

# Alphabetical Project

canberra  
CALLIGRAPHY  
society



~ newsletter no 182 ~  
october 2012



*A collaborative project suggested by Elaine at the Jindabyne retreat: each person decorate two puzzle pieces for the page in our workshop attendance book. Have a closer look at it at the next workshop you attend! More details about the Jindabyne retreat on the backpage.*

# FOR YOUR DIARY

## CCS Annual Exhibition

19 Oct to 11 Nov

@ Belconnen Arts Centre  
118 Emu Bank, Belconnen

## Artist's Talk by Gemma Black

Sun 28 Oct 3pm

@ Belconnen Arts Centre  
118 Emu Bank, Belconnen  
(no regular Oct CCS workshop!!)

## Workshop: Hebrew (עברית)

led by Sara Rawlinson

Sun 25 Nov 1:30pm

@ Urambi Village Hall  
Community Centre, **Entry B**  
81 Crozier Circuit, Kambah  
\$10/\$15 members/nonmembers

## Christmas Lunch

Sat 1 Dec 12:30pm

@ Black Pepper Cafe  
63/1 Beissel Street, Belconnen

## Workshop: Rhythm, Sound, & Writing

led by Massimo Polello

*visiting tutor from Italy*

Fri-Sun 8-10 Feb 3 days, each 9am-5pm

@ Urambi Village Hall  
Community Centre, **Entry B**  
81 Crozier Circuit, Kambah  
\$150/\$225 members/nonmembers

## :calligraphy classes around town:

with Angela Hillier @ Lake Ginnindera College  
<http://www.lakenitelearning.com.au/>

with Pam Kemp @ Erindale College  
<http://www.erindalecep.com.au/>

thanks to our 2011-2012 committee  
and welcome our new  
**COMMITTEE**  
for 2012-2013

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### *Announcement:*

*Your Newsletter Editor will need an assistant before the Feb issue. Please do get in touch with her if you are interested in helping out.*

### **Postal Address:**

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Australia

*This newsletter is typeset in Arno Pro, with a small handful of headings in Fifth Century Caps. Most headings are hand-calligraphed by volunteer members. We heartily welcome our new printer Prinstant in Fyshwick.*

# President's Report



Marg Peachey

## Dear Calligraphic Colleagues,

A big thanks to Elaine Witton for coming all the way to Canberra yet again, this time to give us a wonderful two days on gold and design. To begin the weekend we had a very pleasant dinner at Jill's house, thanks Jill. The pre-workshop dinners are a lovely tradition and give us all a social time for calligraphic bonding that is not always possible whilst at workshops because of the pressure of the day.

Our annual workshop is well on its way. I urge you to get to the Belconnen Arts Centre and see the works on show. The combination of calligraphy and bookbinding is an excellent one that we can all relate to as many of us have made books in the past. I opened the exhibition last Friday and it runs until 11th November.

The year is fast disappearing so check out the information later in the newsletter for our upcoming Christmas lunch. It is always lovely to exchange a card and I am constantly amazed at the range of themes and ideas that represent a single occasion, Christmas. Receiving and giving a hand made card is something to treasure.

Yours in calligraphy,  
Marg

## Editor's Note

Hand-calligraphed headings in this issue were done by Carol Perron. Thanks for the contributions! We hope to have another set for the next issue. I'm always looking to refresh the newsletter and would welcome contributions from anyone at any time. Send a high resolution scan of your black-ink President's Report, Library News, Miscellany, or Workshop Equipment headings to [sara.rawlo@gmail.com](mailto:sara.rawlo@gmail.com)

The Newsletter Editor needs an apprentice/helper to begin before the Feb issue. Please contact Sara if interested at [sara.rawlo@gmail.com](mailto:sara.rawlo@gmail.com).

## welcome our new printer!



Eckersley's **BRADDON** store offers a 10% discount to members of CCS on presentation of your current membership card.  
*42 Mort Street, Braddon*

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

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# Alpha Erasers

workshop tutor: Pam Kemp  
article author: Jill Robertson

After our AGM we like to have a workshop that doesn't take as long as our usual workshops but still gives us some valuable skills.

