



NOTTINGHAM CALLIGRAPHERS

Newsletter Number 14 September 2014

Committee News

The last Committee meeting was spent gearing up for the AGM on 20th September and you will find all the papers for the AGM attached with this Newsletter. There's quite a lot to read, but then it will save time on the day if you do some homework! We hope as many people as possible will come to the AGM **AND** it will be followed by a **FREE** workshop (see Pages 2 and 6 of this Newsletter for details).



The AGM is your chance to air your views about our workshops, the envelope exchange, the Newsletter, the website and anything else relating to Nottingham Calligraphers - so please come along to tell us what you think!

You will also find attached the Members Questionnaire which we mentioned last time. There's no need to fill it in now, we will provide copies on the day for everyone to complete. It will be really helpful for the Committee to have your feedback as we start to plan for our calligraphy year starting in September 2015.

We look forward to seeing you on 20 September - usual place, usual time!

Sue Sinclair - Chairman

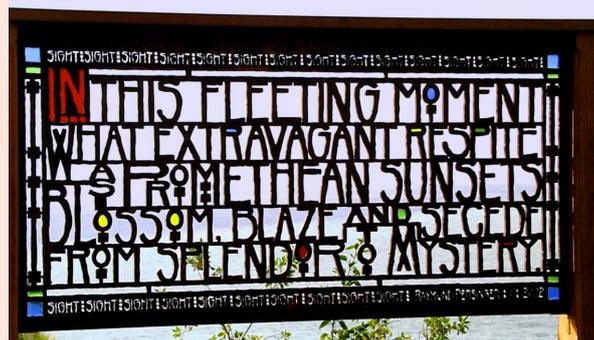
Kate Hall - Secretary

Gwen Vine - Treasurer

A Thing of Beauty.....

Sight & Sound by Raymond Persinger

Raymond Persinger is an American artist and sculptor who runs the Laguna College of Art and Design in California. These panels, which he made in 2002, are at Browns Park, Laguna Beach.



They are made of metal, wood and stained glass and the words are by Persinger himself. He says: "There is often a gap between looking, seeing and understanding" and this piece addresses that point.

The lettering style is reminiscent of that of Charles Rennie Mackintosh the Scottish architect, designer and artist who was working in the late 19th and early 20th century, but his work looks just as modern as this piece.

Sue Sinclair

Workshop News

AGM and Papers, Inks and more.....

Tutor Various
Date 20 September

This workshop is a chance to experiment with different papers, inks and writing instruments. We have a wide range of sample papers to give out - all you need to do is provide the inks, pens and a few words to write - see opposite for THE CHALLENGE!

In Your On Words

Tutor Sylvia Thomas
Date 11 October

How often, when you are starting out a new piece of calligraphy, does your mind go blank and you can't think of a single word to write - Sylvia Thomas has the solution! In what promises to be a fun day Sylvia will help us never to be lost for words again!

Cards, Envelopes and Pop-ups

Tutor Various
Date 1 November

It's getting close to Christmas! This workshop is an opportunity to learn to make some greetings cards that will make your seasonal communications just that little bit more special.

Tips and Tricks and Mince Pies

Tutor All
Date 6 December

Everything you ever wanted to know about calligraphy but were afraid to ask. A chance to share all those little tips and tricks you've learnt over the years that will make people say "I wish I'd known that before!" ALSO: Enjoy a mince pie or two to get into the Christmas mood.

Papers, Inks and more.....

THE CHALLENGE

We have bought a range of different papers to try out and these will be dished out on the day - there should be plenty of variety for you to experiment with!

