

# Alphabetical Project

canberra  
 CALLIGRAPHY  
 society



~ newsletter no 171 ~  
 december 2010



“Happy Christmas to all,  
 and to all a good night!”

# FOR YOUR DIARY

## Committee 2010 - 2011

Friday to Sunday  
25-27 February

Exhibition Park in Canberra

### The Royal Canberra Show

*visit (or help out) at the CCS table*

*contact Christine to sign up on the roster*

submit your work via their website:

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

Sunday 27 February  
1:30 - 4:30

### Graham Berry Manuscript & Decorative Panels

*Jill Robertson*

Sunday 27 March  
1:30 - 4:30

### Black and White Theme

*Christine Wilde*

In the February Newsletter:

- extended News from the Library
- announcement for all 2011 workshops
- calligraphic profiles for invited workshop tutors
- and more!

*Thank you:*

to Wrap Writer: Ann Streeter

(& to CCS from Sara & Nick for the lovely wedding card!)

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# President's Report

Dear Calligraphers,

This should be the busiest time of year for us all as we design, make, scan, print or in some other way, make some Christmas cards. As you can see from our front cover, we had a wonderful exchange of cards at our recent Christmas lunch – always a highlight of the year! Then we should also be bringing cheer to the postal workers by addressing our envelopes with beautiful lettering too. The names can be as intricate as you like, but the address should always be readable and I heard recently that we should put the suburb or town name in capital letters! Didn't know that was important before!



I sincerely wish you a very happy and peaceful Christmas with lots of calligraphy books and/or equipment as gifts. There is nothing like settling down after Christmas and having new toys to play with – ask any child!

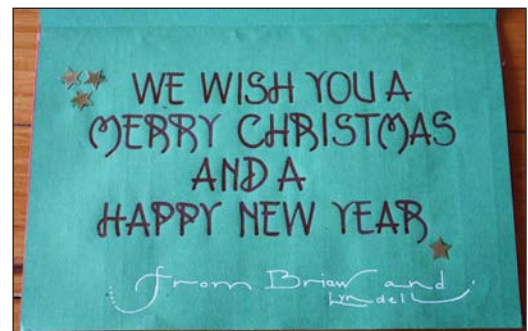
Thank you to all the people who have made this a wonderful year for our society. The workshops have all been excellent and we have been given a lot of inspiration for our art.

Next year's workshops are almost finalised and there will be the usual double page spread in the February newsletter so that you can see the year at a glance. I will be starting the year's program with a workshop on a script we saw at the National Museum of an illuminated manuscript made in Australia in about 1866. It commemorates the contribution of Graham Berry to the life of the Aboriginal people of Corranderk in Victoria. It is an easy script to learn so we will add to that the development of a decorative panel that is on the address also.

Thanks too, to Sara who has designed this newsletter as her first attempt as editor. Well done Sara, the steepest part of the learning curve is over!

I look forward to 2011 and meanwhile hope you and your families have a wonderful Christmas and holiday season.

Jill Robertson



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# Ampersands and Ligatures

a 2-day workshop by Gemma Black



This two-day workshop ably run by one of the Canberra Calligraphy Society Life Members, Gemma Black, was a sheer delight to attend & participate in.

Day one, was a feast of information, ampersand recognition practice & a wealth of historical & etymological material to wallow in, as a preparation for day two when we were to put our learnings into practice.