This year Pam Kemp took on the task of showing us how to use erasers as stamps in order to make a full alphabet and then combine this alphabet with pen writing.

First of all we had 3 full size erasers and had to cut them up so that we had all the shapes we needed in order to make a complete alphabet. The shapes looked like the examples shown to the right.

Then we played around with these shapes to make an alphabet. People used them in many different ways but we were still able to recognise the letters.

Adding words using a fine pen or a ruling pen was the next challenge. This brought about many different examples of the ways these two very different writing implements can be used to form beautiful words. It was a fun afternoon and we all ended up with a cardboard folder decorated with our name in alpha eraser writing and hopefully some other style of using the erasers as well.

Thanks Pam for a very satisfying use of our time after the AGM – it was fun.



# Writing on Gold &

# Layout with a Difference

workshop tutor: Elaine Witton

article authors: Jill Robertson & Cherrie Grant

## ::::: DAY 1 :::::

It was good to welcome Elaine back to Canberra on a lovely spring weekend to spend time with us on two different subjects. We did manage to combine them by the end of the weekend, but we started out on Saturday with Writing on Gold. Perhaps that should read Writing ON Gold. Most of us had had some experience of writing IN gold, but writing ON gold was new to us.

Elaine started the day by showing us many examples of what she had in mind. In preparation for the weekend she had produced nearly a book full of examples and experiments she had done herself to discover ways of writing on various types of gold. She had recorded all the bases and the types of gold used and then written on them with various tools and inks and gouaches and recorded those too.

Now it was our turn to produce a mass of samples of gold on our paper and reproduce some of her experimentation. Sitting in tables of 4 or 5 we found we could pass round many different types of gold and bases for it and gold gouache, acrylic paint and gold powder. In the end most of us had over 20 samples that we then wrote on. This was the fascinating part as, I for one, found that writing on transfer gold was much the easiest, when I had feared it would be the trickiest of all. Gouache on gold leaf was my favourite and one I reproduced in the afternoon when we got down to producing a finished piece of work using a technique of our choice.

Another exercise was to write on Joss paper. This is the orange tissue paper

with gold squares transferred onto it that Buddhists use in their funeral ceremonies. They burn the paper and believe that the gold will give the deceased person riches in the next life. We used this paper to write on and had various successes and failures. Writing with a broad pen was easier than a pointed pen, but perhaps it was just me pressing too hard as usual!

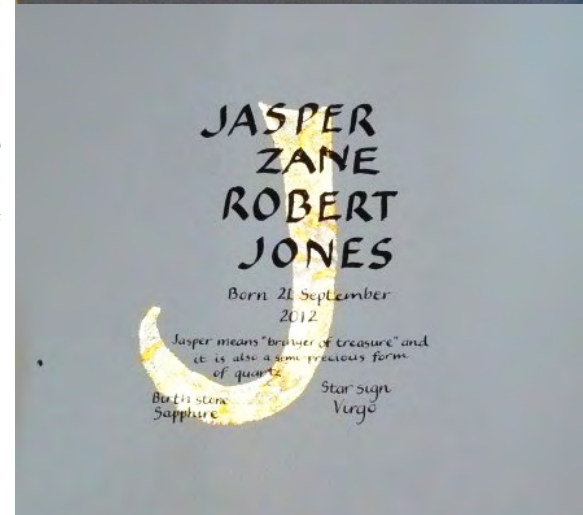
For our afternoon project we had a blank piece of coloured Canson paper in front of us when Elaine sprang the first of her two major surprises of the weekend. We had to make up our own Haiku poem to use on our piece! However, after the worried looks had passed, and clear instructions given, we realised that it was not that hard and everyone managed a three line poem with lines containing 5 then 7 then 5 syllables. With poem in mind we had to place no more than half a sheet of gold onto our paper, using no more than one cut, and then write our poem into the space produced.