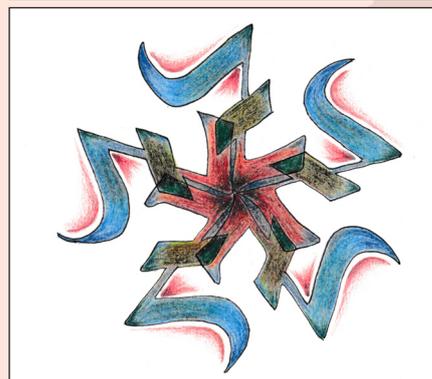
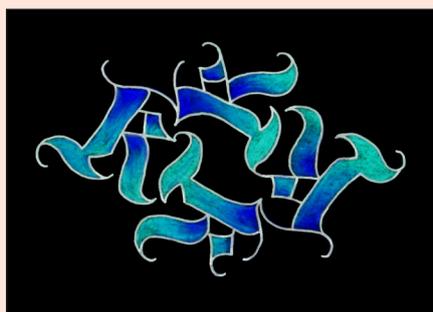
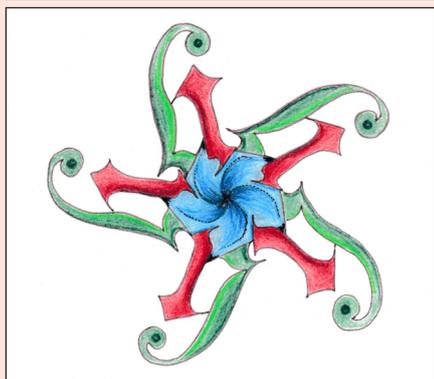
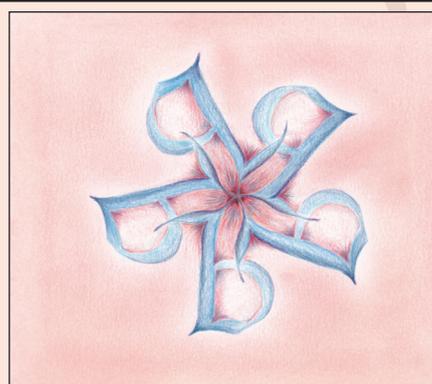
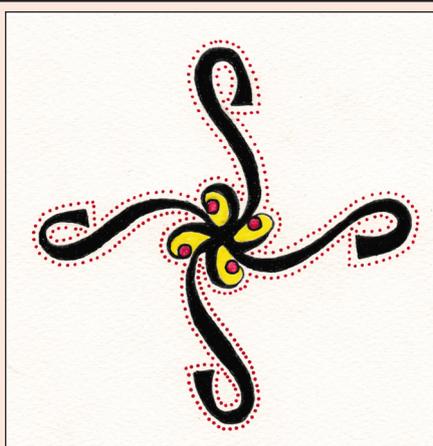
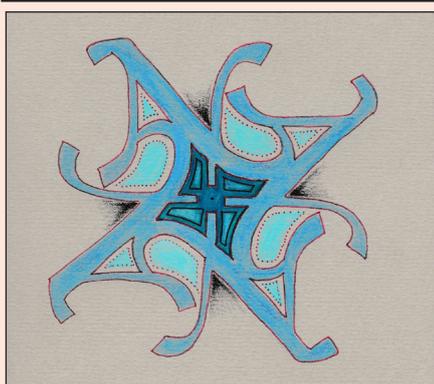
The challenge is twofold:
(1) **MAKE YOUR OWN INK** - all sorts of vegetable matter and food dyes can be used for writing, so get boiling up those onion skins and beetroots and see what happens!

(2) **MAKE YOUR OWN "PEN"**
Coke pens, balsa wood, quills, toothbrushes, twigs - anything goes; just bring them along to try!

OR

Of course you can just stick to Higgins and a metal nib - but where's the fun in that?

Members' Gallery - Sue Sinclair: Transformations (only 20 more to go!)



Workshop Reports I

Transformations - Sue Sinclair

The planned workshop for June was to be 'Monochrome Magic' with tutor Jan Pickett. Unfortunately, Jan sustained a shoulder injury and had to cancel. Nottingham Calligraphers very own Sue Sinclair stepped into the breach and introduced us to the world of 'Transformations'. Sue brought with her beautiful examples of her own work to give us an insight into what could be achieved by the end of the workshop.

