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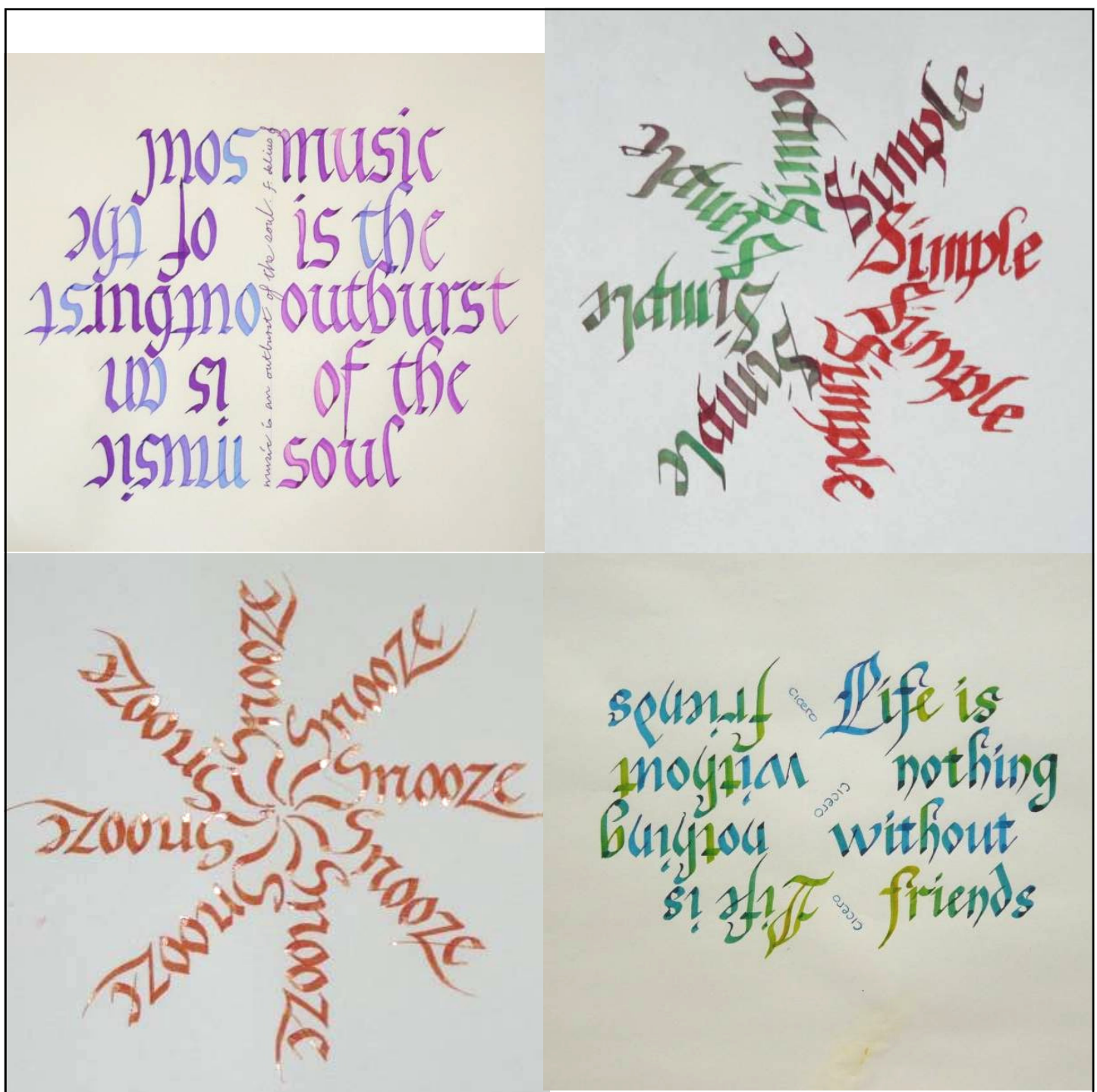
canberra
CALLIGRAPHY
society



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Z A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P

Newsletter 161 - April 2009



For your diary

Sunday 26th April 1:30 — 4:30 Celtic spirals Jill Robertson
Sat — Sun 23rd, 24th May 9:30 — 4:30 Paper Sculptures Dave Wood
Sunday 28th June 1:30—4:30 Calligraphic Panels Pam Kemp
Sunday 26th July 1:30—4:30 Copperplate Marg Peachey
Sunday 23rd August 1:30—4:30 AGM plus concertina books Angela Hillier
Sunday 27th September 1:30—4:30 Cnut Lexie Arlington

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President's Report

Dear friends,

We have had a great start to what looks like being a fantastic year in the life of our Society. The first event was our workshop on Neuland hand with Angela. This was a very productive afternoon and we had lots of examples to go home with.



