

Newsletter 162 - June 2009



Paper Sculpture

For your diary

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 Charter Hand Lexie Arlington
24th—25th October 9:00—4:00 Pen Manipulation Charles Pearce
Sunday 21st November 9:30—4:30 Ampersands etc. Gemma Black

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Wrap writer: Chris Matthews.

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If you would like to receive this newsletter in PDF format and are not yet doing so, please email James Hislop, and let him know at jameshislop@ieee.org

President's Report

Dear Calligraphers,

By the time you receive this I will either be packing my suitcase or on the way to China. John and I are visiting our family there and will have a big family reunion to celebrate his special birthday! It is very exciting in prospect so we hope Swine Flu keeps its distance from us all!

We have had another rich few months in our Society. As you will see from the reports, the workshops have been on *Celtic Spirals* in April and *Paper Sculpture* in May. I was delighted to see how people got their pencils going round in circles in April and the results were very satisfying. Never discount the amount of joy you give to a tutor when you enjoy a workshop and actually seem to "get it" when things are taught! It is a wonderful gift to the tutor and encourages us to keep going!



In May we welcomed Dave Wood from Queensland and he spent a couple of days introducing us to the techniques of cutting and folding paper into wonderful and interesting shapes. I think I can speak for others when I say we were amazed at our own achievements. The photos and report will give you the details.

Our next two workshops are well underway in their preparation and we look forward to having Pam and Marg up front again. Then comes August. This will bring the Craft and Quilt Show to Canberra again and the need for demonstrators. Do let Christine know if you are willing to demonstrate for a few hours. It is always very much appreciated by the passers-by and a way of spreading the word of our art.

Then on August 23rd we have our Annual General Meeting. This is an important time in the life of any organisation. We review the past year but we also look to the future and ask everyone to contribute to ideas and committee positions to make this happen. All committee positions are declared open and if any of you are interested in coming onto the committee but are not sure what it entails, just contact me or the person in that position now and we would be happy to talk you through it. We will also be making concertina books that day, so there will be some light relief and work for your hands as well.

I look forward to being back with you in July and meanwhile I will look out for interesting Chinese calligraphy again while in China. That is another world!

Jill Robertson

Cover: some of the works produced at the May paper sculpture workshop.

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Celtic Spirals

The Celtic Spirals workshop presented by Jill Robertson was a most interesting and successful session; and a wonderful way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

Jill was very well organised, which was just as well as this was the largest turn up to a calligraphy workshop that I have seen.

Jill commenced the session with a brief history of Celtic spirals. They have been known to be in use from around 5 to 6 BC. It was fascinating to see that there has been little change from then to now. These designs are still used in jewelry today. It is obvious that the spirals have not lost any of their magic nor have they changed very much over time. The photos of the different examples were extremely beautiful, complicated and mysterious.



Jill started us off with some simple designs and then we moved on to the more complicated designs based around a Triskele. What

the original symbol meant is unknown although there are many theories. It was interesting to find out that it is a symbol found not only in Ireland but also in a number of other cultures around the world. It consists of three equal spirals radiating from a common centre.



Replicating the designs provided for the workshop required a great deal of patience and concentration. It was lucky for all of us that Jill had abundant patience as she provided support and assistance around the room. The notes provided were most helpful during the workshop and also gave examples to take away and work on later.

As we completed our first design we were encouraged to keep it as a template, and use tracing paper to transpose the design onto 'good' paper. The finished pieces, notwith-

standing that the designs were all the same, looked very different with some participants using gold gauche to highlight the spirals whilst others used blended colours. The end results were outstanding.

