

Newsletter 163 - October 2009



Books, books, books

# For your diary

24th—25th October

9:00—4:00

## Pen Manipulation

Charles Pearce

Sunday 21st November

1:30—4:30

## Make your own cards

DIY

Saturday 5th December

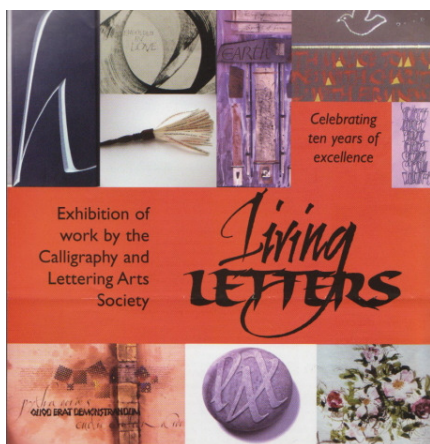
Time TBA

Place: A Bite to Eat, Chifley

## Christmas Lunch

### Lost

The book “**Living Letters**” has gone missing from the library. If someone has borrowed it, could they please return it to the librarian at the next opportunity.



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### Thank you to:

Wrap writer: Karen Woodhall

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**Cover:** the society has spent a lot of time making books lately. The cover photos show some of the results.

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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](mailto:jameshislop@ieee.org)*

# President's Report

Dear Calligraphy Friends,

We have finally arrived at October - the month of our annual exhibition. I do hope you will be able to come to see the exhibition this year and **particularly invite you to come to the opening** on Monday October 26th, when our international calligrapher, Charles Pearce will not only be opening the exhibition, but also showing us some of his own work and talking about his journey in the world of calligraphy.

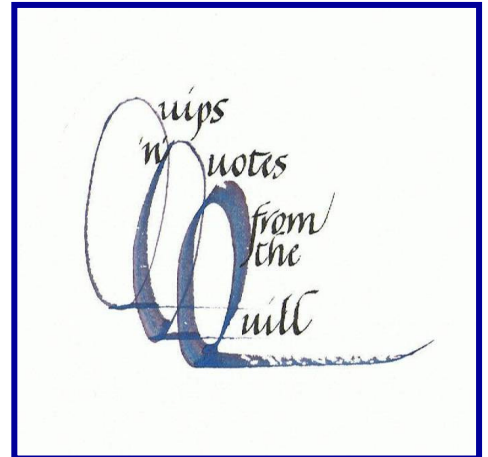
That date and venue again:

**Monday 26th October at 7.30pm**

**Urambi Community Hall**

**Crozier Circuit, Kambah.**

If you have work for the exhibition, please bring it to Urambi over the weekend of the workshop there, or deliver it to a committee person near you. Angela and Jill on the northside and Christine or Reta on the southside. All phone numbers are on the previous page. Also, please see further instruction on page 12.



After our opening at Urambi, we will be moving the exhibition to Belconnen Gallery in Belconnen Community Centre in Swanson St. This is opposite Westfield near the library. The gallery has a lovely space with excellent lighting and many people go through the area every day so we will have good exposure. Pieces can be for sale or not - that is up to you. We are also looking for people who may be interested in demonstrating while the exhibition is on.

Charles' visit is really the high point of our year this year, and as a couple of people have had to pull out, we actually have some spaces left for his weekend and would love to fill them. So if you are interested in learning about Pen Manipulation, then get in touch with Christine as soon as possible and she will be only too glad to add your name to our list.

Our final workshop will be a card making afternoon on November 28th, when we will be as creative as the supplies allow. Do bring anything you have in the way of bits of pieces and we will enjoy a creative time together.

**Jill Robertson**

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**42 Mort Street, Braddon**

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



# Concertina Books

After a pleasant lunch, provided by committee members, we all sat down to view a slide-show review of the past year's workshops and events.

Everyone agreed that the society has had a rich and full year, with an interesting variety of workshops; some presented by interstate tutors, and others by our own talented members and teachers.

