

Newsletter 158 - October 2008



## Text and Texture

# For your diary

# Committee 2007 - 2008

**Sunday October 26**

1.30 - 4.30

**The Luttrell Psalter  
and its Gothic script**

*Tutor: Alison Lawrence*

**Sunday November 23**

1.30 - 4.30

**Carolingian Script**

*Tutor: Jill Robertson*

*Christmas Party*

*Saturday November 22*

*7pm*

**The Ridge Restaurant  
Farrer**

Bookings to Reta Gear

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James Hislop, and let him know at  
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# President's Report

Dear Calligraphers,

Greetings in this month of our exhibition! However, we do want to let you know that **the date for the opening of the exhibition has had to change** as the people who are usually available to set up were not free on the day we originally stated. So, we have put the exhibition back one week, meaning that it now opens on **Tuesday October 28th**. The subject is the same - Our Planet - with a very wide interpretation of that subject. Please make sure you have something in the exhibition this year, and remember that if you want to sell your work, it needs to be clearly priced. Small pieces sell well, so don't think it has to be a magnum opus.



At the time of the August meeting I was in West Australia on other business and while visiting a Talc Mine in the middle of the outback, I was amazed to find an original piece of Dave Wood's work in the site manager's home. You never know where calligraphy is going to turn up.

The August meeting had a "Surprise" theme, so you will have to see the report to find out how people had to perform calligraphically.

In September we had a very special weekend when we had Penny Price with us. She is the Chair of the Calligraphy and Lettering Arts Society in UK and has been travelling around Australia on a teaching tour. It was an honour to have Penny with us and we enjoyed an informal dinner together the evening before the workshop so had established a relationship before we worked together. We chose *Text and Texture* as our theme and had a great weekend. The reports speak for themselves.

We are now looking forward to Alison Lawrence leading us on a workshop about the Luttrell Psalter and its script on October 22nd and then I have to get myself organised to do the workshop in November on Carolingian - a fascinating story and script.

Keep flourishing (when appropriate!)

**Jill Robertson**

From the editor:

We had such a great time at Penny Price's workshop in September. To show off what a wonderful time we had, photos of our work are scattered throughout the newsletter.

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Phone: (02) 6257 1711 [www.eckersleys.com.au](http://www.eckersleys.com.au)

# Surprise Workshop

*tutors - Christine Wilde and Karen Woodhall*

This workshop certainly lived up to its name and attendees appreciated all the time and effort that the tutors had expended. The Surprise workshop Unleashed Restraints we had Pressing us to Rove into areas speedily with excitement.

After a physical warm-up involving, among other exercises, ankle, shoulder and wrist rolling as well as finger flexing, we did a warm up with pencil and paper.

“Has anyone got a ruler?”, Christine asked. “Then put them away, no rulers allowed today!”

What could come next, lettering with no rulers.....

However our pencil warm-ups saw us drawing around the edge of an A3 sheet in ever diminishing rectangles getting to a much tighter shape in the centre, going the opposite way. Next after drawing 4 lines to make a noughts & crosses grid we made a variety of marks in each square, helping us to relax, think with both sides of the brain and to think outside the square (pardon the pun!)

We also discussed what things we should consider before starting a piece of work and the following were noted. Script, script size, colour(s), medium, layout shape, texture, spacing and presentation.

Many of these things came up when we did the workshop.

A fun item was a mix'n'match with head, body and legs of 3 committee members. This was achieved by having 3 photos, head only pinned on the wall and underneath several

different 'body' parts (body builder, ball gown, etc.) and under that several 'leg' parts, which could be altered by changing the sheets of paper. I think at one stage we had James' head, ball gown body and really muscular legs.

This was a precursor to what we were about to do calligraphically. Using the lucky dip method we each got 7 pieces of paper with a prescription on each. The headings were: script, texture, colour, shape, writing implement, surprise element and the 7th a haiku poem.

