

Alphabetical Order

canberra
CALLIGRAPHY
society



Newsletter 159 - December 2008

Merry Christmas



For your diary

Sunday 22nd February 1:30 — 4:30 Negotiating the Nuances of Neuland script Angela Hillier
20th—22nd February Royal Canberra Show Canberra Show Grounds Get your piece in.
Sat — Sun 21st, 22nd March 9:30 — 4:30 Italicised gothic with Pilot Parallel Pens Elaine Witton
Sunday 26th April 1:30 — 4:30 Celtic spirals Jill Robertson
Sunday 21st June 1:30 — 4:30 Scrap booking and calligraphy Heather Hodgson
It's time to renew your membership of the Canberra Calligraphy Society. See the renewal form on page 11.

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President's Report

Dear Calligraphers,

Well this is the time when we wonder where the year has gone! We have had our Christmas party and exchanged our hand made cards, which is always the first sign of the approaching season for me! I hope you will enjoy seeing the variety of cards in the illustrations from James in this edition.



I had a treat recently as I was in Melbourne when the exhibition of The Calligraphy Society of Victoria was on and I was able to visit it. There were some fantastic works by Graham McArthur as an extra pull, and they were the sort of pieces you could look at for ages as there are so many layers to them. I noted a good number of the pieces were done on canvas, which seems to be a growing trend, so maybe we need to have a go too.

Next year is shaping up already and we are able to announce the first few workshops. We will begin with Angela leading us on some adventures with Neuland hand, so that will be a good way to start. Mark the 4th Sunday of the month in your new diaries right away, so that you don't double book with anything else and miss out on calligraphy.

Now is the time when we can spread the word in the best way possible by writing all our Christmas card envelopes in calligraphy. This gives pleasure to us, to the recipients and to the Post Office workers. What could be better in the season of goodwill?

This is also the time of year to remember that ***your membership is now due*** to be renewed. The form is in this newsletter, so please send it in as soon as possible.

Thank you to all the committee for all your work this year, and I want to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a wonderfully fulfilling new year with lots of time for calligraphy.

Jill

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Cover: a multilingual Christmas snow flake by Karen Woodhall. Clockwise from top right, languages are Spanish, Indonesian, Danish, Dutch, French and Italian. Below is a sample of the Christmas cards swapped at the annual Christmas dinner.



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42 Mort Street, Braddon

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The Luttrell Psalter

Tutor: Alison Lawrence

The Luttrell Psalter is a fourteenth-century illuminated manuscript, which was commissioned by a wealthy landowner, Sir Geoffrey Luttrell. A Psalter is a collection of psalms, and it was probably intended to be a memorial to Sir Geoffrey, and an heirloom for his family. It is believed to have been designed and created between 1330 and 1345. The manuscript is part of the British Library collection, and is displayed in the Library's Treasures Gallery.

Alison guided us through a selection of slides, showing pages from the Psalter. A number of them had an agricultural theme (being Alison's favourites, as she lives in a rural area). We viewed scenes of workers ploughing the fields and sowing seeds, with the grain being protected from greedy crows, by dogs and a man wielding a slingshot. The farming theme developed further, until the crop was harvested and processed. The artwork was detailed and full of information about life in 1300's. The images showed various activities, such as the Luttrell family at table, entertaining guests; the ladies travelling in their carriage, the cruel sport of bear-baiting, and knights jousting from their horses. Various "grotesques" peeped out around the vines decorating the pages; strange half-bird or animal, and half-human creatures, designed to parody or praise Creation.

Although the scenes depict daily life, much religious symbolism was hidden in the beautiful illuminations, intended to keep people thinking about their souls – and not sinful actions.

After our tea break, we all felt immersed in history, and were ready to attempt some calligraphy worthy of the Psalter. Alison handed out exemplars of Gothic Presiscus, so named because of the abrupt endings at the base of the

letters, and a photocopy of one of the pages of the Psalter to guide us.

The blunt-bottomed a, f, i, m, n, p, q and r's were a challenge for those of us who have problems changing pen-angle within a stroke, without a wobble.



Everybody managed to complete a piece of script, decorated with a tracing of a bird or beast from the Psalter in time for a quick show-and-tell, before the afternoon ended.

Thankyou Alison, for a fascinating visit to Medieval times, and for guiding our modern hands to create those beautiful letters.