Then followed the Royal Canberra Show. Thanks to Gemma Black for being our judge once again. It was good to see 17 pieces in the Show this year with a wide variety of subject matter. Congratulations to the prize winners and a special commendation to all who entered - it is wonderful to have your work on display to encourage others in the art of beautiful lettering. As we sat demonstrating there were endless *wow* comments from the visitors. Well done to everyone.

Our third big event was our weekend with Elaine Witton, who came from Sydney to lead a weekend on using Pilot Parallel Pens and then using them to write Pointed Gothic script. It was a great time of learning what versatile pens these are and to have fun using them in a variety of ways. The results of all these happenings are illustrated in other parts of the newsletter.

We have been saddened by the death of one of our founder members, Beb Bartholomew. We were well represented at her funeral, and know that she will always be remembered as an enthusiastic member of the Society.

We have had it confirmed that Charles Pearce will be with us for our first choice of time - our weekend of October 24 and 25. Then our Exhibition will open on October 26, so we are dreaming of having Charles to open that for us. This year it will be at Belconnen Community Centre and we have chosen **Quips and Quotes from the Quill** as our theme this year. It is never too early to start creating something, so have that in mind when you see a saying that you just must write down and remember.

I am just about ready for the April workshop on Celtic Spirals, so look forward to seeing as many of you there as can manage it.

Jill Robertson

Cover: Some of the output from the March workshop where we learned about the uses of Pilot Parallel Pens.

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NEULAND

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Our first workshop for the year was held on 22nd February. The subject was the Neuland script. The workshop began with everyone receiving a folder, full of examples of the Neuland script; also guide sheets, and an exemplar.

Angela gave us a quick history of the German type-face designer, calligrapher and teacher, Rudolf Koch. Born in 1876, and trained as an engraver and art teacher, Rudolf's life was uneventful until he joined his countrymen in the first world war.



As a result of his traumatic experiences, he became devoutly religious, and devised the Neuland typeface as a means of attracting the attention of the German folk. It was intended to be used on roadsides and postcards – to bring people to religion, and denounce war. The lettering is solid and bold, and was an attempt to replace the old ornate Blackletter.

After some warming up exercises, we settled down to work. Angela gave us a demonstration of several letters, and some useful instructions:

- Start with two pencils, taped together (to

make large letters)

- Aim to make shapes, there is no constant pen angle.
- Make firm strokes down the page and keep a constant pressure.
- Notice the kink in the letters D,P,O,Q etc., and how the S wiggles around.
- Take note that the letter tops are almost parallel to the guide line.