An example would be

script - Neuland,

texture - layered writing,

colour - red monochrome,

shape - triangle,

writing implement - ruling pen,

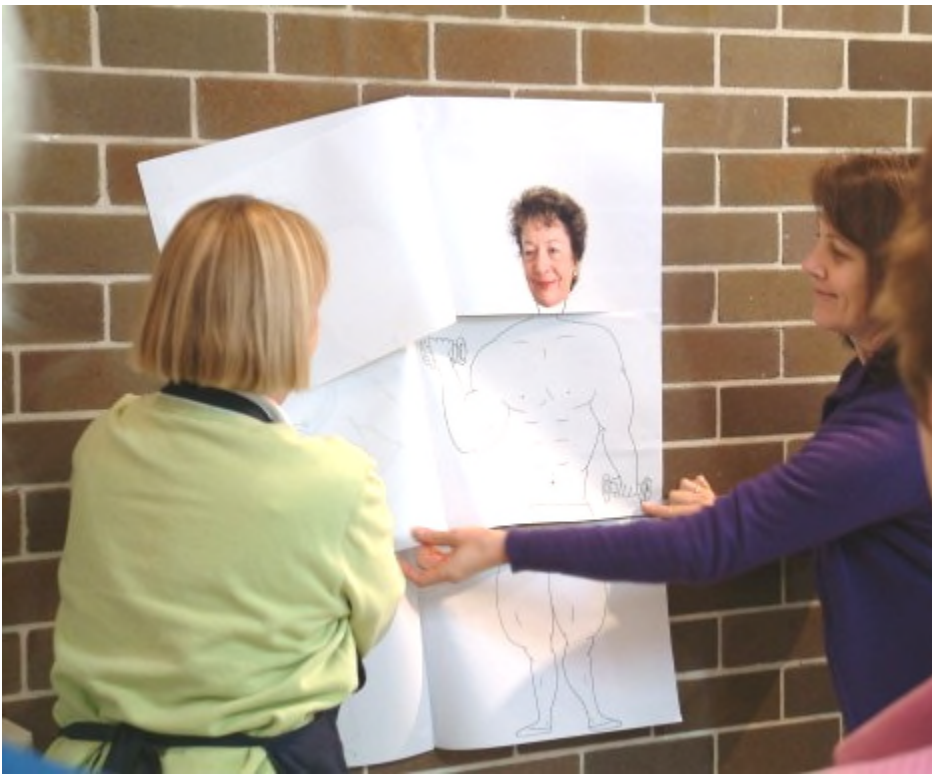
surprise element - write on black paper.

The results were amazing and this method of deciding how to start a piece of work certainly stopped us from being precious.

We changed our strips of paper for another set and tried alphabet trees this time. A valuable aid was the large range of stamps that Karen had made for us to use during the afternoon. I was particularly glad of her 'world' stamp when my surprise element was a circle! An important point some of us learnt the hard way was to put our prescription on the back of our work FIRST as a reference.

All worked hard during the afternoon and we wished it was a day and not a half-day workshop. We took home some interesting work and enjoyed the challenges that Christine and Karen gave us. Many thanks.

Angela Hillier



Christine and Karen up to no good with the committee members.

Haiku in action.



A selection of the name tags generously provided by Christine and Karen.



The prophet.



# Text and Texture

The Canberra Calligraphy Society was fortunate to have a workshop from Penny Price, chair of the Calligraphy and Lettering Arts Society in the UK. Alison Lawrence takes up the story of the first day.

## Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September

In introducing herself, Penny explained that she is not only a calligrapher but also a botanical artist, painter and scribe to Cambridge University.

She showed us many examples of her work and other calligraphers' and students' work to give us some ideas about text and texture and also examples of using masking fluid, bleach, glad wrap and some of the ideas which we would explore.

We started writing in the Italic hand in the usual way 5 pen widths high and approximately 3 pen widths wide with a 45 degree pen angle and then moved to writing the same word 10 pen widths high. We found we tended to write with narrower letters and altered the texture of what we were writing.

Then we wrote 3 pen widths high and found we had to spring off earlier from our down strokes to make our word legible.

By writing in a spiky fashion with one letter from the A family in each word written wide

and using no interlinear space we started to build up interesting textures.