Karen Woodhall

These are some photographs of the original and of our attempts at the script. Have a guess which are which.

More examples of the original may be found on the British Library web site at

<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/luttrell/accessible/introduction.html>



CAROLINGIAN SCRIPT

Tutor: Jill Robertson

Jill began the workshop by using a PowerPoint presentation to take us through the Carolingian story, so called because it was associated with Carolus Magnus (Charlemagne), who lived from 747 to 814. He initiated a new script because the existing ones were a mess! Jill showed us some examples of these, including Visigothic and Anglo-Saxon.

Then she gave us a “starter pack”, which included a history of the script, some early examples, an exemplar sheet, and guidelines. The x height of the script is 2 nib widths, with tall ascenders and descenders of 4 nib widths. The serifs are club serifs, and the pen angle is 30°.

After afternoon tea, during which we raffled a book and some gift vouchers, we used the guidelines to practise the alphabet – with individual help from Jill. She then gave us each a text called *Desiderata*, divided into paragraphs. She asked us to write the paragraph that she had highlighted, using any size nib or in colour or in spiral form (she gave us the template for this too).

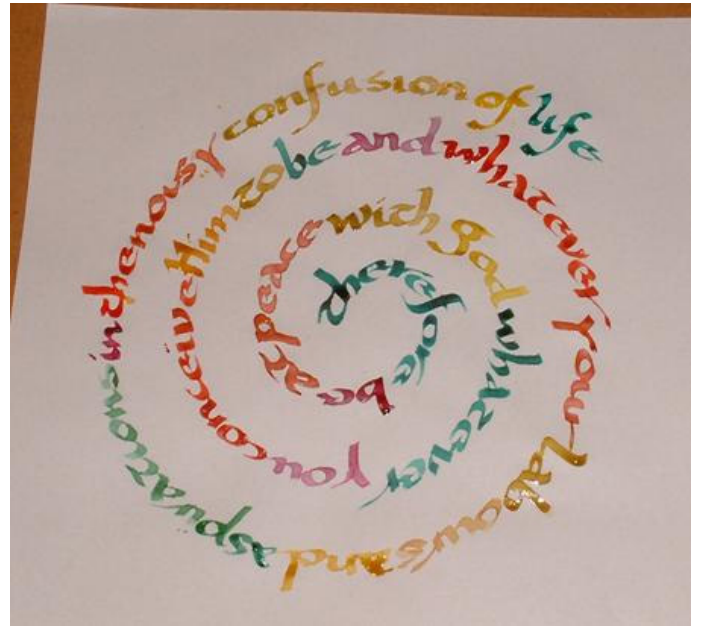
There was relative quiet as we each worked on our piece, and at the end we came up to put them in order on the wall, to set out the full text. It looked really effective, with lots of variety, but pulled together by the script.

Thank you Jill for a well planned workshop on an elegant and very readable hand.

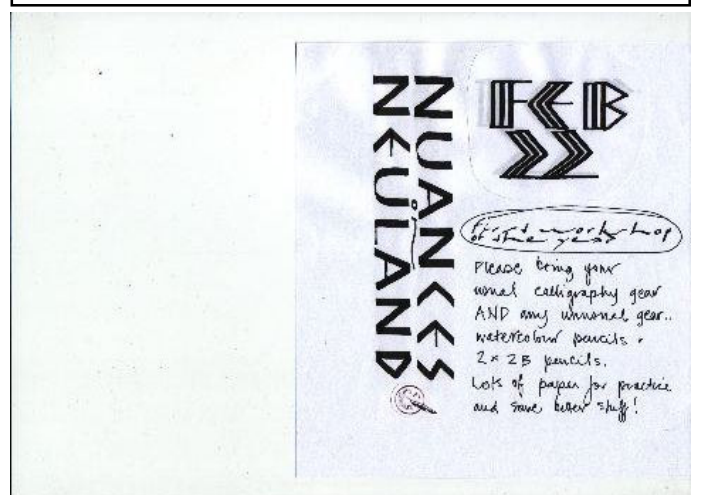
Some of the history of Charlemagne

Carolingian was developed by Alcuin of York in the 8th century on the commission of Charlemagne, emperor and founder of the Holy Roman Empire. In 789, he decreed that all works of law, literature, science, history and religion were to be written in this hand in order to pre-

serve them. Many of these works would have been lost but for Charlemagne’s ruling. For calligraphers, this makes Carolingian a very important script.