Following the formation of the new committee, and conclusion of business, we were free to spend some time with Angela, and involve ourselves in the making of small concertina books.

Angela had a selection of books to show us; ranging from a tiny book with front and back covers made from a mosaic tile, presented in a little box...to a tall and elegant book with a special removable spine, that locks the folds in place.

There was a book with a cut-out window on each folded page, which revealed a photo on the final page, and a book with laced windows (using lots of different textures of thread and ribbons). We also admired a Triangle book, and a "Bon voyage" book crafted from the



pages of an old passport.

Angela assured us that just about any recycled material could be used to make pages: old calendars and brochures, colour swatches from Bunnings, and scraps of foamcore and paste board, old credit cards etc. could form the boards of the books.

We began by making two little books, the first about 3.5 by 4.5cms and the second 4 by 6cms, both decorated with ribbons.

We received instructions for the tall, "locked spine" book, and for another book which started with an A4 sheet of paper that was folded down in thirds, origami style. The latter being reminiscent of a folded street map.

A few important tips that we learned during the afternoon were:

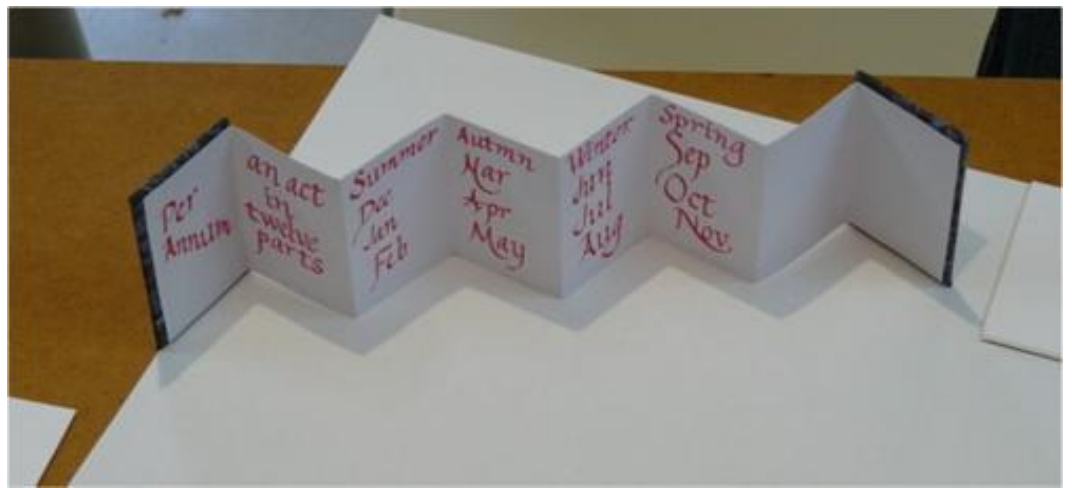
When forming the concertina strip...start folding from the centre, and measure page width against cover board. The excess can be trimmed off from both ends of the strip.

Make the folds gently at first, use a bone folder afterwards, to make the creases properly (once you are sure the folds are aligned).



Use an old phone book for gluing, and rip each page out as soon as it becomes sticky.

When making a larger concertina book...write on squares of card, and glue them on to each folded page, reducing the risk of making mistakes.



Apply glue to the cover paper, not the boards...and with very small books, use a fingernail to tuck in the edges of the paper (they don't need mitred corners)

Angela also gave us the template for a small folded box, to house a small square book.

Everyone had a great deal of fun making their little books, and although most of us ran out of time before attempting the larger ones, I'm sure we will be inspired to try them at home.

Thankyou Angela for a great workshop, and to the Society, for providing an excellent year of calligraphy.