The afternoon brought a fun time experimenting with bleach, having painted our paper with Quink type ink. The results were very variable depending on the brand of bleach and we decided we would have to buy up all the bleaches in the supermarket to find the most effective one.

We also used 'Gladwrap' techniques to make coloured backgrounds, sprinkled sea salt on wet areas of ink and enjoyed spreading our gouache by approaching it from the edge of our paper, so that the paint would gradually spread in an attractive way.

Many of the workshop participants felt that they would use some of these techniques to create masterpieces for the upcoming CCS Exhibition.

Alison Lawrence.

Background image: textures made with water colour and salt.



## Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> September

Penny first introduced us to Walnut ink, & showed us that it could be made from walnut ink powder - just add water. This powder is available from John Neal on the Internet.

Then she demonstrated the structure of the ruling pen. It has a gentle point, which we calligraphers need, as we use the pen on its side. It is adjustable in width (use the screw), & can be unscrewed for cleaning. Penny also showed us a German designed ruling pen with a larger blade. She also drew a diagram showing how to construct a "Coke" pen, using a flattened out Coke can.



We were shown how to load the ruling pen on the *inside* using a brush, just as we load our pens with gouache. The way you hold the pen affects the width of the strokes you make: hold it flat & parallel with the paper for a thick line, & hold it upright for a thin line. To use it as a calligraphic tool, hold it with the screw at the side. For ruling lines (its original use), it is used with the screw pointing up.

We also learned that there are only 4 lines that are the essence of all our writing: circle, vertical, horizontal, & diagonal. Penny drew us a circle within a square, with diagonals, to demonstrate this.

After this introduction, we were told to go & play. We were asked to make up an alphabet using the variations that Penny had demonstrated: a row of thick lines, followed by a row of thin lines, first vertical then horizontal. We were told to use straight lines only – no curves! This proved quite a challenge for all of us, as we had to make up the rules our alphabet was to follow, eg. all downstrokes thick, all horizontal strokes thin. It was very interesting to see the variety of alphabets which eventuated, as we each used our

creativity.

Back to Penny, who showed us how to do curves, & then off to devise another alphabet, this time using both left & right curves, both thick & thin.

After this playing, we were asked to use our good paper, for a final effort.

During lunch, Penny gave us a Powerpoint presentation, showing her copying a leaf of the *Metz Pontifical*, using materials of the time (1310), for a film about the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. Some extremely fine work was involved!

Then in the afternoon we learned about hard (conte) pastels. Penny showed us how to scrape the pastels with scissors onto paper, & spread the scrapings with a paper towel. For a smooth image, pat before rubbing. You can layer other colours on top, using the same method. You can also use a shaped/torn paper over the area to be coloured for a defined line. There is no need to use a fixative before writing over this.

We had almost run out of time, so Penny showed us how to make a simple book to hold our samples (which were all about a quarter of an A3 page), by simply punching a hole in the top left corner of each piece & tying them together with a ribbon.

Then we had our "show & tell", followed by Jill's presentation to Penny of a CCS apron which we had all signed, & by Ann Streeter's presentation of a handmade lace bookmark.

We were all impressed with Penny's talent & creativity, & hope she is able to return sometime in the future.

Penny Sohier

# Information for exhibitors for our EXHIBITION

If you have work to display in the exhibition ***please bring it to Cornucopia Bakery on Monday October 28th between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m.*** If this is not possible for you, then you may be able to find someone else who could bring it for you. Alternatively, you are welcome to bring it to my place anytime that week. Please phone ahead.

When entering work for the exhibition could you please let me know beforehand if possible, so that I can make the labels for the work. An email would be fine. Add the following information:

**Your name**

**The title of the piece**

**The media you used**

**The price** - or mark it NFS if you do not want to sell it.

For example:

***Mary Smith***

***The Ancient Mariner***

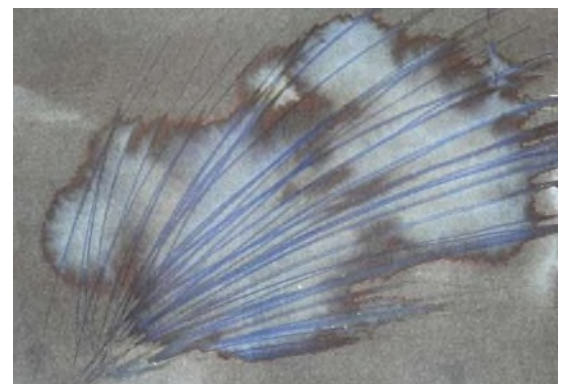
***Ink, water colours on Canson paper***

***\$250***

A contact phone number. *This will not be on the label, but we need it for contacting you if a piece is sold.*

Remember the theme is ***Our Planet***, so anything that is connected with that lump of rock under your feet. Maybe there is a particular place that is special to you, or where something significant happened. Maybe there is an aspect of it that you think needs to be preserved, or even removed, in order to improve it. It's our home, so there must be something about it that is in some way significant. If all other inspiration fails, you could write something about one of the residents of it. Don't worry about how loosely your work is connected with the theme, because anything you submit will be accepted. I look forward to seeing all the calligraphy and as many of you as possible at the exhibition.

***Jill Robertson***

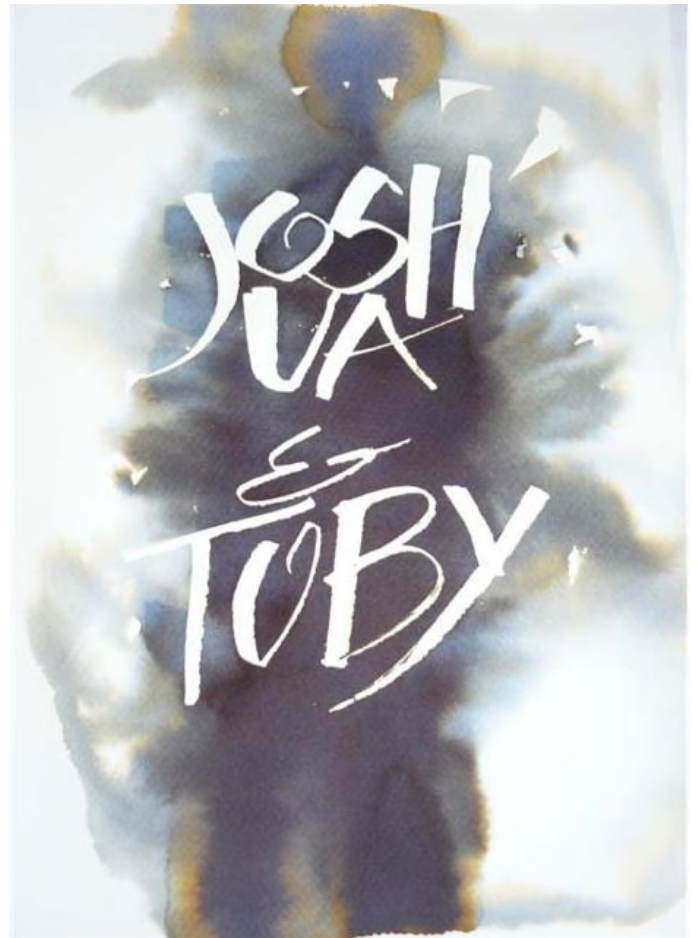




## Some further highlights from the Text and Texture workshop



Penny models her official Canberra Calligraphy Society apron.



Jill's grandsons

A sample of the various textures that can be produced.



# News from the Library

## CD-ROM

We have received a CD-ROM *The calligraphic art of Denis Brown*, which features his work from his teenage years, through his artistic experiments in mixed media. It was issued in June 2005, & is well worth a look for the depth & variety of his work.

## NEWSLETTERS

*Postscript (Vic.)* reviews their Summer School in Winter (SSiW), which was a huge success once again. Peggie Schwurth also looks at Zentangles, an artistic (& fun) form of doodling.

*Dancing pen (Tas.)* has reports from 3 workshops at SSiW – Carl Rohrs, Peter Gilderdale & Christopher Haanes. Alison O'May also describes her visit to the medieval cathedral in Siena, Italy.