The amazing thing to see at the end of the afternoon was that everyone's piece was unique. No two pieces of gold had been cut in the same manner and everyone had a piece that was either finished or very, very close to being finished. Around the room there were those subdued smiles when everyone realised we had actually produced something to be proud of! I think Elaine had one of those smiles too.

Elaine is a great teacher who has the ability to gently push us out of our comfort zones

and make us realise we can be more creative in our calligraphy than we had previously given ourselves credit for.

And all that was before the squirming out of our comfort zones that was to come on Sunday!



::::: DAY 2 :::::

As a newer member of the Canberra Calligraphy it is my pleasure to give you my first report. It's day 2 and I'm so excited, as I read over my homework from yesterday while eating breakfast, that I jump up from the table and pack my own project for today's class.

I'd been having some trouble with a layout and design aspects. Well, our homework talked volumes on what I needed. I had to think about size, form, direction, structure, contrast and colour.

Talking about colour, I thought I was back in high school; with Primary, Secondary and Tertiary. Did you know Tertiary colours come about when you mix two Secondary colours get mixed up together? There were no shades of grey – only white and black. With Windsor & Newton Gouache Zink White is added to a colour it gives a nice 'tint'. Then there's Ann's suggestion: make your focus point in orange, then when colouring the shadow of the orange use blue combined with orange will make it look great. Elaine handed out a reference sheet which emphasised colours have meanings and express emotion.

Next came composition; images of my music teacher came flooding back, arggh, Elaine gets me to think how will I assemble my piece. Will I use the 8 point plan by Tony Van Hassell & Judi Wagner, maybe the handy hint sheet titled 'Quick Format Finders' can help me (some of which look like the pieces falling down the screen in a Tetris game).

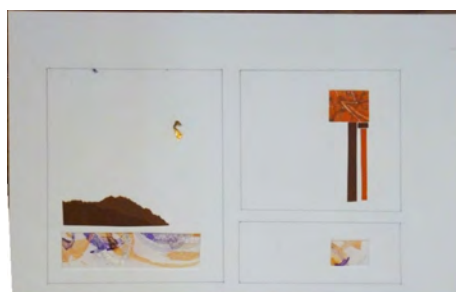
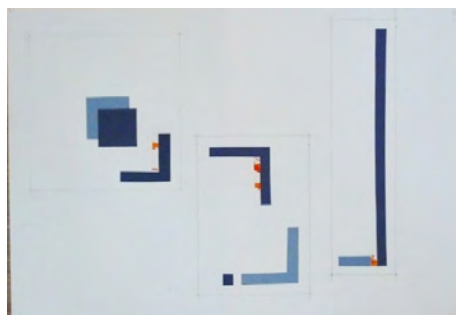
What about the layout, the style of font, thick or thin? Just when I think my brain sponge is full, Elaine talks about positive and negative shapes – imagine my surprise when she wasn't talking about battery symbols. I have to admit that I was way off. It all had to do with 'format'. Hope I haven't bored you so far, well I found it all very fascinating and ended up raiding our library to do some follow up on some techniques in today's class.

I think if Art imitates life, then Calligraphy must represent the

Unknown, or even the undiscovered part of us. Imagine getting a piece of A3 Canson or 300gms Watercolour paper then using a separate pieces of paper, for example Bond (no, not James Bond), and cut out 2 or 3 shapes from an A4 size sheet. Here's where it gets tricky – once you've decided on which bits you like then place them on your A3 page – this is when you get to use the format and layout techniques that we just discussed.

Now with your pieces laid out, use a pencil and trace around them. Elaine surprised us by gifting some various coloured pieces of paper in all sorts of different shapes, textures and even marbled pieces. I finally picked out some pieces and was reminded by our fearless President "Less is More", I'm sure she said that because it will take less time - or so I thought.