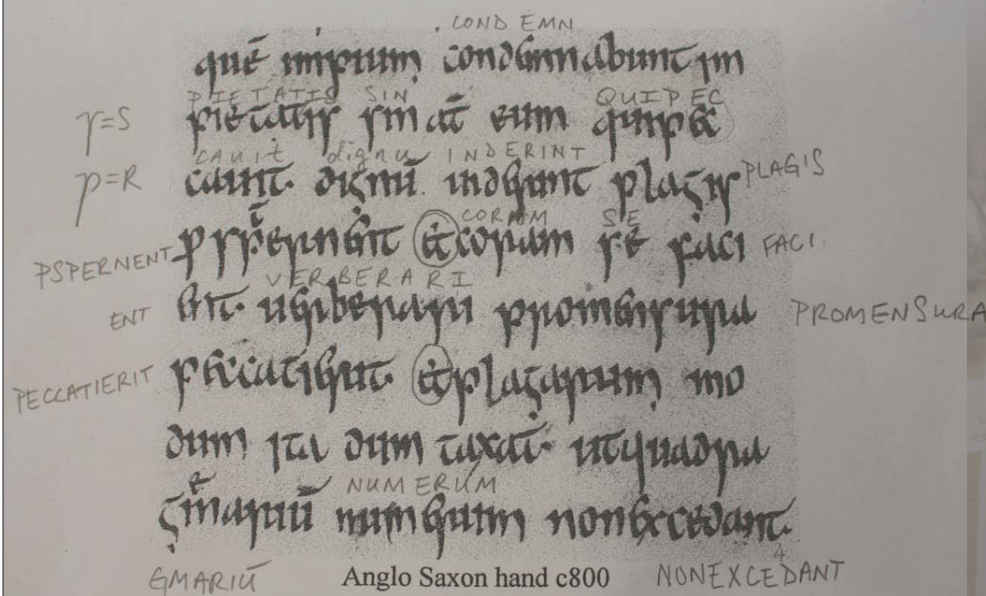
The ampersand, Gemma tells us, came to birth in the late 17th & early 18th centuries & was a feature of the rote learning of the alphabet: per se a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, per se i, j, k, l, m, n, per se o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, y, z, and per se and. Its derivation is from a corruption of 'and

per se and' to 'ampersand'. There are literally thousands of symbols used for the ampersand, which abbreviates the ligature (or joining together) of the letters of the Latin and French word 'et' meaning 'and'.

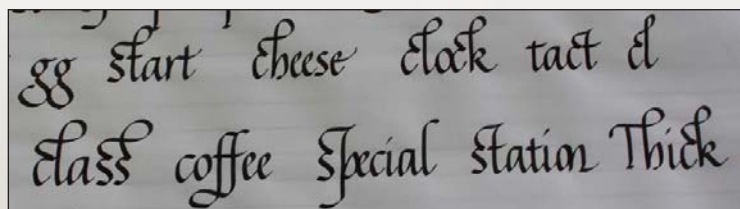
In the numerous handouts given to us by Gemma, we retraced her own research into the ampersand. These handouts included the following: excerpts from the Book of Kells, an artificial uncial c850, several Anglo Saxon hands spanning 9th and 13th centuries, a sample of insular uncial c700, a Gothic Textura c1300, an example of Roman Square Capitals, & some examples of the calligraphy of Arrighe (1475-1537).

We did some class exercises in the recognition of ampersands in some of the sample texts, & before too long we felt that we were becoming quite confident in spotting 'ands'.

From the Artificial Uncial Vespasian Psalter c850  
AE/ON/UB/UT/UF/NT/NC/QS/NS/AE



One very interesting feature of the day's activities was being introduced to what were referred to as 'Tironian Notes'. This scheme for abbreviating words in texts (somewhat like a form of shorthand) was presumed to have been invented by Cicero's scribe, Marcus Tullius Tiro. Originally consisting of 4000 signs, the notes expanded to 5000 in classical times & to about 13000 in the Medieval period, where they were taught in monasteries.



paper roll, to show the workshop participants what was required. Gemma, with her wealth of knowledge & skill, had the lettering flowing fluidly from her pen to the paper, & made it look deceptively easy. There were varying levels of skill among the participants, & the room was often quiet with concentration. The exercise began with tracing, moving on to freehand, before finally expanding & incorporating the ligatures into freehand words like "church", "cheese", "giggle", etc. At the end of the exercise, & before morning tea, everyone shared their many varied and creative works.



Day Two commenced with Calligraphy News where members advised of any interesting snippets. Angela Hillier had worn

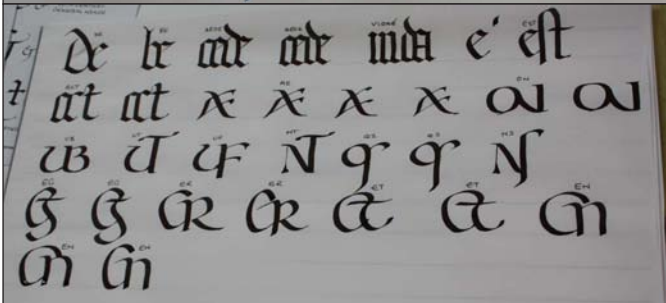
her newly acquired "calligraphy" top, & also passed on a handy hint where she'd discovered out of necessity that a fabric marking pen doubles as a pen holder. The nib fits snugly into the small channel at the top of the lid on either end of the pen, making it a very versatile tool.