The *Newsletter* of the Calligraphy Society of South Australia also has workshop reports from the SSiW – Carl Rohrs & Olive Bull. A live calligraphy performance by Denis Brown in the US is also reviewed.

Hints for stamping are featured in the Calligraphic Society of New Zealand's *Newsletter*. William Morris's calligraphy is also illustrated – we usually consider him only as a designer. There is also an article on

Alcuin of York, the creator of **Carolingian minuscule** – helpful for Jill's workshop in November.

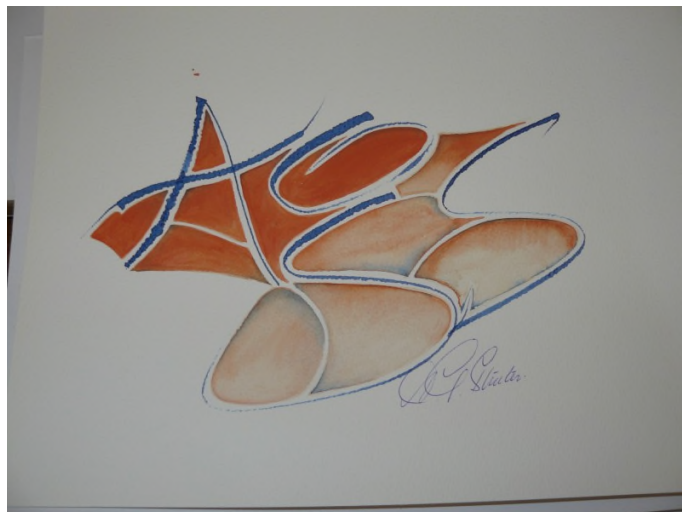
The latest issue of *The Edge (UK)* has an article on the calligrapher & lettering artist David Howells. There are also colour photos of the award winning entries in the CLAS Art & Letter Exhibition 2008. Truly inspirational! There is a tribute to the late Ralph Beyer, & the issue concludes with an excellent guide to Inks.

Calligraphy Southscribes (NSW) *Newsletter* has a report of a workshop by Gemma Black at Chaldercot, complete with many b&w photos.

*Tasmanian pencraft* has some lovely pictorial letters you might like.

All these will be on display for you to see at our monthly workshops.

To **BORROW** a folder of any newsletter, or any book, just write your name & the date on the card which is in a pocket in the back, and put the card, together with \$1 for each item, into the plastic container marked **LIBRARY**. Or see me to borrow. Books are due back at the next workshop. To **RETURN** an item, simply give it to me!



# UPCOMING CALLIGRAPHY CLASSES

## Calligraphy Summer School

### Title: Calligraphy - Classical to Contemporary

Date: January 7 - 17, 2009

Tutor: Gemma Black

Location: Toowoomba, Queensland Australia

Contact: University of Southern Queensland,  
McGregor Schools

<http://www.usq.edu.au/mcgregor/default.htm>

For more information contact Gemma Black  
email: [gblack@pcug.org.au](mailto:gblack@pcug.org.au) or go straight to  
the website.



## Calligraphy Classes at ANU Semester One 2009

Gemma Black will be teaching 12 weeks each of:

- The Illuminated Letter and Medieval Illustration (Tuesday evening 6 - 9)
- Italic - from the classical to contemporary (Wednesday Evening 6 - 9)
- Calligraphy – an exploration of the calligraphic arts, traditional & contemporary (Thursday evening 6 - 9)

For more information, go to:

[http://www.anu.edu.au/cce/vaacourses/  
index.php](http://www.anu.edu.au/cce/vaacourses/index.php)



# CCS Exhibition 2008

on the theme of.....



The exhibition will open on

**Tuesday 28th October**

at

**Cornucopia Bakery**

Mort St Braddon.

Come and bring your friends for an excellent coffee  
and admire the works of calligraphy.

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## *You are warmly invited to our Christmas Party*

*Saturday November 22nd at 7pm*

*The Ridge Restaurant  
at Farrer Shops*

*Bookings - Reta Gear: 6231 4209  
reta.gear1@bigpond.com*

*Bring a home made Christmas card to swap!*