Karen Woodhall





# Cnut Charter Hand

## Workshop with Lexie Arlington 27th September 2009

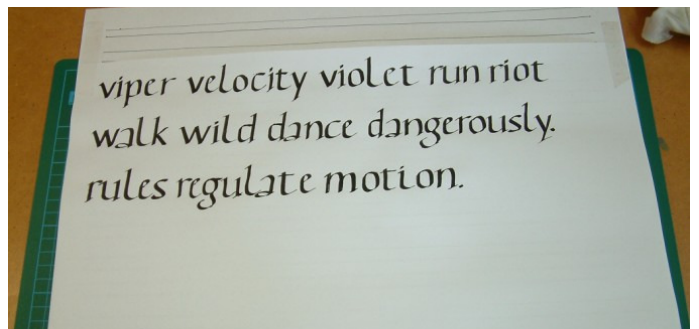
Lexie opened the workshop by providing the twelve participants with a brief summary of her more than 23 years calligraphy experience. She commenced classes as a fun thing in 1986, making marks (non words) on canvas, later achieving certificate and diploma levels and passing on her knowledge and skills as a teacher.

The Cnut Charter Hand on which the modern version was based was found in documents found in manuscripts made during the reign of King Cnut, a Dane (known to the English as King Canute) who ruled as King of England from 1017 to 1035. The Cnut Charter Hand of 1018 is attributed to Eadvius Basan, a scribe of Christ Church, Canterbury. There is also "The Gospels of Canute" which associated King Canute to the priory of Christ Church, Canterbury. The historical Arundel Psalter was written by Eadvius Basan. It is similar to the Cnut and is the beginning of compression. Just as Edward Johnston based the Foundational hand on the Ramsey Psalter, the modern Cnut is based on the Cnut charter hand. (British Library Ref. "The Art of Illuminated Manuscripts – Illustrated Sacred Writing" by J.



Westward pp. 22 – 23)

This English script, although less formal than Foundational hand, was used to prepare official documents. It was written with a quill and was a rather slow process. Adapted for modern use approximately 14 years ago, the modern hand is very versatile and equally suited to

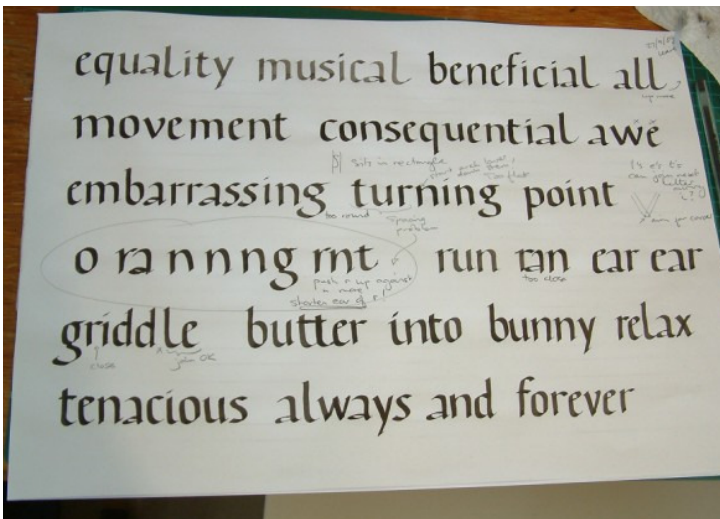


small or tall lettering. The workshop was based on Lexie's own adaptation which she now teaches in preference to Foundational Hand.

For the benefit of those of us who had not previously done so, Lexie guided us through one of her handouts ("Looking at an Original Manuscript as defined by Edward Johnston") to define the "rules" for analysing a script to copy, examining the following:

- **CHARACTER:** widest stroke, nib angles, and text slope angles;
- **WEIGHT:** number of nib widths for x height, ascenders and descenders;
- **SHAPE:** of the letter O, number of stroke widths of the letter O and how letters start and finish;
- **CONSTRUCTION:** number of strokes, order of strokes and pen direction;
- **SPEED:** at which it might have been written, what it was written with and the size of the original work.