Speaking of scripts, the first workshop in 2009 will be on the Neuland script, led by Angela Hillier. Please see the details below. In case the text is unclear, please bring your usual calligraphy gear, and any unusual gear, water colour pencils, 2 x 2B pencils, lots of paper for practice, and some good paper.



Visiting Hatfield House

Alison Lawrence was in England earlier in the year and was fortunate to have the opportunity to have a look at some of the historic manuscripts in the stately Hatfield House. Alison takes up the story.

I was staying with my brother, Ian, and sister-in-law Susan at their home in Welwyn Garden City in August 2008 when I had a fantastic opportunity to visit Hatfield House and see some wonderful documents and manuscripts.

My sister-in-law is an Anglican minister in the parish of Hatfield and knows the Archivist at Hatfield House, Robin Harcourt Williams, as he attends St Etheldreda's church, the oldest church in the parish of Hatfield and the church which Elizabeth and I used to attend.

The previous year, the Marquis of Salisbury

Central London and the Old Palace was completed in 1485 AD. Elizabeth, Edward and Mary, the children of Henry VIII were brought up there and it was in 1558 that Elizabeth heard about her accession as Queen when she was sitting under an oak tree at Hatfield House.

Mr Harcourt Williams opened the cellar door to us and led us into his spacious study.

We were invited to sit down but my chair's leg got caught in a hole in the beautiful Persian carpet. I was asked what I would like to see but, as Mr Harcourt Williams was intimate with the collection, I asked him to show me things which he thought would interest me.

He led us through three heavy metal fire doors into a temperature and humidity controlled



had suggested to my brother that, when I was next in England, I might like to see many of the documents and manuscripts that are in the archives of Hatfield House. Whilst excited, I thought that it was unlikely ever to happen as no-one is ever welcome to see them.

However, my sister-in-law kindly emailed Mr Harcourt Williams and received an immediate reply inviting me to visit at 2.30pm the next Friday. We were to enter Hatfield House, not by the magnificent front door, but by a small door lower down to the left which opened to the cellars.

Hatfield House is situated 21 miles north of

room which had floor to ceiling shelves filled with beautifully bound books containing letters and documents sent to the various Lord Salisburys over the ages.

Mr Harcourt Williams chose to show me letters where the writing was particularly attractive and was of calligraphic interest. The first was a beautiful letter written in an exquisitely accurate Italic Hand by Elizabeth I when she was 15 years old. It was written to some Council and Elizabeth was angrily refuting the accusation that she was having an affair with some nobleman. She was insisting that she was not pregnant and she said 'I have done nothing wrong'.

Hatfield House continued.....

The next letter was also written by Elizabeth I and was sent to an English Lord, whose brother Elizabeth was said to be having a romance with. Again she angrily denied that this was true and she obviously became upset as she wrote the letter. It started in her beautiful Italic, but then came errors, crossings out and blots. I felt that she had probably burst into tears and her secretary continued the letter in a very untidy unformed hand. It showed the difference between the excellent education which Elizabeth had received and the education that her secretary had had.

Letter followed letter, document followed document and we found it hard to remember exactly what we saw. Whilst Mr Harcourt Williams was very reserved and typically English, he had a fund of stories about each letter and was very familiar with the thousands of documents in his care.

I particularly remember seeing a letter written in Jacobean times, very nicely spaced and a strong, attractive writing style. The person writing it was pleading with James II to free him as he was in The Tower of London and said that when James read the letter, he would be dead. The person was explaining that his life was in James's hands and he begged to be spared. Lower down the page was some phrase like 'I remain your devoted subject' and then there were, almost falling off the bottom corner of the page, the initials WR. The letter was written by Sir Walter Raleigh.

We also saw some of Queen Victoria's messages written in a large loopy Copperplate style on her writing paper which was about A5 size with a 1cm black border all around and a 2cms black strip down the middle. This left very little room for writing and many lines only had two words. She wrote about riding in her carriage through the streets of London at the time of her Jubilee. I think she rode 23 miles in 5 hours and said how tired she was because of the noise, the dirt and the crowds. She mentioned that, for the very first time, not more than a dozen men in the whole day had made a strange noise as she passed. She

wrote 'I think they call it boeing'.