The second exercise for the day revolved around Roman Capitals & Gemma wrote everyone's names on the whiteboard. This exercise involved writing each name to include known & created ligatures. Once again, Gemma gave a demonstration first, explaining exactly how the lettering was to be executed. It was a very enjoyable & imaginative exercise & involved an interesting discussion at the end with each person putting one or two of the ligatures they'd done, onto the whiteboard to share.

Our first exercise for the morning was to practice a page of italic ligatures (ch, ck, cl, ff, gg, sp, st, etc), which Gemma had given us in our notes the day before.

A number of books, some from the CCS library, some from private collections, were on display for browsing through at lunch time, & were very useful resources.

Gemma commenced with a demonstration of large letters, beautifully scribed in walnut ink, onto a wide





After lunch, we were given our final exercise, painting a “Book of Kells” ampersand. Gemma gave a demonstration of tracing, outlining & painting an ampersand. She had a selection of designs for us to choose from, & we set about working on our own piece. Once again, the room was quiet with concentration. It was a lovely culmination of the weekend’s workshop to finish off on this creative note. Some members were even lucky enough to have finished painting their ampersand by the end of the day.

Finally, we had a “Show and Tell”, & the members surprised Gemma with an emotional “thank you”. Each member had written their name & an ampersand on a small piece of quality paper, & had the option to write some words on the back, in appreciation of the hard work Gemma had put in to creating this workshop.



As a new member to the CCS, & a long time fan of Gemma’s (having attended previous workshops), I would like to add that it was a very enjoyable weekend. Everyone was very welcoming, supportive & helpful. Gemma, as always, was a fountain of knowledge & very generous with sharing it, & I’m sure everyone went away with renewed inspiration & enthusiasm.

... & who would’ve thought ampersands & ligatures could prove to be so interesting!!!



thank you to our writers:  
Pam Collins & Michael Jarvis

# Upcoming Workshops & Classes

(external)

## Calligraphy (Beginners & Intermediate)

Feb-Apr 2011

(dates announced on 25 Jan 2011)

tutor: Angela Hillier

Lake Ginnindera College

Lake Nite Learning

<http://www.lakenitelearning.com.au/>



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

## Copperplate & Pointed Pen

10am-4:30pm    5-6 March 2011

ANU Visual Arts Access

tutor: Gemma Black

<http://www.pcug.org.au/~gblack/>

<http://www.anu.edu.au/cce/vaacourses/>

Experience the beauty of a hand-penned copperplate. Enjoy a two-day workshop exploring the elegant and ornamental hand of the 18th & 19th centuries.

This will be an introduction course to the elegant and regal hand Copperplate. The class is for beginners through to more experienced calligraphers. Come and enjoy this popular hand of the 18th century in a creative and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

Firstly we will explore a little of the history of the copperplate through George Bickham's master engravings then work some pen-skill exercises to get us started with the letterforms. A more intensive copperplate two-day workshop will follow should you chose to continue in second semester.

## Vivacious Versals

10am-4:30pm    7-8 May 2011

ANU Visual Arts Access

tutor: Gemma Black

<http://www.pcug.org.au/~gblack/>

<http://www.anu.edu.au/cce/vaacourses/>

We will explore versal forms from every genre. In this two-day workshop, we will touch on the basic versal, the versal history, then experience chronological examples from the Grandval Bible through to Irene Wellington, David Jones, and to the wild and contemporary. Traditional techniques will be learnt along with a new and more extreme gestural versal forms.

Recommended for Intermediate and Advanced students.

# half uncial

by christine wilde

Everybody gathered on a cool, rainy Sunday, for a cosy afternoon of practicing Half Uncials. Christine handed out folders packed with information and guide sheets.