This check list is useful in analysing any script you are looking at reproducing. As a beginner



I found this process interesting and a very useful tool.

On to the script. Lexie demonstrated the formation of each minuscule letter, reminding us that we were actually drawing the inside shape of the letter. With the letter O as an example, Lexie taught us to keep an eye on the right hand side of the nib while making the left curve, and then the left hand side of the nib while making the right hand curve. The morning went very fast as we worked practicing our lettering, each member receiving lots of individual attention from Lexie as she worked the room checking our progress and helping correct any errors.



Some points to remember:

- Pen angle is 30°;
- On letters such as v w y & x initial down strokes start at 45° – 50°;
- A change in pen direction is noted with the letters r n m h & u – all of which have

- sprung arches;
- The x height - 5 nib widths;
- Ascenders and descenders – 3 nib widths;
- The o is an oval with flat sides, as are the bowls of b c d e p and g;
- Foundational Hand uppercase at 7 nib widths is used with Cnut minuscule;
- The script is less formal and more versatile than Foundational and is legible with any size nib from Mitchell 4 to a number 4 automatic pen.

Lexie demonstrated how elegant Cnut could look if the x height was increased and the letters were compressed. It is a good script to experiment with.

We also had fun making a little no-sew birthday booklet featuring the months of the year in Cnut Charter Hand. Most of the materials used were similar yet all the books are so very different, as you will see in James' photographs. Lexie had prepared the paper and covers in advance and provided a box full of attractive, colorful paper for decorating.

Thank you Lexie – it was a great day. The handouts and materials provided were helpful and informative. We all enjoyed the workshop and learnt a lot. We hope you will come again. A perfect way to spend a cold Canberra Spring day.

Carol Perron





# THE SAINT JOHN'S BIBLE

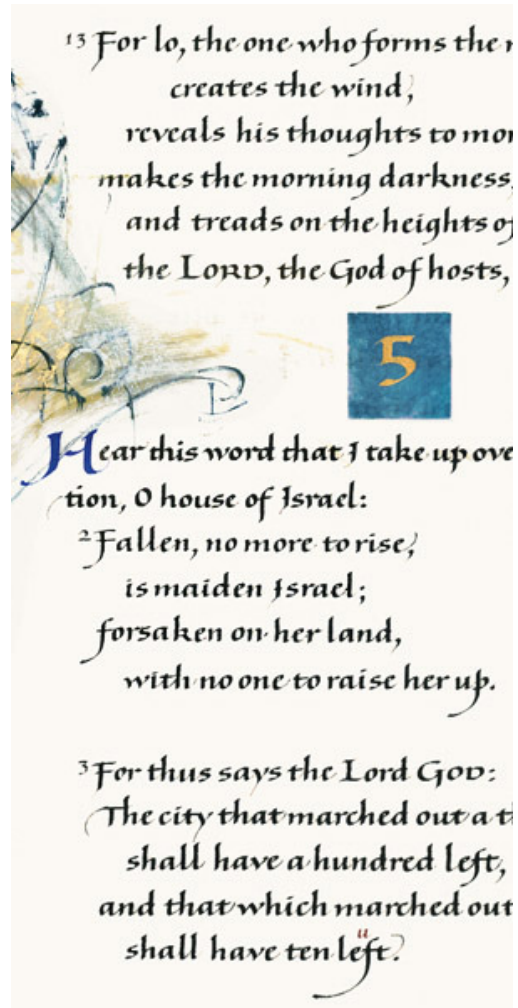
Exhibition of some pages of The Saint John's Bible. London, 2009.

The Saint John's Bible is the first handwritten, illuminated Bible commissioned since the advent of the printing press more than 500 years



ago. It was commissioned in 1998 by the Benedictine monks of Saint John's Abbey and University (USA) to ignite the spiritual imagination of believers throughout the world and to illuminate the word of God for a new millennium.