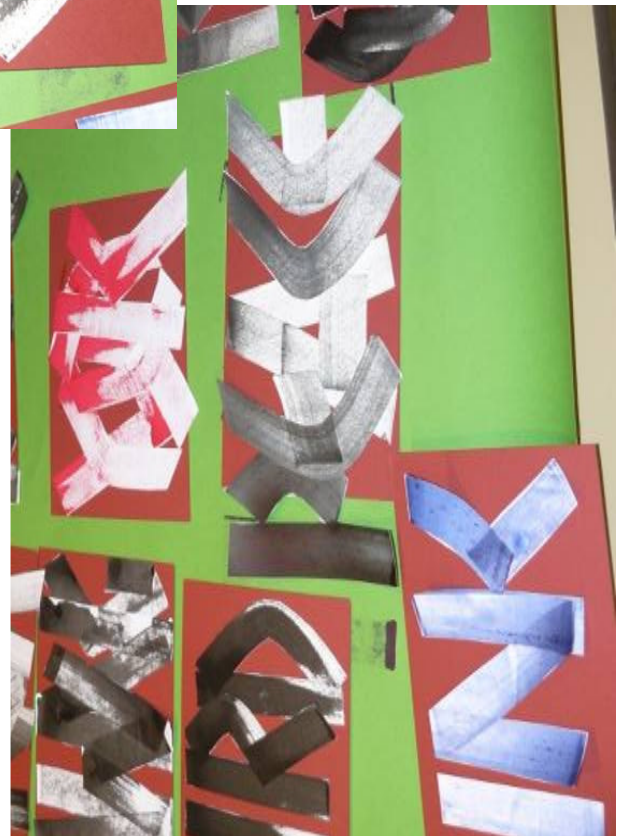
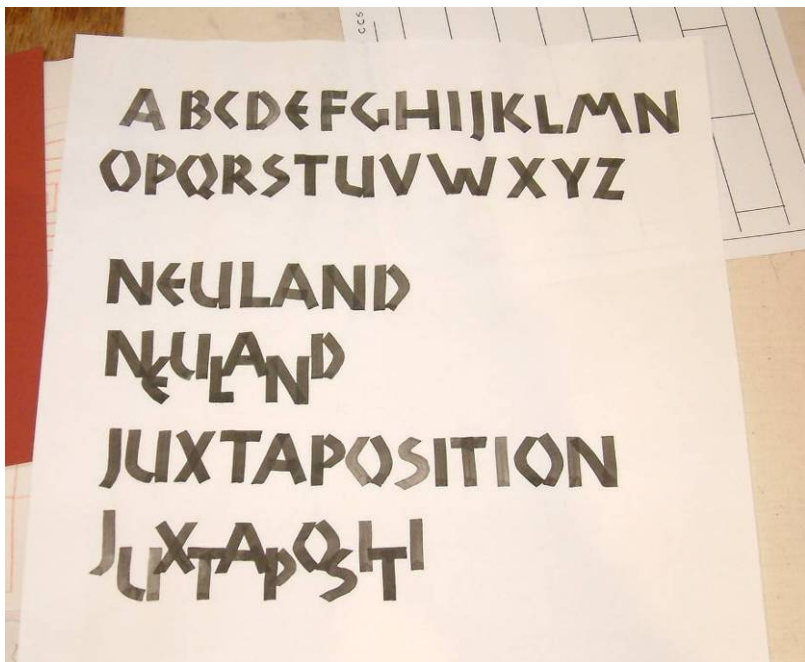
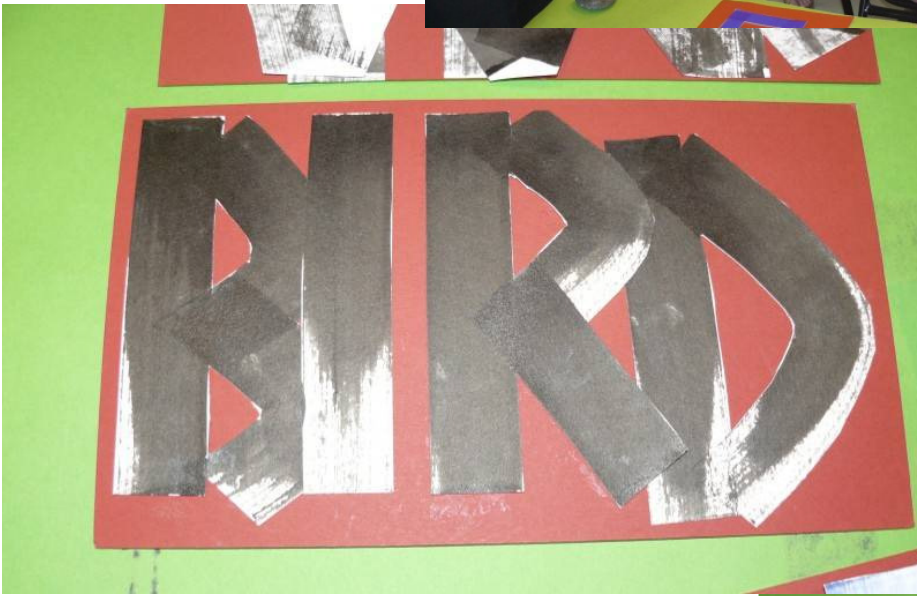
We all wrote out an alphabet sentence each, and next on the agenda was to make a word with overlapping letters, and letters that were moved up and down. The letters “with attitude” C,D,E O and Q, were lots of fun to do. The O and Q make an interesting and unusual diamond shape.