The morning session started with an explanation of 'Transformations' which is the creation of unusual images using a single letter or word. There are three types of 'Transformations', these are translation, rotation and reflection, or a combination of translation with rotation. 'Q' was the single letter chosen by Sue to demonstrate this creative form of calligraphy, followed by examples of how to develop it into rotations, which is the movement in a circular direction of a design which has a centre and angle of rotation.

Armed with Sue's very explicit and user friendly handouts, we returned to our desks to choose our own letter, suitable for a rotation type 'Transformation'. Now there are 26 letters in the alphabet so you would think choosing a letter would be reasonably easy – how wrong can you be!! When everyone had chosen their letter, the second phase was to see how well it would work when repeated. The selected letter was traced and several copies made onto decent paper to allow each individual to experiment with varying layouts, letter positions and decorating methods before creating a final piece of work. A wide range of mediums and colours can be used in creating a transformation.

With Sue's help, guidance and encouragement, final pieces of work started taking shape and by lunch time everyone had completed a rotation 'transformation'.

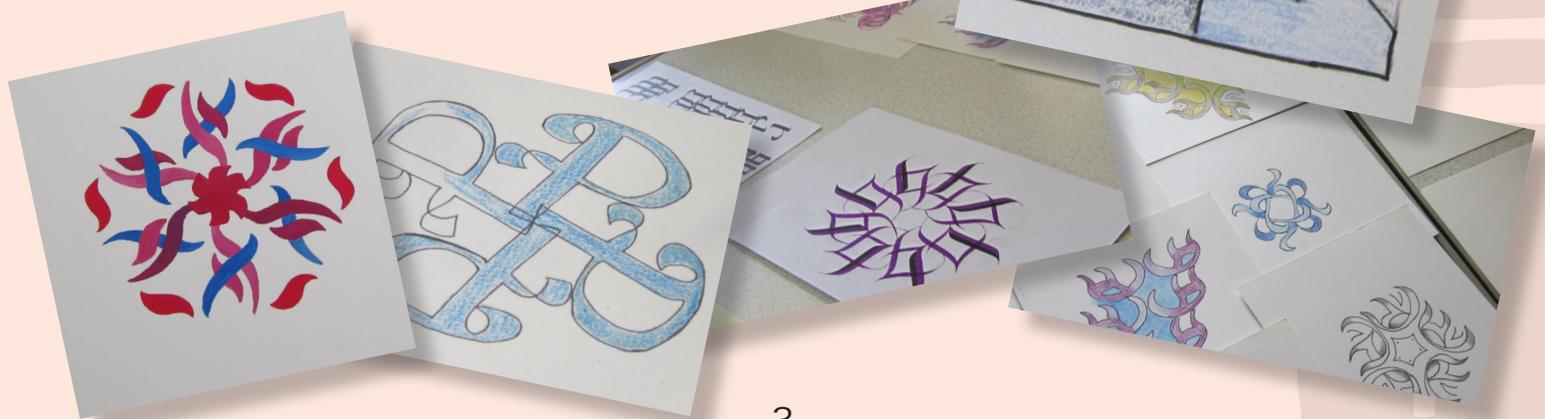
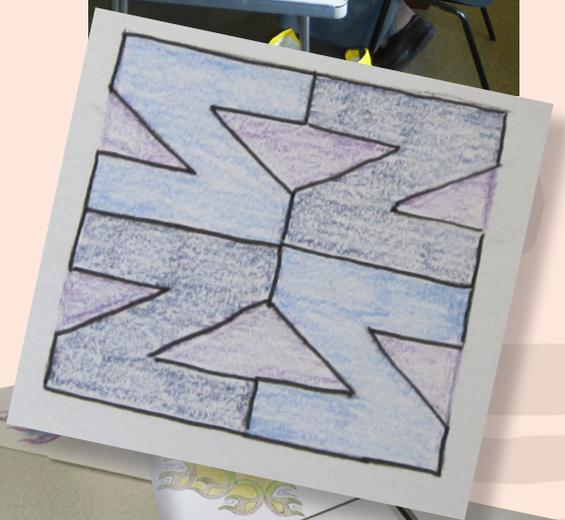
The aim of the afternoon was to produce a reflection - which is the inversion of a design across a line. The silence in the room was an indication that everybody was hard at work designing and producing their final piece. At one point a pin could have been heard dropping in the room.