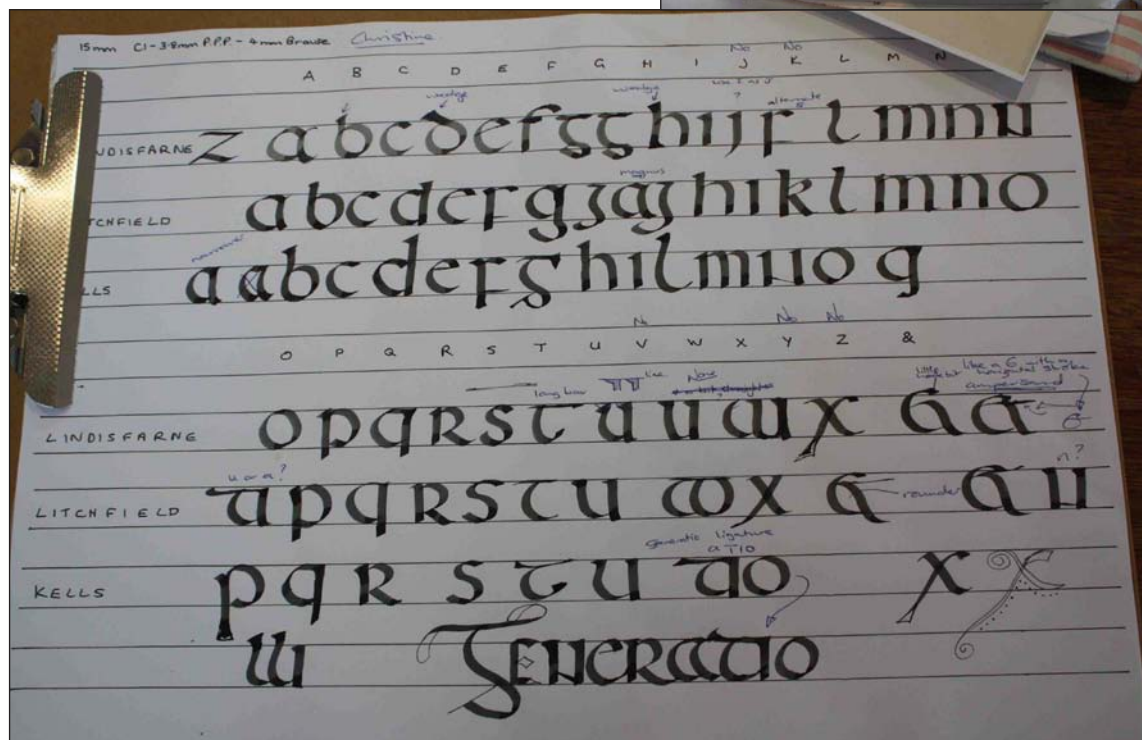
Our first task was to examine the coloured copies of script provided, from the Lindisfarne Gospels, the Lichfield Gospels, and the Book of Kells. We built up an alphabet on our large guide sheet, comparing letter formations and familiarising ourselves with the wedge-shaped serifs.

The Lindisfarne Gospels were made between 680 and 720AD, in the island monastery of Lindisfarne, off the Northumberland coast. The Gospels are written in Latin, using the Vulgate (common) version made by St Jerome, who died in about 420. The book contains the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John: the four evangelists. Medieval manuscripts were usually produced by a team of scribes and illustrators – but the Lindisfarne Gospels are believed to be the work of one man... a monk called Eadfrith, Bishop of Lindisfarne between 698 and 721.

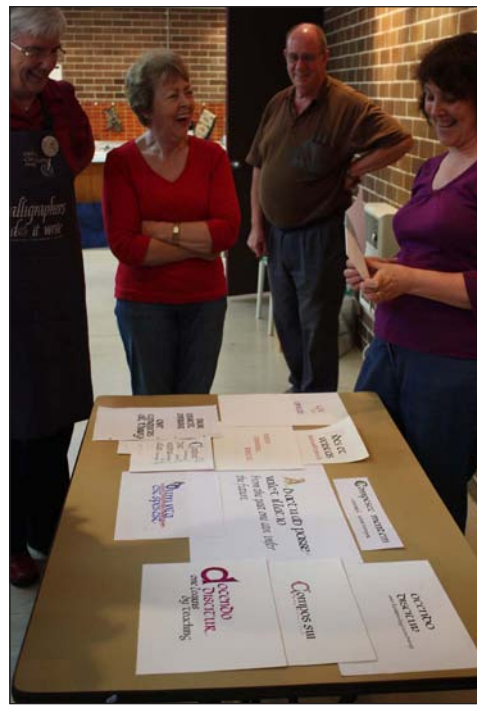
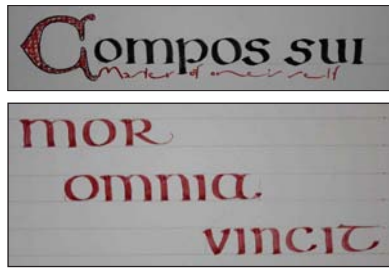
The Lichfield Gospels were written about

730AD (20-30 years after the Lindisfarne Gospels, but about 70 years before the Book of Kells) The Lichfield gospel manuscript features the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, as well as the early part of the Gospel of Luke. The text is written in Vulgate (common) Latin in predominately Insular majuscule script, but features some uncial characteristics. It is not known who wrote the manuscript, for whom it was written, or where it was written.