After tea we made some big letters with matt board, or balsa wood pens, and arranged them on card – overlapping the letters with an eye to “negative spaces” We also wrote out two letters each, to form a banner, for our calligraphy society.

Neuland looks good paired with a light, delicate script; and works well when used for embossing projects (as those of us who attended Jan Pickett's workshop, will remember). It is fun to decorate and colour in the letter forms, and Neuland also looks striking when written with a “music pen” The script needs very little interlinear space, as only uppercase letters are used, which makes for interesting texture when writing a dense block of text.

Thankyou Angela for a very satisfying and informative afternoon. We are all richer for the time and skills that you shared with us, on this versatile hand.

Karen Woodhall



Pilot Parallel Pens

On the weekend of the 21st and 22nd of March, the Society was privileged to receive a workshop from Elaine Witton, guild member of the Australian Society of Calligraphers. Karen Woodhall reports on the weekend.

Everybody gathered on Saturday 21st March, at Weston Community Centre (our temporary workshop venue) for the weekend workshop tutored by Elaine Witton. The first day of the workshop was devoted to exploring the uses of the Pilot Parallel Pen, and to begin with we looked at the structure of the pen, and its advantages.

The nib is constructed from two metal plates, between which the ink flows – making it an automatic pen, and a fountain pen at the same time.

The ink flows instantly and evenly, and fine hairlines can be produced by writing with the corner point of the nib. This helps to keep the writing rhythm smooth, as it is not necessary to change from a thick to a thin nib.

The very regularity of the ink flow can be seen as a disadvantage, but a grainier effect can be achieved on textured paper; and if the writing

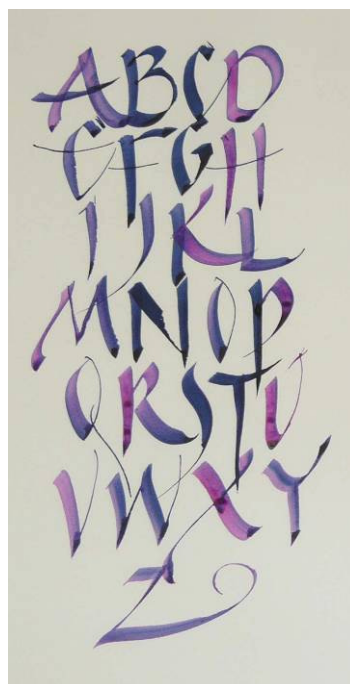


is done very quickly the ink will drop out, and create a more interesting effect.

Our first task was to create some free Versals,

using the corner of the nib. The next exercise involved creating a monogram using thick and thin strokes. We also attempted some block capitals with heavy down-strokes and fine up-strokes, which looked good “stacked” on lines with no interlinear space. There were variations to try – such as making every third or fourth letter a thick one, and keeping the others thin.

Another nice effect was contrasting a bold, Neuland style script, with a fine one such as “Akim”



We learned how to touch pens together to pick up another colour (“kissing” pens) and that you can also dip the pen into a different colour of ink or gouache for colour variations.

We discovered that watered down gouache works well in the pen (keep your used ink cartridges, they can be cleaned out and re-filled with a pipette) and were advised

not to put “bleedproof white”, or acrylic inks in the cartridge (as they will clog up the pen). Use only inks free of shellac (non-waterproof inks)

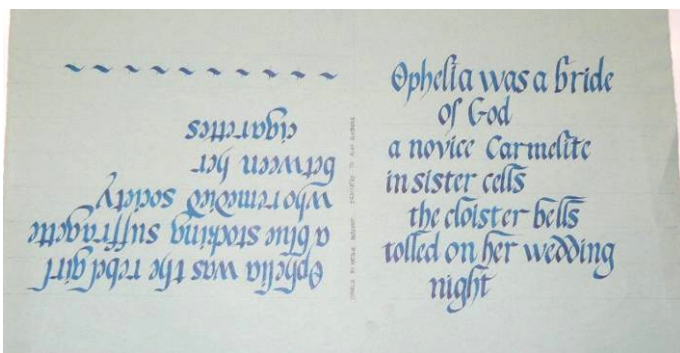
Along the way we learned other decorative tips such as using a piece of eraser to pick up gouache, and stamping patterns with it. Elaine explained that the eraser will pick up and transfer lettering written in gouache, if it is still wet.