We moved on to another room where Mr Harcourt Williams produced the most beautiful 14th century Book of Hours that I have ever seen. Every page was decorated with illustrations and gilding and the writing was in Gothic Rounda. It took my breath away as it was so richly decorated. He showed us various other manuscripts, but Hatfield House does not own very many and my eyes kept returning to this Book of Hours. I asked if we might see a few more pages and he invited me to 'help myself' and I gently held the book and gazed at more of the exquisite decoration.

We were honoured to have Mr Harcourt Williams attention for about one and a quarter hours and came away completely dazed with having been given such a fantastic opportunity.

ROYAL CANBERRA SHOW



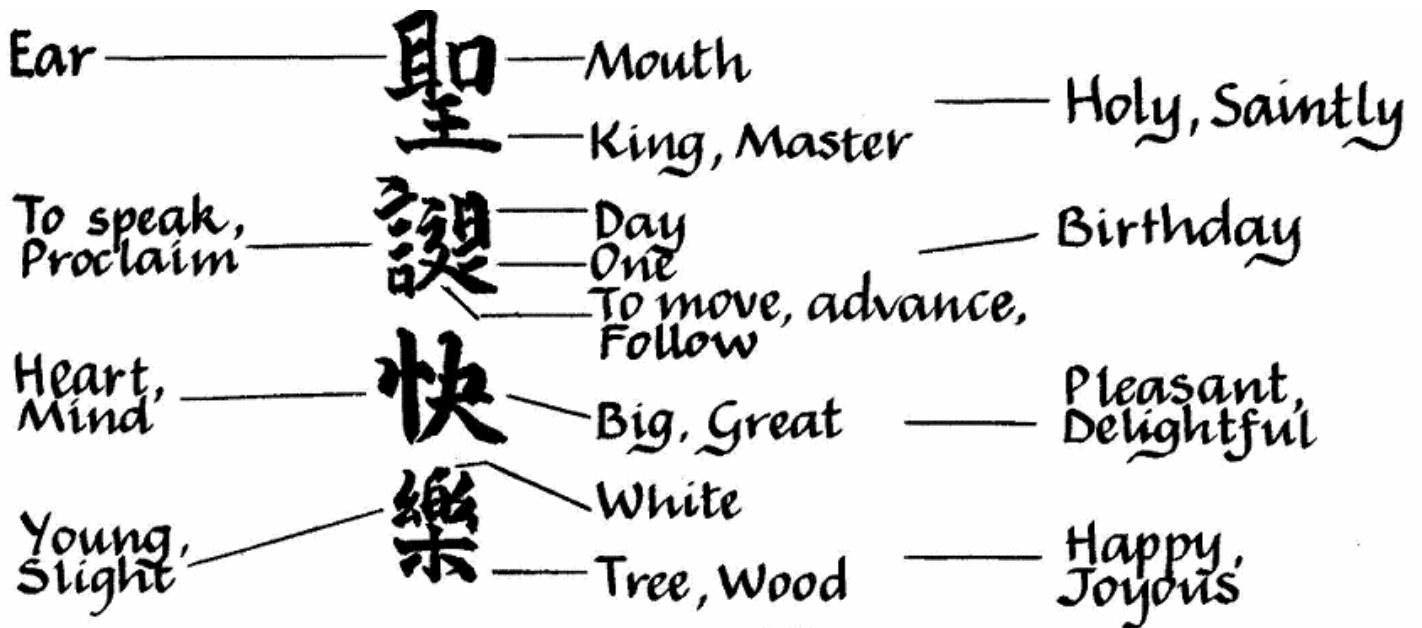
The Royal Canberra Show is on again from 27th February to 1st March 2009. Entries for the arts section close on 5th January 2009.

For more information, go to:

<http://www.rncas.org.au/showwebsite/site/index.php>

on the internet.

Merry Christmas in Chinese



Merry Christmas

Shengdan Kualie

The first Chinese pictographs developed from simple illustrations of everyday objects and phenomena of daily life.

This is an attempt to break down a set of complex characters into their components for translation and interpretation.

The first character meaning Holy or Saintly is formed from "Ear" "Mouth" and "Master", it is easy to imagine people talking (or singing) about their "Lord".

The second character "Birthday" continues the theme, with "First" "Day" and "Follow". Our Western minds would probably be adding the star, to follow to Bethlehem.