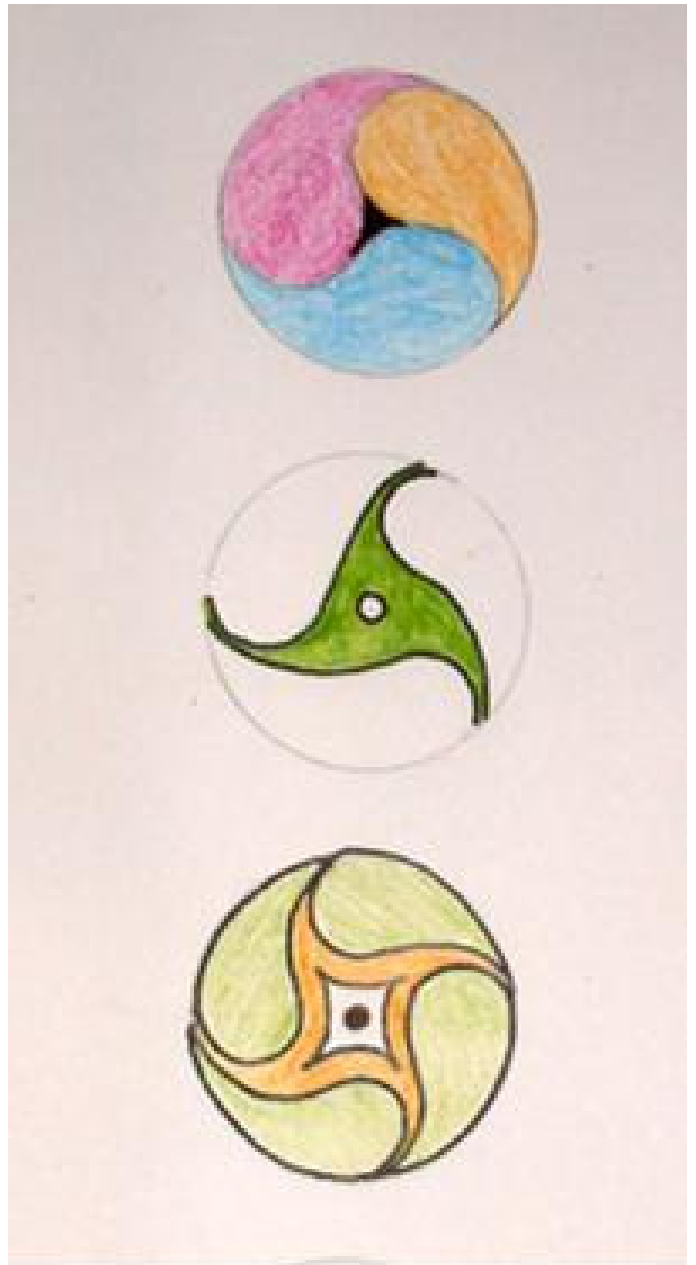
Towards the end of the session Jill revisited the photos of the Celtic spirals she had shown us initially. This gave a better understanding of the use of Celtic spirals down the centuries and how all of the designs we had been admiring at the start of the session could be broken down into the spiral designs provided in the workshop. Some of the mystery unfolded.

My criteria for a successful workshop are the usual ones of enjoyment, a sense of achievement and companionship which I certainly got from this workshop. For me, a highly successful workshop is when I can take away the calligraphic techniques or scripts presented and produce a piece at home. I am currently working on a Celtic spiral – black Canson paper with gold gauche – fabulous!

For your interest some references are:

1. The Celtic Art Source Book by Courtney Davis;
2. Celtic Spirals and Other Designs by Sheila Sturrock.

Lyndell Dobbs.





On the 23rd and 24th of May, we were privileged to have Dave Wood as our tutor for a weekend workshop. We were all eager to learn the secrets of paper sculpture, and the morning began with some exercises; the first being the creation of a concertina fold, on a wide strip of paper. Dave asked us to place letters on the valley and mountain folds, and in between; partially cutting them out, to see the 3D effect. Dave encouraged us to try placing letters on the diagonal, as well as vertically, on our folded strips.

The second exercise involved making a wavy - line template, and using it to form a curvy concertina. Following this was a more complicated chevron pattern of pleats.

After lunch we were treated to a “show-and-tell”. Dave walked us through his Alphabet artist’s book, which showcased all his lettering and decorative skills, and also his miniature book with an origami concertina fold.

We moved on to shaping leaves and petals next, in preparation for creating a rose sculpture. Dave explained that scoring strengthens paper, and that stems needed to be wide enough to support the weight of leaves. The stems could either be scored (creating a v-shape; or burnished, which makes a u- shape) We were shown how to burnish around the edge of the leaf, on a foam pad, to give it a nice curved shape. A bone folder could be used to curve larger shapes. The “veins” were traced gently, with an embossing tool.

