eventually set up and we began.

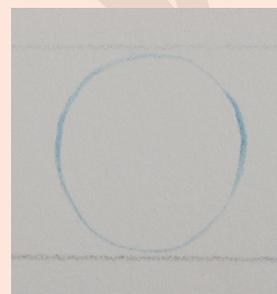
The topic for the day was pressure and release technique which for many members was a new subject. In the many available calligraphy books on the market, this technique is rarely mentioned. Angela demonstrated how this technique using the humble pencil can create a contemporary sleek and nuanced look. Subtlety and depth can be achieved through this style of writing which we knew was the general aim for the day.



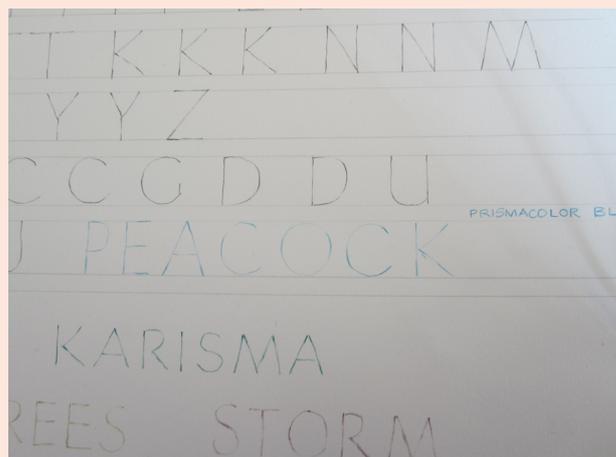
The need for sharpness with pencils and crayons was emphasised and good quality soft paper a must to achieve good results. Starting with a set of exercises to get used to the pressure, the tool, the paper, we all managed to find our way to create elegant vertical, horizontal and curved strokes. Trying to avoid the 'spent wobbly match' look or 'bulrush' style was a challenge to most of us.

Next we were taught how to translate those strokes into making letters. Once again, the general feeling in the room was the difficulty of knowing how much pressure to put onto the

strokes to keep them looking elegant. Personally, I did feel I did a perfect letter 'O' at one point, much to everyone's amusement and there is photographic evidence to prove this! We all produced some lovely stylish letters and using pencil crayons too, we all felt we were making some progress. Then we tried ink.



Using a pen to do this technique was very hard for most of us and quite disappointing after our successes with pencil. However, some people did manage to create some words and letters that they felt would springboard them to practising and taking this further. The general feeling from the group was that it might have been better to concentrate more on pencil and crayon and building up confidence with this, before doing ink work. We have to remind ourselves that workshops are for trying and experimenting new things and that we take this away and develop in our own time. So, after a shaky start with problems getting into the building, we had an enjoyable well attended workshop which we felt gave us plenty to work on in our personal studies. We hope that new members Norman and Jillian despite the poor start, had a productive and pleasurable day and that they felt welcome to the group.



Kate Hall

Workshop Reports

A Carousel of Techniques with Pat Allen & Sue Sinclair

This workshop, also known as “The Pat & Sue Show” was memorable in all aspects, above all for its careful and thorough preparation. Awaiting each participant on arrival, was a goody bag containing a list of contents, programme, instructions, diagrams and materials, all arranged in order of use. You just couldn’t go wrong! Well....

Pat started the carousel by demonstrating how to prepare backgrounds for calligraphy using water colours, acrylic paints wet on wet and pastels, with the option of adding magic with cling film. When we then had a go, it was not only fun (slosh, slosh) but produced some beautiful effects, each one different.

While our work was drying, Sue took over to show us how to make Origami frames to set off our eventual masterpieces. With amazing dexterity and faultless folding accuracy, she smoothly produced these little miracles, promising to enter the next Olympic Synchronised Origami Contest. Then it was our turn. Not everyone showed the same artistry, and a few groans and cries of despair were to be heard, in spite of the clear diagrams we could refer to. But Pat & Sue were at hand to sooth, advise, refold and rescue. We were expected to produce 6 frames! It did get easier. A bit. Sort of. I found.

One use of the framed coloured background is to feature decorative capital letters. We tried out various broad nibs, including automatic pens and handmade balsa nibs, in preparation. We practised copying the capitals from

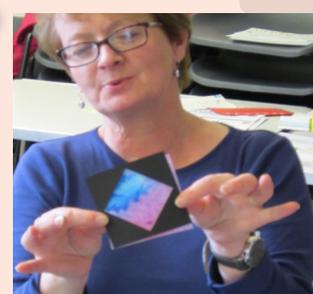
the handout sheets – Rotunda, German Gothic and Italic.

Now it was time to put squares of our background papers into our frames to be transformed into objets d’art to the satisfaction of their creators.

On the display table were Sue’s & Pat’s creations which they had “prepared earlier”. Framed arrangements, signs of the Zodiac, Christmas decorations, gift boxes, and more. In the last stage of the workshop, we learned how to make boxes out of the frames (tricky!) and then we were free to use these ideas to make what we liked.