Although 'translation' was not on the agenda, it can be described as the movement in a linear direction of a design having a direction and a distance.

The end of the workshop came all too soon and it was time for everybody to display their stunning pieces of work. In fact, there were so many pieces to admire, this took longer than anticipated.

Thank you Sue for your excellent tuition and patience guiding us through the intricacies of 'Transformations' It was a very enjoyable and productive day.

Sheila Palmer



Workshop Reports II

Pointed Pen Uncial - Janet Smith

On Saturday 12th July, 17 keen calligraphers of varying skill and experience gathered for a day's workshop on Pointed Pen Uncial led by Janet Smith at Lowdham WI Hall. As you may know Janet has moved to Anglesey and so it was a pleasure and delight for many of us to meet up with her again and to exchange news – a sign of how much she is missed on the local calligraphy scene.

It was clear from the very start we were in for a treat. Janet is passionate about calligraphy and she is a consummate teacher; patient and encouraging with those who were less confident of their own skills and challenging those who are more adept in the scribbler's arts. Pointed Pen Uncial does what it says on the tin – it's an uncial-like hand (with hints of 'butter knives' and 'shark's fins') written with a pointed rather than an edged pen. This meant we could get to work very quickly replicating one set of letter shapes and not concern ourselves with upper and lower case versions.

Those who are familiar with Janet's teaching style will know that she breaks down the task of producing a particular hand by thinking through the required skill into 'bite-sized' steps to build up ability and this workshop didn't disappoint on that score. Her systematic approach and well-presented handouts (all produced on A6 slips of paper – after all we were going to be challenged to write small!) meant that after a short introduction we were working pencil-in-hand simply familiarising ourselves with the letter style. A strength of Janet's approach to skill acquisition is her belief that learners learn best by doing and she was always patrolling the room to encourage, correct and generally give feedback on our efforts. The session was interspersed by very short demonstrations as precursors to our moving back to our drawing boards and on to the next step in the journey to mastering the topic in hand (excuse the pun).

So from familiarising ourselves with the basic shapes of this form of uncial we moved on to achieving simple but effective variation through the use of greater or lesser pencil pressure. This led to use of the pointed pen which allows the user to create thick and thin lines according to the amount of pressure on the nib. From there we were encouraged to vary the hand by size, spacing, weight, decoration and so on to explore the vast potential in presentation of what is actually a very basic hand. Janet encouraged us to 'play' with the hand – considering colour of medium - ink, watercolour or gouache, different papers, and writing on stones – a little bit of Anglesey came to Lowdham at that point in the day as Janet handed out pebbles she'd taken from the beach near her house for people to work on. We were all encouraged to produce a short, complete and finished piece (on paper and/or on stone) which demonstrated our learning.

The company was friendly and the atmosphere was relaxed but focussed – the day whizzed by. We exhibited our efforts at the end and without exception all showed that they had indeed begun to master a new and different hand and were sufficiently enthused to go away and continue to experiment with it. Quod Erat Demonstrandum! Thank you Janet for a splendid workshop and thanks also to the committee for setting up the event.



Norman Randall

Workshop Reports III

Applying Flat Gold - Kath Partington

"To add a touch of gold to our calligraphy needn't be difficult" were some of the opening words by tutor Kath Partington at our August workshop. Although most of us have experienced applying gold, we would all admit that either due to poor technique, lack of practice, lack of knowledge or perhaps by using inferior materials, we have all had 'gilding disasters'.