We were advised to number and keep our “play sheets” because they show the process that results in our creation of something interesting, later on.

The day was over all too quickly, and the best thing was knowing that we had another full day to come.

Pointed Gothic Script

We began the Sunday workshop with a comparison of work by Edward Johnston, Geoff Ford and Sheila Waters. Elaine explained that exemplars are often too perfect, and that she would prefer us to look at pieces written more naturally.



We compared the “o” shapes which were a uniform compressed shape in all three excerpts (“o” being the “mother” letter which determines the look of a script) – and a variety of letters with different styles of ascenders and descenders.

We discussed whether or not our work would look more natural with just a baseline, and using no guideline for the letter height, which is a bit of a challenge for students.

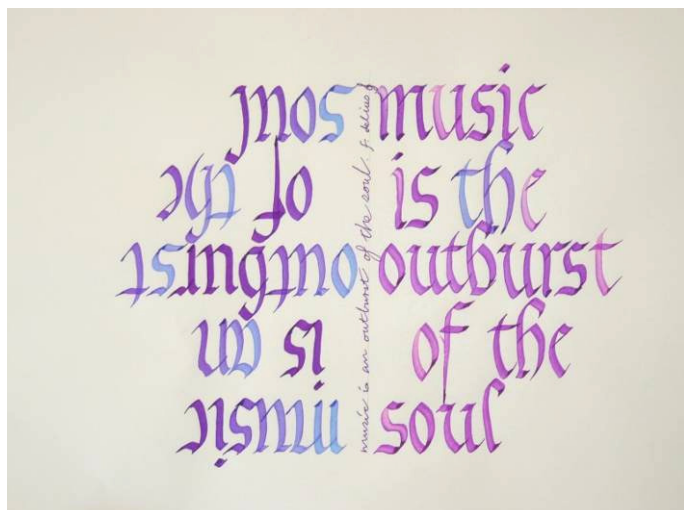
Elaine pointed out that Gothicised or sharpened Italic is based on arches, and that a steep pen angle is required to form the tall, narrow letters – and that the first stroke of the “o” begins and ends short of the guidelines. Elaine also suggested turning the three pieces upside-down, and looking at the shapes formed by the letters, instead of reading them. We also compared the interlinear spaces, and spaces between words.

We spent some time practicing letters, according to which example we had chosen to study, and then we attempted to write out a quote in our best script.

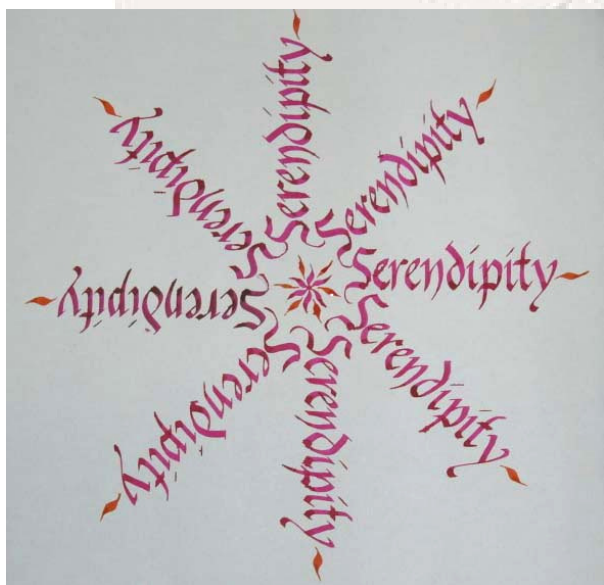
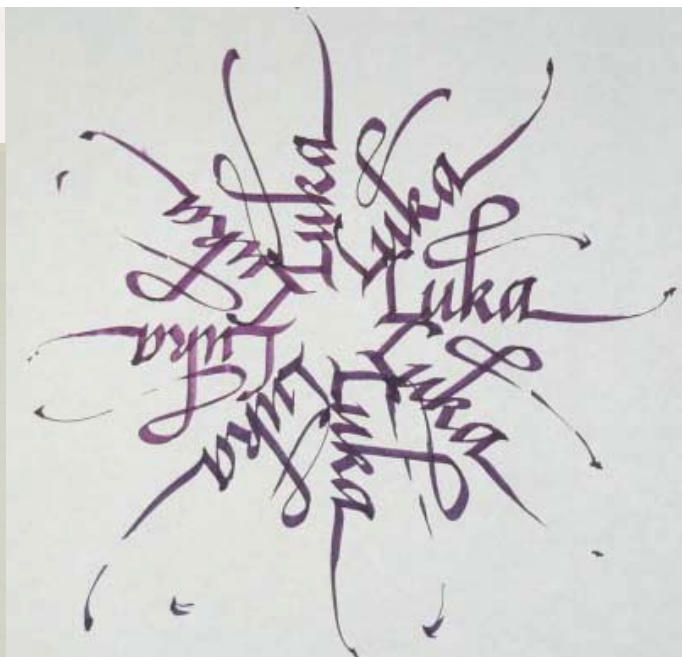
Elaine encouraged us to make a piece that could be read both upside-down, and the right way up - for an interesting effect, and to check the regularity of our lettering. Another idea was to write words, turning the page around after each one; to fill in the spaces and make texture. Our final exercise of the day was to make a “snowflake”. Elaine gave us a guide template with radiating arms, so that we could write out a word eight times – forming an attractive circular pattern. It was important that each word started at the same place and connected with its neighbour. Words with ascenders and descenders seemed to make the nicest patterns. There was just enough time for a quick viewing of our work, before it was time to pack up.