The same treatment was applied to petals, and they could be scrunched and curled to look more realistic. We spent the afternoon

working on our flowers: we were shown how to make supports from tiny pieces of foam core, to build up the layers of petals, or to be placed wherever extra dimension was needed. The stamens were made from very fine strips of paper, which were cut using a steel ruler. They were gathered up and folded in half by



pressing in the centre, with the back of the knife blade. The ends of each strip were dipped in glue, and used to pick up a tiny segment of paper. An x-shape was cut into the centre of the rose,

and the stamens were inserted, and glued in. A cross-cut “heals” more tidily than hole poked into the paper. A more natural effect was produced by having the stamen strips made different lengths, and letting them curl.

A few tips to remember:

- The glue needs to be tacky, so have some set out, an hour or so before you begin
- Stick the point of your knife into the foam supports, to hold them, while you apply glue
- Use a straightened paper clip to apply glue (it is easier to clean than a toothpick)
- Peel the paper layer from a piece of foam-core, and use the foam as an eraser to remove dried glue.

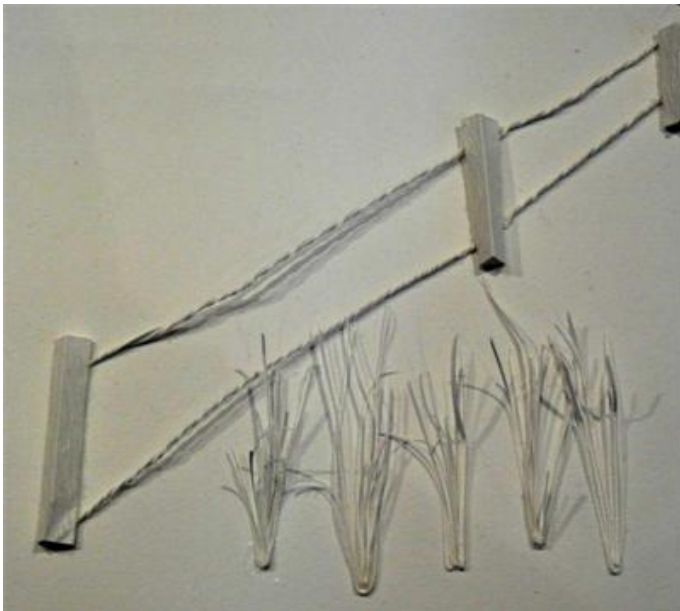
On Sunday morning Dave gave us a sheet with five Roman letters, to trace and cut out. The next step was to score the centre line of each letter, and then bend it gently to produce a 3D effect. Circular letters like “O” needed a notch at the top and bottom to remove the excess curve in the paper. Some times a “release” was also needed in the elbow of a letter. When our letters were completed, we were shown how to add small paper hinges, to

attach them to the backing sheet. If the hinges are applied to one side of the letter only, it allows for reshaping – if the letter becomes a little flattened.

The classic white-on-white effect creates interesting shadows, but letters can also be painted to match a piece of calligraphic work. They can be coloured with acrylics before or after scoring, and a touch of foil applied after that will pick up the light, and attract attention. Our next project was to start working on an ornate decorative letter with vine tendrils and foliage.

Later in the afternoon we were given a demonstration of “Feathering”, and following that we all fitted a tiny no. 15 blade to our no. 3 scalpels, and practiced making small cuts that lifted the top layer of fibre in our paper.

This method of creating texture is useful for suggesting feathers, hair, fur, scales, or differ-



ent fabrics. Dave used his scalpel as if it were a pen, and “drew” clouds, waves and birds on the paper. After that, we learned how very thin long strands of paper could be used to form “ropes” (twisting two strands together), or used to suggest fence-wire, rigging on a mast, or grass and plant stems.

To round off the weekend, we watched a slide show of some of Dave’s earlier work – and could appreciate his skills more deeply, having been taught a few of his techniques.

The final hour or so was spent working on our “thank you” message to Dave, a sculptured

Roman letter from each of us at the workshop.

