

PLY
MOUTH
Calligraphers
NEWSletter

Chairman - Paul Mattock

January 2022

I was just looking through some previous newsletters and my introductions have a sense of Deja Vu, so here we go again, after a long and demanding 2021 we have finally made it to 2022. Has anything really changed? We are still operating under pandemic conditions, still distancing and still wearing masks. However, I believe we can be optimistic about the coming year, there is of course our calligraphy to keep us occupied.

I'm really looking forward to seeing the final results of our Tamar project and attending the many workshops and meetings the committee has prepared for the coming year. Even though we have had to adapt to restrictions, there are still opportunities for us to attend workshops, both Celia's and Ruth's were well attended and offered many different tips and techniques to help us all progress our calligraphic practices further. Both Celia and Ruth have provided me with details of their workshops which I will expand on later in this newsletter.

There are a few of our members who cannot attend meetings or workshops, so I am asking for any suggestions to allow these members to continue to engage with what is produced at a workshop and allow them to submit work for exhibitions etc. I do feel that if we don't take these steps then we could lose the vast experience these members have brought to meetings and workshops in the past.

One idea I have had is to film the workshop (with permission of the lecturer) this will enable them to at least see what was demonstrated and then be able to produce work to be either submitted or evaluated.

What do you think?

I would like to say welcome to Ian Jamison who has decided to join us, Ian came to our meeting in December, he comes with lettering experience and is a specialist in letter carving in Stone.

We were able to undertake two workshops In October and November 2021. The October workshop was presented by Celia and the November event by Ruth, both excellent.

Celia and Ruth have provided a reprisal of the workshops so if you have forgotten or just haven't had the time to work on any calligraphy over the Christmas or New Year period, this is a little reminder so you can maybe incorporate Ideas and development into your own work or the Tamar project. Which reminds me there are only a few months now left to the May deadline.

We started our workshop sessions in October, firstly with Celia. Celia has kindly written a piece explaining what was involved in the workshop and it's development.

WORKSHOP October 2021

'Making a mark, calligraphic texture using different tools'

It was wonderful to be able to go back to Hemerdon for the 'Making a Mark' workshop. The intention for this workshop was to explore letter and word shapes using

different tools as many of us have a selection of tools from brushes, folded pens, balsa wood, pencils in fact anything that can make a mark with and wonder how to use them.

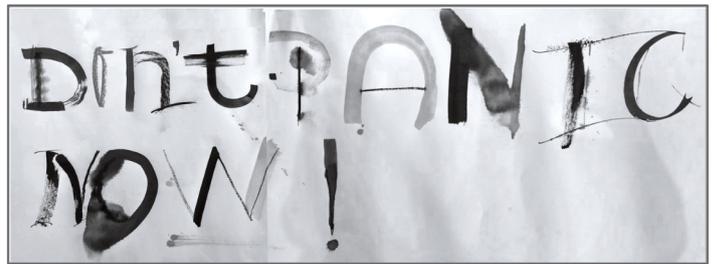
The workshop started considering how letters, especially capitals can be 'short cut' on how they are read, with limited marks and minimal shapes, with this in mind, and an array of different tools laid out, we took turns to write a letter each for 'don't panic now!' an excellent choice of words to write from Jan.

Looking at different marks, sometimes using 2 tools for one letter, thick, thin, expressive strokes quickly done or water sprayed to add another layer.

I explained how to use some of the tools, for example how you hold a brush can change the mark you make and to questioning everything you do.

During the workshop there was time to experiment, finding the tool and style that you would like to develop and the size of lettering that suits you.

I look forward to seeing your lettering in the 'Making a mark 2, development' or ideas that you have played with since, work in progress is ideal.



An example of a group collaboration initiated by Celia, "DON'T PANIC NOW !" which I think most of us did having to produce a letter in front of the rest of the group.

A wonderful time was had by all. Hopefully we have something to take to Making a mark 2.

November was gold month, firstly Alison introduced us to the gilding process onto paper, how to apply the gold size correctly, then showing us how to apply the gold, and then utilising a dog tooth burnisher combined with crystal paper to generate a golden lustre.

A workshop with Ruth also took place in November, this went a lot further into the gilding process introducing us to preparing gesso, using various gold sizes and then utilising and preparing vellum for writing.

Ruth has kindly written a small introductory article to sum up the days workshop.

When I was invited to hold a workshop on gold, vellum and quills, I had to think very carefully about how this could best be achieved, as it was a going to be a busy day.

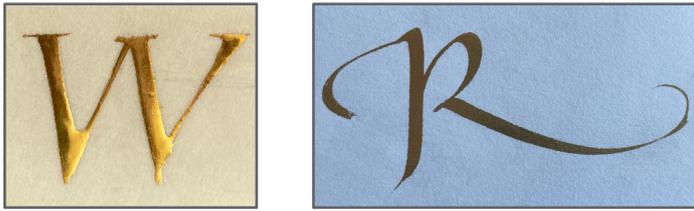
Having used these materials for years, it's become

second nature for me, in knowing how to use them correctly. However, it is an important responsibility to pass on this knowledge, and especially when the materials are very costly.

The challenge for me, was to present a workshop that would cover the main aspects of the subjects, and give confidence to those who came, to have a go.

Many months before, I made a very large batch of slaked plaster, the main ingredient for gesso making. This was because 'cakes' needed to dry out properly before they could be handed out.

However, we also made a batch of gesso, with traditional recipe, so people could have a go with this a few days later if they wished, or when another project requires something sparkly and gold.