Thankyou Elaine, for a very enjoyable, and well presented workshop. We all had fun playing with our Parallel Pens, and practicing the beautiful Pointed Gothic script.

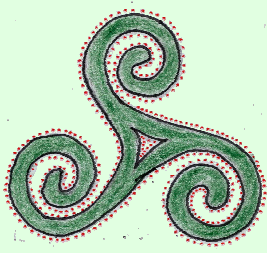
Karen Woodhall.



Some more of the output of the Pilot Parallel Pens workshop.



2009 Workshops



Celtic Spirals

April 26th 1.30 - 4.30
Tutor - Jill Robertson

Do you know the name of this shape and what it signifies? Come and learn some of the history of Celtic spirals and how to draw and decorate them for yourself. Easy when you know how!

Sat/Sun May 23 - 24
A two day workshop on
Paper Sculpture
with Dave Wood

Dave is coming down from Queensland to bring us this workshop. He has a world-wide reputation for his unique paper sculptures and we have the chance to have a go ourselves.



Cost: \$100 for the weekend

28 June
1.30 - 4.30

Tutor - Pam Kemp

An exciting way to get layering of calligraphy working for you. An exciting way to get layering of calligraphy working for you.

calligraphic panels

panels

panels

calligraphic panels

26 July
1.30 - 4.30

Copperplate

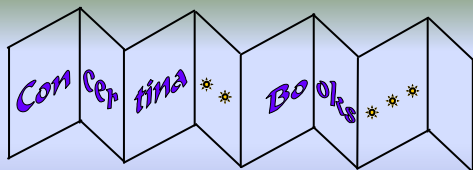
Tutor - Marg Peachey

Come and learn or fine-tune your copperplate hand with Marg. Always a popular script to tackle.

23 August

AGM

Lunch provided at 1pm
AGM meeting at 1.30



workshop with Angela at 2pm

27 September

full day - 9.30 - 4.30

Tutor - Lexie Arlington

Cnut Charter Hand

Lexie will be coming from Sydney to teach this 11th century hand and its modernisation for 21st century use.

Cost - \$50 for the day

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ego. Cnut. anglorum rex.

A TRIBUTE TO BEB BARTHOLOMEW

Some of these words will be familiar to those who were able to attend Beb Bartholomew's funeral but you have every reason to "hear" them again.

My friendship with Beb began at the inaugural meeting of the Canberra Calligraphy Society held at Belconnen on a very wet and windy occasion in January 1986. My husband, Paul, and I had just arrived in Canberra, knew only a few people, and needed to meet new folk to become part of the community. A notice posted on a board at Jamison Centre about the formation of a Calligraphy Society provided an impetus to meet new folk and learn a new craft in the process.. Calligraphy is an art form. With some misgivings as to what might await a non-artist, two people in front of me were so enthusiastic that you could not help but "give it a go". Those strangers were Beb and Charles Bartholomew and thus started a friendship of 23 years.