A few things to remember:

- make your Roman letters wide enough to compensate for the shaping
- any kind of water colour paper can be used for “sculpting”, but BFK Rives (190 – 250 gsm) is nice and soft to work with. The paper is handmade and has no grain. It tears where you want it to.
- rolled up paper “posts” can be used as a less visible alternative to foamcore supports
- have two copies of the pattern for your sculpture; one to cut up, and one to use as a reference.
- when joining two sheets of paper, try shaving a little off the edges. The join will be less visible because of the reduced thickness
- scalpel blade extractors can be bought from “Wills Quills”, or just cover the old blade with masking tape, before you try to remove it.
- curly paper can be straightened by pulling it upwards between your body and the table
- to imitate a deckle-edge, use a steel ruler and pull the paper left and right when you tear it, or make a line with a wet brush, and pull paper from both sides when you tear it.

For those keen on using their new burnishing tools more often, Fiskars makes a set of texture plates with which you can blind emboss a variety of backgrounds (polka dots, bubbles, squares, swirls, grids and “hessian” etc. They have been available in K-mart, in the scrap-booking section.

Karen Woodhall.



Ode to a Scribe

There's a well known proverb that the pen is mightier than the sword. Maybe after this 2 day workshop our views will change, as we keep our pens packed away and our blades sharpened.

*Remember that dashing young scribe called
Dave*

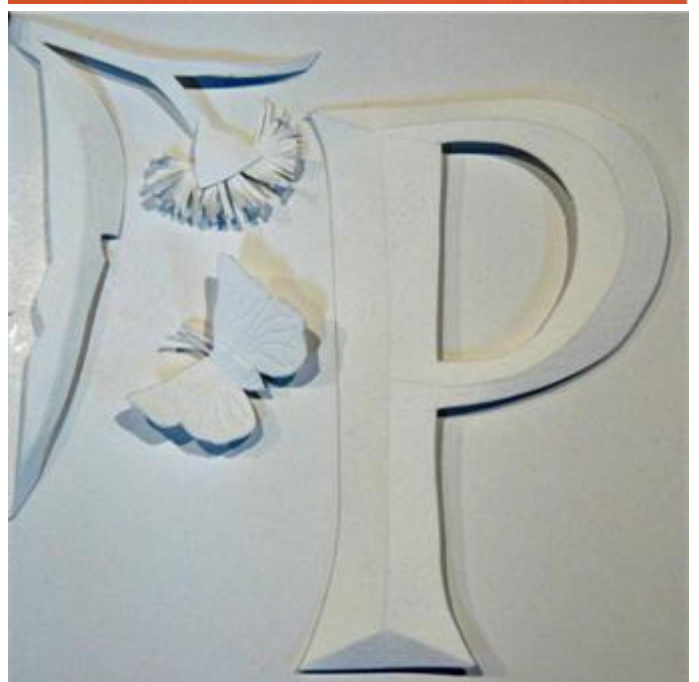
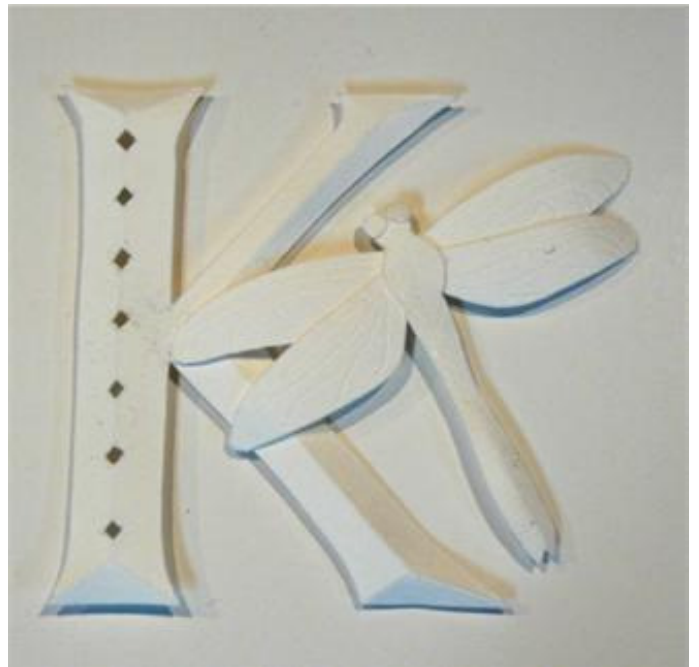
*With pen work remarkably suave
Well he's come down by plane
To help us again
But not with a pen
But a blade*