The Saint John's Bible is being created by a team of scribes, artists and craftspeople in a Scriptorium in Wales under the artistic direction of Donald Jackson, one of the world's



foremost calligraphers and Senior Scribe to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Crown Office at the House of Lords. The Saint John's Bible revives an age-old calligraphic art form using calf-skin vellum, goose quills, natural inks, hand-ground pigments and gold-leaf gilding. And yet, it is a modern creation complete with a contemporary translation, script, themes and illustrations.

It is a monumental artistic endeavour; Newsweek magazine has called it 'America's Book of Kells'. The Smithsonian magazine described it as 'one of the extraordinary undertakings of our time'.



So when in London in July, I went to the lower crypt of St Martin-in-the-Fields to see the 26 pages that were on display. Each page has a full description of the text, illustration and materials used. All the pages have titles, and descriptions of the work. For example, the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8-25) Artists Donald Jackson with contributions from Chris Tomlin.

'In this vibrant collage of colourful creatures



and plants, the images combine chaotically, revolving around the human figure of a huntress in the centre, who also appears in the Creation illumination. Ultimately, the gold presence of God unites them. The dancing figures are based on rock paintings. Near the top, the vertical stripes echo the Genesis illumination. While this scene is meant to evoke a time of plenty and innocence, symbols foreshadowing the end of innocence appear in the lower section: the predatory harlequin shrimp, the coral snake, and several poisonous insects. The Garden of Eden is also called Paradise, a word derived from the Persian for 'garden'. Tending a garden may be seen as human participation in God's creation, starting

with Adam, who after his banishment from Eden had to till the soil for food'.

Some other titles include:-

- The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-21)
- Jacob's Ladder (Genesis 28: 10-17),
- Valley of the Dry Bones (Ezekiel 37:1-14) and
- Out of the Whirlwind (Job 40:6-42:17, Restoration of Job's Fortune).

The illustrations are very much an integral part of each page. The script is in many cases incorporated with the 'picture'.

Google The Saint John's Bible and you'll see what I mean.

Also on display was a completed volume, one of the seven that make up the complete works. The whole scene was breathtaking. Just to go into the crypt with all its hundred's of years of history was an event in itself, but to see these works was a privilege indeed.

And entry to this exhibition was free!

Angela Hillier

#### Resources on the web

The St. John's Bible project web site can be found at

<http://www.saintjohnsbible.org/>

It features some history of the project, and even a selection of images where you can electronically turn the pages with your mouse.

There is also the 'Illuminating the Word' web site at:

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/stjohnsbible/stjohns-home.html>

This one is not as sophisticated as the St. John's project web site, but still features plenty of images.

James.

# News from the Library

## Library News August 2009

**Colophon**, in a packed June issue, has an interview with US calligrapher Gina Jonas, where she discusses how to find your own 'flow' – where everything comes together in your writing – as detailed in her book *Finding the flow: a calligraphic journey*.

Then follows a discussion of *What is a calligraphic mark?* Led by Elaine Whitton, which is well worth a read.

An excerpt from an interview with **Denis Brown** (from the calligraphia blog) titled *1000 wishes* includes some of his recent works.

Finally a visit to the premises of master hand engraver in Sydney, **John W Thompson**, who appears to specialise in Copperplate for his invitations, silverware, etc, is described.

**Dancing pen (Tas)** has an exemplar of **Charles Pearce's** pen manipulation techniques in Bold Roman I & Letters from Hell (Blackletter).

**The Edge (UK)** is devoted to Gold: Books of gold; Gold gallery; Substitutes for gold leaf (eg brass leaf): how gold leaf is made. Some beautiful work, as we have come to expect.

Calligraphy Southscribes in Sydney has re-named its newsletter **Inkspiration**. **Gemma Black's** intensive Italic workshop is reviewed, which really does sound intensive. The earlier March issue has a article from Wikipedia on Black Letter Gothic.