Everybody went home with something pleasing and plenty of good ideas and intentions. It had been a most enjoyable and relaxed day. For this we had to thank Pat’s & Sue’s meticulous planning and their patient encouragement of the adroitly challenged – (INCLUDING ME)

Eve Leadbeater



Workshop Reports

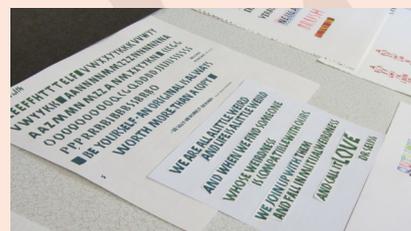
Neuland with Cathy Cooper

November saw the return of Cathy Cooper to teach us the Neuland hand. The uppercase hand was designed by the German typographer and graphic designer Rudolf Koch (1876-1950) from drawn forms. Originally created as a typeface, the calligraphic version with its characteristic wide and bold strokes varies slightly from the original form.

Cathy demonstrated how using two pen basic angles 0° and 90° create the dense, textured writing using the proportions of Roman Capitals.

Easy as it is purported to be, many of us found the idea of creating letterforms with a broadly constant line width a challenge, but managed to produce some dramatic work which demonstrated the value and attractiveness of an unusual hand for headings and short texts, particularly when the counters are coloured.

Sue Sinclair



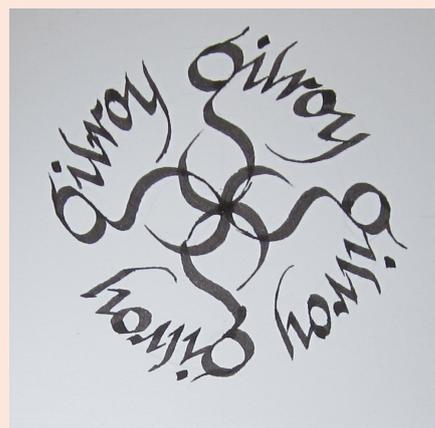
Namecard Winner!



Everyone rose splendidly to our Summer challenge to produce a name tent card for use at workshops.

Angela Dalleywater had the thankless task of choosing the winner - Gilroy is seen here with his winning design (detail, right).

Congratulations!



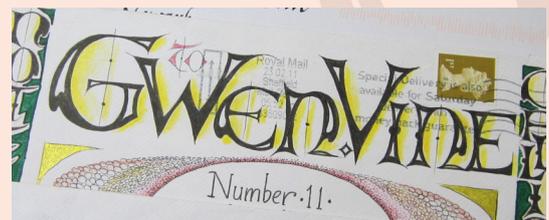
Envelope Exchange

At Sue and Pat's workshop in October we displayed an amazing array of envelopes produced by our group. The variety of hands, techniques and subject matter was impressive and proved how very successful this project has been.



People seemed keen to continue, with the general opinion that it provides an incentive to get involved in a little fun project each month.

I am willing to organise this again if people want to go ahead. If you would like to be involved in envelope exchange again, **please e-mail me and let me know before the end of November.** There was a suggestion about some people pairing up so that they weren't committed to one a month, but one every two months. I am willing to sort this out, but my one request is, that if you sign up to do it, then you need to be committed to it so everyone sends and receives which is then fair.



Kate Hall (katehall55@hotmail.co.uk)

Your Ideas Invited!

Workshop Programme 2014-2015

Our programme of workshops is booked up to August 2014 and it looks an interesting and varied menu of calligraphy delights.

However, we need to be thinking ahead in order to get the tutors we really want, as they get booked up very quickly. The Committee has lots of ideas, but we would also like your views and ideas. Please could you think about topics and tutors and send any suggestions, as soon as you can, to **Sue Sinclair** (sumasqui@btinternet.com) or **Kate Hall** (katehall55@hotmail.co.uk). We will need to start contacting tutors early in 2014.

Remember it can be a hand or a particular technique, a medium or a more craft based topic, just run some ideas by us. If you know of local tutors too, let us know.

Group Project/Competition

Someone in the group suggested that a group project and/or competition (with a prize) would be a good idea. Everyone seemed to like the name tents exercise and this is where the idea came from. Once again the Committee would love to hear your ideas and suggestions to make this possible. Please just let us know.

Kate Hall

Nice work if you can get it

The White House Calligraphers

It may interest you that the White House employs three calligraphers for the design and execution of all the official and social documents. The chief calligrapher Patricia Blair works in the East Wing of the White House in the Graphics and Calligraphy office along with her two deputies. Projects range from official invitations to state dinners, proclamations, and greetings from the president, military commissions, service awards and place cards. It is reported that the current White House chief calligrapher earns \$96,925!

Five go to Cheltenham

A small group of Nottingham Calligraphers visited the CLAS Regional Day on Sunday 20 October at Cheltenham. The theme for the day was "Works on Paper" including an open competition for a paper structure which was judged by public vote during the lunch break. None of us submitted an entry, but we were much impressed by those who had.

The morning lecture was given by Nancy Ouchida-Howells who showed us slides of work by herself, her husband David Howells and her students. She spoke of the need to take care of your paper, always store it flat, always to use acid-free papers and cards, always to use your chosen paper for your rehearsals, and to find ways of using unusual papers - sampling papers using varied nibs and writing tools.

In the afternoon Clifford Burt, representing his family's firm of paper makers gave an interesting and entertaining account of the history and development of paper production. This accompanied our free gift by CLAS of a pack of 37 different papers samples, all numbered, listed and detailed - an amazing reference kit all prepared by members of the Gloucester Lettering Arts Society.

There was a generous lunch break with time to visit various demonstrations, browse the book stalls, pore over paper products and stock up on writing materials at the Scribblers' stand.

It was quite a long journey but pleasant on the Sunday morning; our return was rather more dramatic with black skies, torrential rain and vivid rainbows. Hilary's driving was positively heroic and she got us all home safely.



Pat Allen