*Dave's been here before
Not for a decade or more
When he showed us new tricks
Involving various flicks
And constructing S E R I F S
Not to mention letters alive
That could jump up and jive.*

*So welcome back sir
We're greatly astir
To see this scribe with persona
Who's come from Pomona
To help us create not demur*

*So the scribe from Pomona
The one with persona
Has shown how to create, cut and score
Now we hope he'll return
Because as you all know
We all want to learn even more*

AH



From the Library

CHARLES PEARCE

Charles Pearce from the US is coming to do a full weekend workshop with us in October. You can see some examples of his work, & information in ***Quillo*** (WA), ***Colophon***, & ***Dancing pen*** (Tas.)

NEWSLETTERS

Capital letters (Canada) has a long article on the making of the *Merchant Navy Book of Remembrance*, which lists those who gave their lives in 2 World Wars. It was made in 1992-93.

Scriptit (Vic.) has some interesting exemplars – free Italic lower case, & an unnamed one which looks challenging.

The newsletter from New Zealand Calligraphers has some lovely examples of letters produced for an Alphabet project by some of its members.

Postscript (Vic.) Patricia Barth is the member profiled. She is a family tree specialist, & her work is beautiful.

Raised bands (Canberra) has an interesting article *ADFAS in Canberra* about a local group making an inventory of church furnishings at St John's in Reid, including a beautiful Remembrance Book which records the names of parishioners who served in World War 2. The calligrapher was G. M. Duncan.

Colophon has an article written by Gemma Black on the *Apology* manuscript which she did on vellum. Some of you may have been lucky enough to see this.

Calligraphy Society of New Zealand's newsletter has a Versals exemplar. There is also Part w of Kerry Bunting's article on *History of Western typography*, here covering the 16th to 18th centuries.

Calligraphers of Kapiti (NZ) profiles Don Lit-

tle, with an inspiring double page spread of some of his work in colour. Also included is Part 2 of an article by Daniel Reeve *What's in a font?* with some terminology of font design.

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

Materials lists for upcoming workshops

July workshop—Copperplate

Black ink

Pointed nib – Mitchell copperplate elbow nib

- Brause EF66 nib

- Hunt Imperial pointed nib

Straight holder for Mitchell angled nib

Angled holder for straight nibs

Layout paper

Some hot pressed watercolour paper (smooth)

Ideas and wording for an invitation which we will do if there is time.

August AGM—concertina books

Cutting mat, steel ruler, sharp craft knife/scalpel, pencil eraser, ribbons, decorative paper for covers. Angela will have some.

craft glue, bristle brush or applicator for glue, an old phone book for glueing on

These books measure 3.5 cms x 4.5 cms and have a concertina 'page' for writing on between 30 and 40 cms in length.

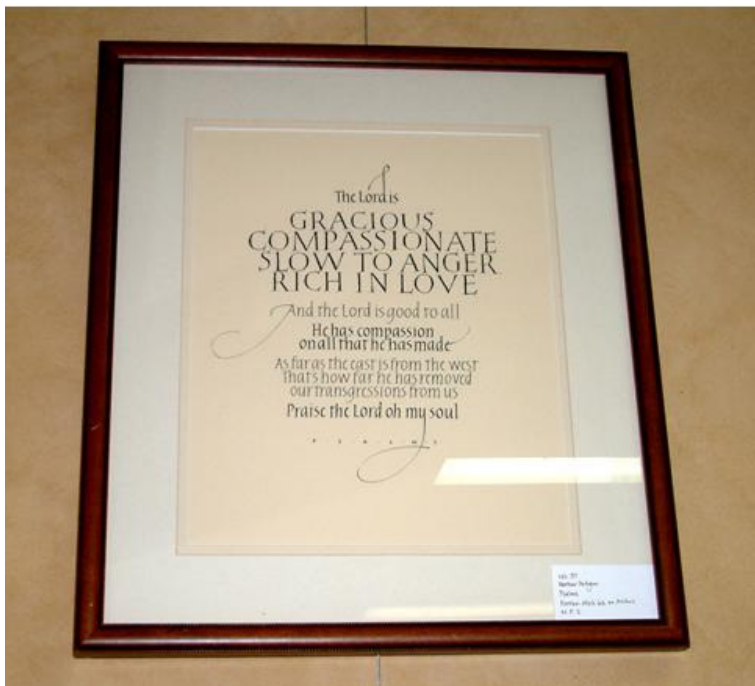
Bring your calligraphy pens, ink/gouache in case we have writing time.