The third character "Pleasant" means "heart big with feelings"

The final character "Happy, Joyous" is a bit more difficult to analyse. "Young" "White" and "Tree"... perhaps the sight of a slender young sapling is particularly pleasing to the poetic Chinese soul. This character also means "Music" and is said to represent three musical instruments on a table (It is possible that "Tree, wood" refers to the table, or the instruments)

The character is believed to have originated from the days when bands of travelling performers passed through towns and villages, entertaining the peasant folk and the wealthy alike. Although Christmas is a Western tradition, and is not celebrated in the East, this seems an appropriate symbol. The four characters together fit well together, and transfer to the image of carol singers walking through a village; or perhaps people lifting their voices in song, at a Christmas service.

Karen Woodhall

News from the Library

BOOKS.

Ruth Booth's *Scrapbooker's alphabets* contains, as well as the recognised Classic Italic, Roman capitals & so on, a variety of styles under the headings Romantic, Playful, Funky, Exotic & Casual. All alphabets are clearly presented, with instructions on letter construction & spacing, as well as suggestions on where each style would be most suitable. I particularly like *Pajama stripes!*

NEWSLETTERS

Postscript (Vic.) has a reprint of a short UK article on how to prevent tension when we are writing, & some more reviews of their Summer School in Winter (SSiW).

The Edge (UK) features a week in the life of Janet Mehigan, showcasing some of her superb work. Jan Pickett designed a card for the 90th birthday of the well known typographic designer Hermann Zapf, & explains how she created it.

The *Newsletter* of the Calligraphers of Kapiti (NZ) has a centre spread of some stunning colourful backgrounds done in a workshop.

Raised bands (ACT) has an account of the Craft Bookbinders' Guild visit to St. Marks National Memorial Library in Barton to look at some wonderful old Bibles.

Capital letters from the Calligraphy Society of Ottawa in Canada gives us an account of the beginnings of the Society, now 25 years old.

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!

That's all for now. Penny

It was with great sadness that we learned that Gemma Black lost her father during September. The thoughts of the whole Society go out to Gemma and her family to support her in her time of loss.

MAUREEN'S ART SUPPLIES

Maureen's Art Supplies is now stocking Pilot Parallel Pens in both black and colours. If the colour you want is not in stock, Maureen is willing to order it for you.

We will be using these pens in the March workshop with Elaine Witton.

Maureen's Art Supplies is located at 2/29 Badham St., Dickson, ACT 2602.

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 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 Illus-
tration (Tuesday evening 6 - 9)
- Italic - from the classical to contemporary
(Wednesday Evening 6 - 9)
- Calligraphy – an exploration of the calli-
graphic 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)

Membership Renewal Time

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

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SUBSCRIPTION type:

Single \$30

Family \$40

Senior/concession \$20

Family concession \$30

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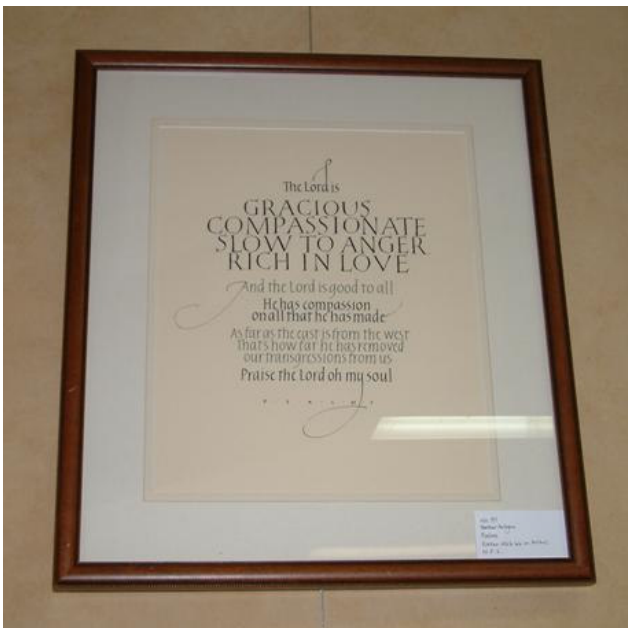
snail-mail



Please return with your payment to:

The Treasurer CCS,
PO Box 291 Jamison Centre,
ACT 2614

Scenes from a Braddon Bakery



The annual exhibition of the Society went on display at Cornucopia Bakery on 27th October. This page shows a sample of the calligraphy on display.