On the calligraphy grapevine, it is said Kath Partington can get gold to stick to anything! So, the workshop began by Kath demystifying, in no nonsense and highly practical ways, the best methods to apply flat gold by talk and demonstration. She then encouraged us to do a set of trials using different sticky mediums. Once we had the technique for mixing Berol PVA, acrylic mediums gloss and matt etc, in a thin (first coat) and a thicker consistency, (second coat) we started off, making a useful trial sheet with our own personal notes and findings. This proved to be really useful and enjoyable as we were able to compare and discuss our findings. Kath then demonstrated how using a glue stick has its place in modern gilding too.

The actual application of gold to these test pieces was a revelation. "Don't use a breathing tube" - "Be generous with the gold" - "It's only gold, don't worry about it". These statements were actually quite liberating as previous workshops on this topic have had the tendency to make people a bit wary and cautious about using gold.

We were very lucky to be able to buy, at a very reasonable price, a whole selection of beautifully shaded gold transfer sheets. Yellow gold, red gold, green gold, white gold and moon gold were set out to tempt us. Along with this, Kath gave us details about each one and how they apply, if there are any pitfalls, the effect and its uses etc. All this useful information was superb.

After lunch, some exciting techniques were demonstrated, whereby we could use oil and dry pastels and then apply gold. Using a glue stick proved very popular and it was quite amazing how, by using gouache with a pen or brush that we could execute sharp letters on top of the gold. People were very pleased with their results and samples.

Kath's relaxed attitude to the subject, her extensive knowledge and teaching skills allowed us all to be successful and we thoroughly enjoyed a very productive, informative and experimental day. Everyone felt that they were inspired and much more confident 'to give gold a go' (banish the glitter Gwen!) Additionally, we were encouraged to ask Santa for a burnisher for Christmas.

Kath very generously had decided that her fee should be donated to a local hospice and we are in discussion about this. Thanks Kath that is so kind.

Kate Hall



NOTICE OF NOTTINGHAM CALLIGRAPHERS AGM

Nottingham Calligraphers 2014 AGM will take place at 10am on Saturday 20 September at Lowdham WI Hall. We hope as many of you as possible will be able to attend.

Anyone can attend the AGM but only those who were members during the year 1 September 2013 to 31 August 2014 may take part in any votes.

The AGM will be followed by a **FREE (*)** workshop entitled **Papers and Inks and more...** (see **Page 2** of this **Newsletter** for further details).

Circulated with this **Newsletter** are the following documents:

- ✘ Minutes of 2013 AGM
- ✘ Draft Agenda for 2014 AGM
- ✘ Chairman's Report
- ✘ Secretary's Report
- ✘ Treasurer's Report
- ✘ Nottingham Calligraphers Constitution
- ✘ Members' Questionnaire

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

Please let Kate Hall know if you plan to attend the AGM.

Read the minutes from the 2013 AGM and think about any points you might want to raise at the meeting.

Read the draft Agenda for the 2014 AGM. If you would like to add any further items, **please contact Kate Hall by e-mail by Friday 12 September** so that the agenda can be revised.

Please read the three **Committee Reports (Chairman, Secretary & Treasurer)**. Think about any questions you might want to ask about the reports on the day.

Constitution: The draft Constitution was circulated earlier this year and we propose to adopt it at the AGM. A copy is enclosed with this **Newsletter**. Please think about any points you might want to raise before we adopt the document.

Questionnaire: Please read the attached Members' Questionnaire and think about your answers. We would like your comments and feedback before we start to put together the 2015-16 programme in January 2015. **We will distribute copies of the questionnaire on the day for you to fill in there and then, so you don't need to complete it now unless you will not be at the AGM** (Please send you comments to Kate if you are not attending)

Committee for 2014-15. Please think about any names you want to put forward to stand on the Committee for the year 2014-15. You can nominate another person, or volunteer yourself. The roles available are: Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Programme Officer (the last of these is currently vacant). If there is more than one nomination for a role, then we will have a vote by show of hands. You can send your nominations to Kate Hall or wait until the day of the AGM.

We hope as many of you as possible will attend the AGM which we promise will be short!

(*) **FREE WORKSHOP**

All you have to do is pay your annual subscription fee of £15 on the day to qualify for the FREE workshop! What could be better than that?