Canberra Show 2009 Winners

Congratulations are due to Jill Robertson for her entry in the Canberra Show this year. Jill won second prize for her piece "Tall Trees."

Heather Hodgson won third prize for her "Psalms" entry. Christine Wilde was awarded a highly commended for her "Alphabet" entry.

Elizabeth Faul won first prize for her Mad Hatter's Tea Party piece.



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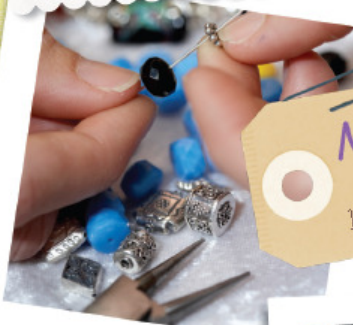
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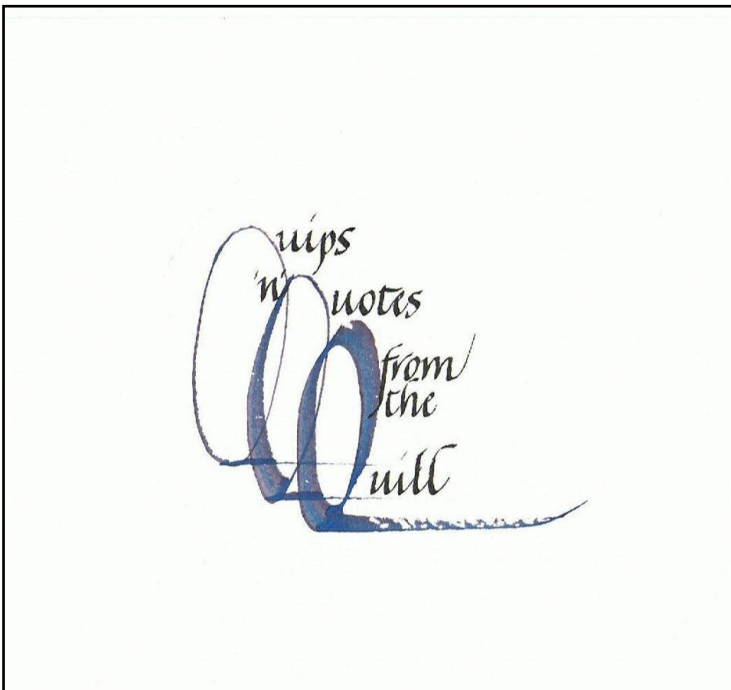
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Society Exhibition 2009

The committee is very excited to announce that Charles Pearce has agreed to open the Society's exhibition this year. Charles is an internationally known calligrapher of many years experience based in Arkansas. He has two web sites at www.charlespearce.com and www.whiskeyspring.com. Of course, with such a high profile international visitor opening the event, we need to have our best work on display.

Opening night for the exhibition is Monday 26th October and will be held at Urambi Village hall, where we normally hold our workshops. The evening will feature a talk from Charles about his work.

Following opening night, the exhibition will move to the Belconnen Community Centre 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.

Materials list for June workshop—Calligraphic panels

- If you have your own acrylic paints bring one or two dark colours plus a silver and a gold
- paint containers big enough for a 2cm wide brush.
- regular calligraphy equipment including a small nib
- tools for making marks e.g. automatic pens, large nibs, balsa wood, toothpicks
- 1 sheet of 300gsm Hot Press Watercolour paper. Cut six 19cm x 6 cm pieces but bring the remainder with you to cut into larger pieces.
- Protective scrap paper – gloss in preference to newspaper
- large flat paintbrush 2cm wide e.g. Talkon folk art brush (2 if you have them otherwise we will share)
- cutting mat, knife and ruler – only if you already have them, if not we can share
- painters on/off tape
- chux cloth
- Small quotes or a verse