The Book of Kells is celebrated for its lavish decoration. The manuscript contains the four Gospels in Latin







based on a Vulgate text, written on vellum, in a bold and expert version of the script known as “insular majuscule”. The place of origin of the Book of Kells is generally attributed to the scriptorium of the monastery founded around 561 by Colum Cille on Iona, an island off the west coast of Scotland. The book was believed to have been written at the close of the year 800.

Thank you Christine, it was a very enjoyable afternoon.

The information in this report came from Christine’s research:

While we were writing, Christine gave us some background on the Half Uncial script: it was a combination of formal and informal Roman hands, and the earliest true miniscule hand. Ireland was visited by missionaries who introduced Roman Half Uncials, which was adopted by native Celts from around 400AD. It was spread by missions to Iona and Northumbria, which flourished in works such as the Lindisfarne Gospels. It was first used around the 3rd century and remained in use until the end of the 8th century.

### Lindisfarne Gospels

<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/features/lindisfarne/overview.html>

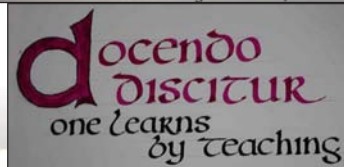
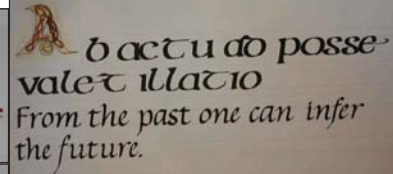
### Lichfield Gospels

<http://lichfield-cathedral.org/the-st-chad-gospels/> and <http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/cultural-history-of-ireland/lichfield-gospels.htm>

### The Book of Kells

<http://www.bookofkells.ie/book-of-kells/>

After tea, we settled down to write out a Latin quote and its English translation. Christine had lots of colour examples of illuminated letters and Celtic initials to choose from, plus a versal example sheet, in order to inspire a finished piece of work.



Although we all managed to complete something (whether it was a practice piece, or a good copy), I’m sure that I speak for everyone, in wishing that we’d had a few more hours, in order to do justice to a well-planned and informative workshop.



thank you to our writer:  
Karen Woodhall

# Christmas Lunch

at A Bite To Eat, Chifley Shops



Shortly after high-noon on a lovely springtime Saturday, members of the Calligraphy Society met for the annual Christmas Lunch at a quaint restaurant nestled amongst the Chifley shops. People ordered a variety of dishes, from trout salad to vegan wraps to fried calamari. A special treat was a pint of their freshly squeezed orange juice (several of which you can see in the photo above!).

during which some people were remarking that this is their calligraphic adventure favorite time of the year.

The afternoon culminated with well-wishes for Christmas (or Hanukkah) and New Years and a bunch of “see you in February”s.

The cards were all collected at the start of the meal and numbered, with the corresponding number put into a hat. After lunch, the hat was passed around the table from which each cardmaker was to choose a number. The corresponding cards were then handed out to each number-holder.

Each person delighted in the card, as each one was fully handmade. Some cards were simple and elegant with the ‘less is more’ principle, some were extravagantly decorated with gold, one was a large scroll, and several were three-dimensional.

My personal favourite was one that folded many times in different orientations such that there was always an interesting decoration on the ‘new’ front. It folded and re-folded ad-infinitum!

After admiring the card we each had received, we passed them all around the table for everyone to see,



Happy  
Christmas



# Annual Exhibition



The Annual Exhibit at Cornucopia Bakery on Mort Street in Braddon was on show from 2-30 November. When I went to take a few photos on a Saturday mid-morning, the bakery itself was full to the brim and the line out the door. My photographic presence sparked even more interest in the exhibit, as people around me began to wonder at the artwork proudly displayed on the wall.

Some of the work was from prior CCS activities, such as the Jindabyne weekend retreat and even a few frames were of recent work from the Ampersands & Ligatures workshop by Gemma Black only a few weeks prior.

Congratulations to Angela and Christine for making sales! We hope that there will be as good of a turnout in 2011 as there was this year.



Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
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 Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
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 Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz  
 Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz Xx Yy Yz Zz

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**CALLIGRAPHY**   
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Annual  
 Exhibition  
 & Sale 2010

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writer:  
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