They threw themselves into enhancing the Society in many ways. Charles was always the practical man making items for the Society and Beb added her talents both as Secretary and Treasurer in the early days, steering the group onto bigger and better things. Her home was always open to us. The Committee meetings

were held around the family room table with Beb's homemade cookies disappearing very quickly. We had workshops where we spread paper from one end of that family room to the other. She supported the group in every way, both financially and socially, attending workshops here, in Sydney and summer schools at Frensham, always enjoying the occasions enormously.

However, it wasn't just calligraphy skills she possessed, but personal skills too and many of us have taken our personal problems to Beb who always listened sympathetically and always provided that proverbial "shoulder to cry on". She was there for each and every one of us. Those of us who took her advice found it to be sound and helpful. She was always the dignified English lady, even though she insisted on being regarded as an Aussie. She was, of course, the epitome of "the benevolent grandmother". We have a store of happy memories and great associations to draw upon, but we shall miss her sunny nature, her sound advice, her great sense of humour, her generosity and her uncomplicated friendship.

Just as our friendship started in the middle of a storm, so in farewelling my mate in February 2009, another storm burst outside. Is that an omen or was she just giving us one last gift – rain?



Jan Kriedeman

Beb Bartholomew (R) having a chat with Iris Walsh at the society's 20th birthday party in 2006.

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

BOOKS

My book for review this time is *The illuminated alphabet: an inspirational introduction to creating decorative calligraphy* by Timothy Noad & Patricia Seligman. Tim works at Britain's Royal College of Arms, and has produced some marvellous work for them. Here he takes us through the various styles of illumination: Celtic, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, and Modern Revival, with a project from each period for you to do, with step-by-step photos & full instructions. A "must" for us traditionalists!

We have had this book for some time, but I have just re-discovered it. Thank you again Ricky Edmunds for donating it to the Society.

NEWSLETTERS

The Edge (UK). Winter 2008 is a New Year special edition by David McGrail (technical stuff) & Denis Brown. Denis talks about and illustrates his debt to Japanese painting & calligraphy, and the remainder of the issue is about his multimedia & live art performance in Chicago last year. Something very different to writing on paper! (You can buy the DVD as well).

The next issue is another special edition – the *Fitzwilliam Collection of Contemporary Calligraphy* in Cambridge. It was put together by donations of works by contemporary calligraphers in an effort to trace the changes that have taken place from the middle of the 20th century to the present. It is really an inspiring collection!

Scriptit has a very useful reminder page on line spacing, and layout and design ideas, and gives us all something to think about. For example, mix decorative with plain, or do it in outline letters. The exemplar is Pointed pen Uncial. Can you do a Calligram? See page 17 for advice.

The newsletter from the Calligraphy Soci-

ety of South Australia has a useful report on a workshop on Flourishing, with many hints & tips.

In *Postscript* Patricia Barth explains how to create a deckle edge on your paper. *Postscript* is starting a series on the alphabet, beginning with A (of course). I bet you have never seen so many "A"s together!

The Newsletter of the Calligraphy Society of South Australia is now called *Scribes SA*. This issue has some travellers' tales – one to Turkey, and one along the Silk Road in China. Both are illustrated with photos of calligraphy seen on the trips.

The *Newsletter of Calligraphy Southscribes (NSW)* has a copy of an entry from *Wikipedia* on Black Letter Gothic.

All these will be on display for you to see at our monthly workshops, and remember – you can **borrow** a folder of any newsletter, or any book for just **\$1**. All loans are for one month, so just return it at the next workshop. If you want it longer, it will cost you \$1 for every month after that. Just **see me** (or a Committee Member if I am unavailable) to borrow.

That's all for now.