Patient Elaine stopped by my area and gently showed me the errors of my wayward thinking. In real life terms, Less gave more zing to my piece. Then I was planning the next step, by arranging my little colour bits here, then moving them there and, blow me over, Elaine tells us to grab our project and hand it to someone on another table telling that person which way is up and no more – the Unknown has hit us! I must say, I was a bit dumbstruck and even surprised by my reaction of not wanting to hand it over; after some time passed, I and everyone else did.

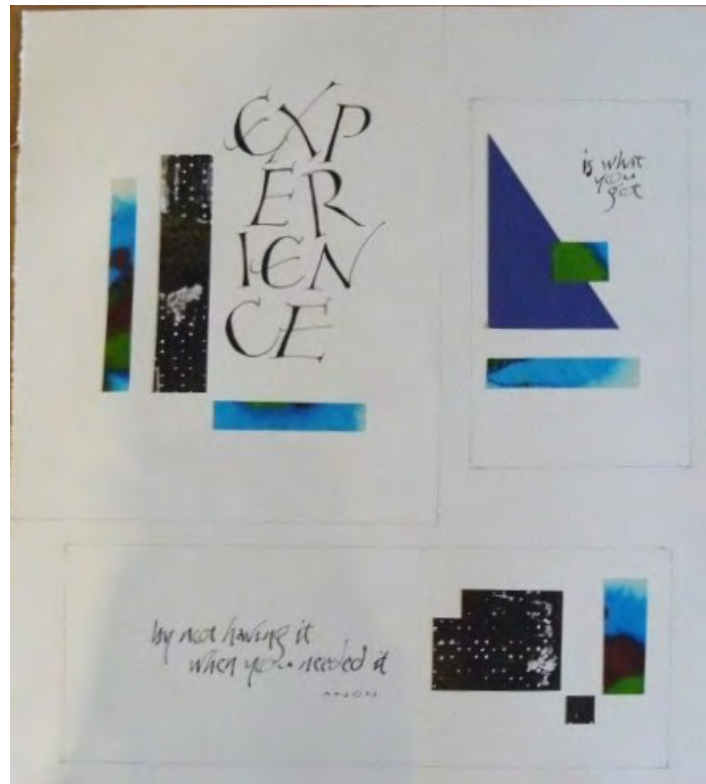
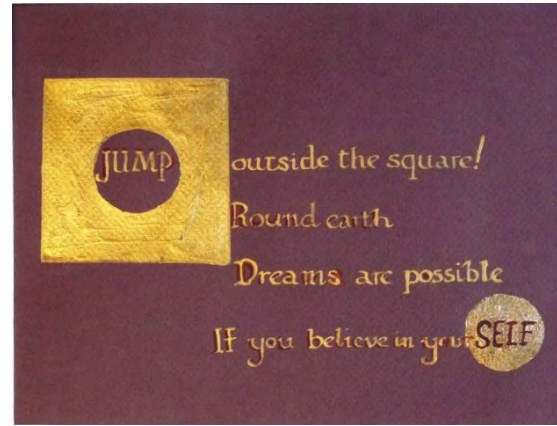
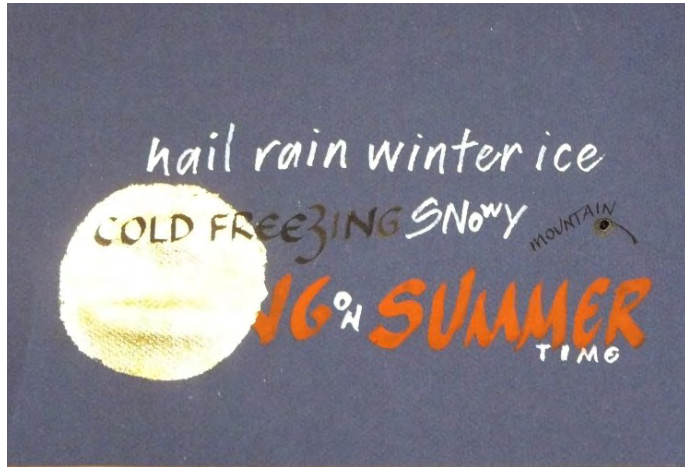
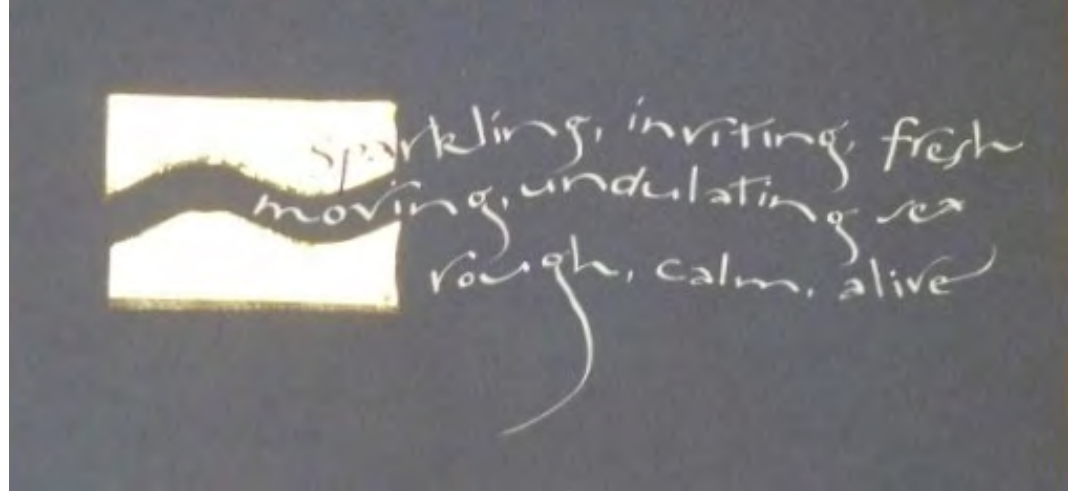