**Scribes SA** has a Tengwar exemplar. It appears to be a fantasy language – that of Tolkien.

**Calligraphers of Kapiti (NZ)** have an issue on "wind the clock back 100 years", where the en-

tire issue is set in old style fonts, & where the calligraphy of the past is showcased.

The profiled calligrapher is **Daniel Reeve**, responsible for calligraphy in movies such as *Lord of the Rings* as well as commercial advertising work.

**Postscript (Vic)** has an article by **Janine Mitchell** on her representation at a calligraphic exhibition in St Petersburg in Russia, & describes how she set about working on each new piece – 6 in all.

Member profiles are **Judy Balfour and Robyn Bos**, from Albury.

This will be my last column as Librarian. I have enjoyed reading all the newsletters we receive, & telling you what I've found interesting. There have not been many book reviews. The calligraphy books recently published have been mostly for the beginner, & not many of you appear to be interested in these.

Next newsletter's column will be written by your new Librarian, **Lyndell Dobbs**, & I am sure she will have no difficulty in stepping into my shoes.

Penny Sohier.



## Library News September 2009

Publications from other Calligraphy Societies.

The Edge (summer 2009 edition) published by the Calligraphy and Lettering Arts Society (CLAS) is definitely worth borrowing. In it is a collection of works from their *Art and Letter Exhibition of 2009*.

There are some truly fabulous pieces to both admire and gain inspiration from. Well worth having a close look.

And for those of us who are interested in calligraphic history, an article "Codices Aurei Part 2" by Professor Richard Gameson about 'Chysography: The art of writing letters in gold'. Some of the recipes for making gold ink speak of the use of mercury and others of the urine of a boy. I suppose the latter being the less hazardous of the two but ....

Also included in the publication is an article by Penny Price on the 'Making of the Darwin Family Tree'. Those attending her workshop in Canberra may remember that she spoke about this project when she was in Canberra. Now is your chance to see a photocopy of the finished work

The New Zealand Calligraphic newsletter (winter/spring 2009 edition) has an interesting column on 'Good Buys'. This month one of the good buys is the Faber Castell – Fibre Glass Eraser. The reviewer uses this to clean her nibs and has done for about 10 years. I have not heard of this before – could be interesting. What do others think?

Postscript (August September 2009 edition) from the Calligraphy Society of Victoria features a glowing report on the Summer School in Winter 2009.

Also a nice little article about an unusual request for a calligraphic project where the scribe, Lauchean Duncan scribed, amongst others, a song each by Leonard Cohen and Eric Clapton which were then signed by the artist and auctioned to raise money for the Koala Foundation for kids with cancer.

The Gala Dinner Art Project described in the edition was an interesting venture – bit too confronting for me. You will need to read the article to make up your own minds on that one.

The South Hampshire Calligraphers newsletter has some lovely workshop examples of Mary Noble's workshop on brush lettering as well as a half page examples of Jan Pickett's water-colour work.

Remember that you can borrow any of these publications from the library at any of the workshops.

Lyndell Dobbs

## Charles Pearce weekend

As part of his Australian tour, Charles Pearce will be spending the weekend of

**October 24 - 25  
in Canberra**

If you would like to book in for this weekend please contact Christine Wilde - [cm.wilde@bigpond.net.au](mailto:cm.wilde@bigpond.net.au) or ring her on 6231 9922

The subject for the weekend is

**Pen Manipulation**

The cost is \$100 for the two days and we need your payment one month in advance please. Please send a cheque to our treasurer at the address on page 2.

# BACK PAGE

## Information for exhibitors for our EXHIBITION

If you have work to display in the exhibition *please bring it to Urambi Community Centre* over the weekend of 24th and 25th October. If this is not possible for you, then you may be able to find someone else who could bring it for you.

When entering work for the exhibition could you please let me know beforehand, 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 ***Quips and Quotes from the Quill***, These can be long or short quotes, that is up to you.

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 opening night with Charles on 26th.

***Jill Robertson***