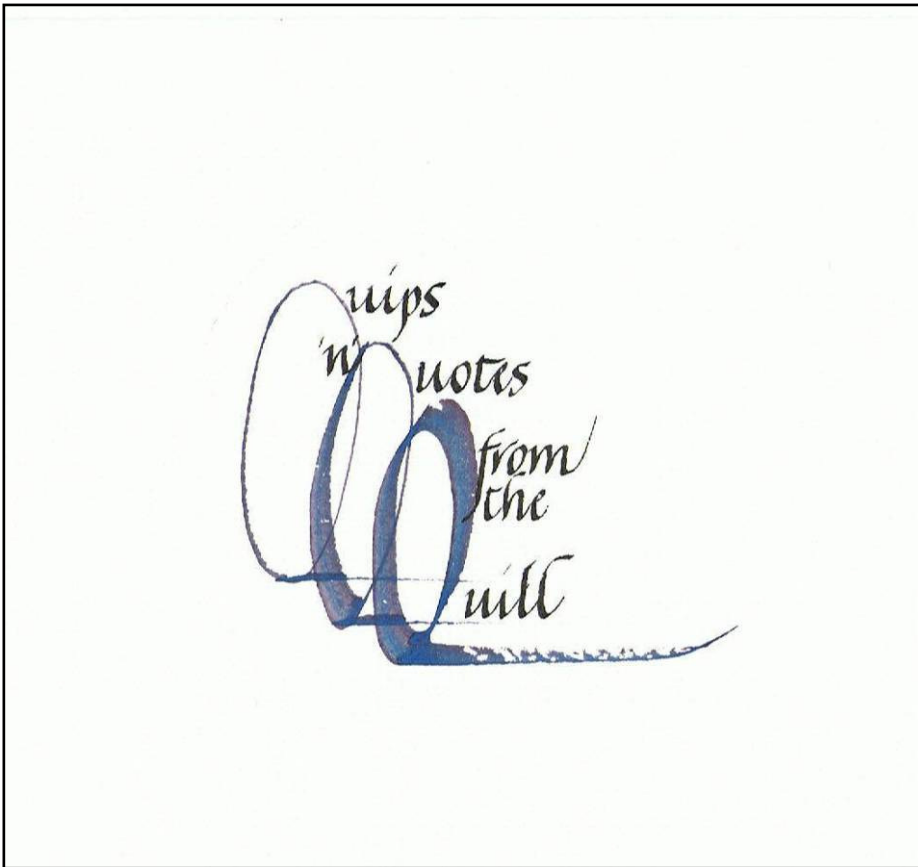
Penny Sohier

BACK PAGE

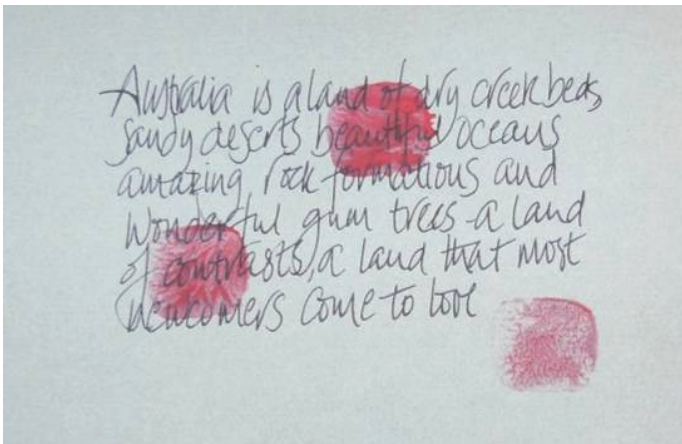
Society Exhibition 2009

The annual exhibition of the Society will be held at the Belconnen Community Centre, opening on Monday 26th October, for a period of two weeks. It will then move to Cornucopia Bakery at Braddon for a further two weeks.

The theme for the exhibition is '**Quips and Quotes from the Quill.**' It takes in all manner of proverbs, wise sayings and quotations. The theme is intended to get us thinking and writing about any such gems of wisdom that we have collected throughout our lives. They don't even have to be yours. You could borrow someone else's wisdom when putting pen to paper. If necessary, get out the dictionary of quotations or the bible and have a look through it.



As always, the theme is only a suggestion. Calligraphic works on any subject will gladly be accepted for display.



Victorian Bushfire Appeal

A raffle was held at the March workshop to raise funds for a donation to the Red Cross to help people get back on their feet following the disastrous bushfires. A cheque for \$200 will be going to the Red Cross. Well done to all who contributed to this worthy cause.