We also stretched vellum, and had a spare piece to practice on, as it feels very different to writing or painting on this as opposed to paper.

A batch of pounce was also made up, this is the dry abrasive rub, that is used to make the vellum surface beautiful to write on.

Had anyone heard of 'Dragons blood paper?' well we made this too.

We briefly touched on using modern gold sizes, and a quick talk on quills was given which I also provided.

The box that I brought down with me resembled a medieval apothecary of the strangest ingredients, as we made up the things we would need to embark on the traditional methods that scribes have used for centuries.

A really busy and rewarding day, that had gone smoothly.

Thank you all for coming.

I ask members if they are willing to offer up a little insight into their calligraphic experiences and showcase some of their work. After Eddie Grainger, Celia Lister has kindly put together an article which provides an appreciation of her distinguished career.

CELIA LISTER

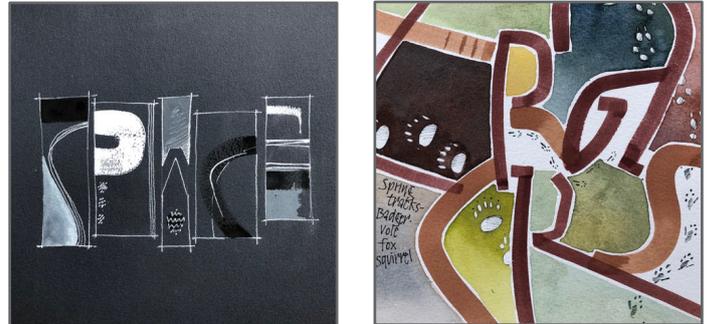
It's a winding journey being a lettering artist, tutor, sketching artist and maker of books (not forgetting assistant beekeeper!) I enjoy taking different paths, exploring new ideas and remembering old, interweaving work, curious to see what will be discovered.

I create for my own enjoyment, for commission, exhibition and in collaboration, often exploring the expressive qualities of text, pattern and colour, working with both contemporary and traditional lettering using a variety of

tools. This is a snapshot of some of my recent journey.

LOCKDOWN

April 2020 was the first lockdown, to keep in-touch, creative and positive with a group of distant good friends, we decided to post via watsapp a 'postcard' a week taking it in turns to choose the title. We loved being challenged without criticism and working anyway we wanted, in fact we enjoyed it so much it lasted a year.



Space; white pencil, gouache and brush on black.
Tracks; broad brush 2 sizes, watercolour, fine-liner.

CHRISTMAS

What a creative opportunity Christmas cards are, and to add the odd illustration as well!



Christmas; brush, broad brush, folded pen, ruling pen, gouache.

Silent Night Winter Light; commissioned by the Devon Guild of Craftsmen to go with their 'Winter Light' exhibition; ruling pen, brush, gouache.

COLOUR

Colour is something I am passionate about, mixing up and exploring combinations, in my own work I often use a 'ground' colour and mix different colours into it, one way to make work inclusive.



Indigo; broad brush, watercolour, fine-liner.

COLLABORATION

Its a pleasure, challenge and creative adventure to work in collaboration.

The black and white book 'Adventure' started with Clare Whittaker and I passing blank papers to each other, deciding on the title first, but not the size or format, we worked on the pages, sending back and forth till we felt it was finished and finally ending up with a collaborative book each.

Using painted papers as a starting point 'Vanishing Edges' developed surprising ourselves on how interesting the folded pages were.

As a tutor I have advised and started book collaborations with Calligraphy Groups, with my intermediate group at Swarthmore I started a group 12 years ago, then Gloria Gardener took up the reigns, having the meetings at her house. It was and is always a pleasure to see what books the group produce at the Plymouth Calligraphers Christmas showcase.



Adventure; folded pen, nib, cut paper lettering, brush, collage, Arches Velin paper.



Vanishing Edges; fine brush, gouache, roller, Plaka painted papers.

BOOKS

From sitting on a cliff path sketching with limited materials, to creating my own books, finding the patterns and colours of nature frequently reference my own work.



Sketchbook, coptic book and a selection of made books.

CELIA LISTER FCLAS

Recent Exhibitions, Publications and Residencies

Words made Beautiful

SSI exhibition and publication 2022

Mayflower 400

Plymouth Calligraphers 2021

Summer Exhibition

Devon Guild of craftsmen exhibition 2021/20

A Way with Words.

CLAS exhibition and publication 2019

A Winters walk.

Devon Guild of craftsmen exhibition 2019

Divine Inspiration

SSI 2016 exhibition and publication.

Artists residency;

University of Sunderland Collaborative residency 2018

Letter Arts Review USA Juried issue;

No. 25/2 No. 27/2 No. 29/1

'De-Scribe' written and collated by Celia 2020

The Scribe article SSI

'Exploring the importance of place' 2019. Collaborative residency. The Scribe article SSI

'Freedom to explore' 2019 Collaborative residency.

The Edge article CLAS

Qualifications

Dip AD art and Design, Ravensbourne College, Kent.

Fellow Calligraphy and Lettering Arts Society (CLAS)

Accredited Tutor, Calligraphy and Lettering Arts Society (CLAS)

Graduate of the Society of Scribes and Illuminators (SSI) Advanced Training Scheme.

Full selected member of Make Southwest: (formally Devon Guild of Craftsmen)

Just to finish off, The society of Scribes and Illuminators has a Centenary Exhibition from Monday 31st January to Sunday 13th February. Spread the word.