The surprises didn't stop there, the receiving person than had to use a piece of each of the coloured papers within each shape outlined on the A3 page. You would honestly think it sounds so simple – but staying within someone else's box, plus leaving room for him/her to write something in each shape, was certainly a challenge.

I received Reta's project to work on and agonised over what I could do, I moved pieces around, put them on top of each other or underneath. Time passed quickly but I finally got busy and stuck them down. I had no idea what Reta was going to write but as you'll see in the photo; it is a stunning piece. I hope everyone will get to see it in the upcoming exhibition at the Belconnen Arts Centre.

For myself who is not a well-trained calligrapher I got my project back and there was an OMG moment. I had no idea how I was going to write a passage however I found a saying from one of Elaine's newsletters and laid it out. Elaine and I discussed a few points, she would leave to attend other students, come back to me – who would have a big Cheshire cat smile "I've changed it again". This was my first time I had met Elaine, and I would invite anyone of any skill or experience to come along to her next workshop. It was so worth spending two amazing days with her. This teacher draws out the hidden parts of you, to make some spectacular work. Thank you, Elaine.





# LIBRARY NEWS

## COLOPHON

SEPT '12

<http://www.asoc.org.au>

This edition features an article on Megan McDonald, a guest artist at the ASC Marriage of Art and Lettering Exhibition. A number of fascinating works of art have been reproduced in this edition. Many works use a Chinese brush combined with multiple washes of ink.

Also featured is a work commissioned by the Australian Monarchist League. Calligrapher Julie-ann Williams produced this work, which included the floral emblems of each state and territory of Australia, on vellum. The work was presented to the Queen on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee.

## THE EDGE

SUMMER '12

<http://www.clas.co.uk/>

If you need inspiration, and who doesn't, look no further than this edition, there are lots of lovely photos from the Art and Letter Exhibition 2012.

The Edge also features an article by Mary Noble who outlines the process of two distinct pieces of work based on the same quote. One is presented in a portrait design and one in landscape. Great reading on elements of design.

## CALLIGRAPHERS OF KAPITI

JULY '12

See this edition for many great examples from a number of workshops including the Text as Texture, tutored by Deidre Hassed. Many Canberra Calligraphers will remember with pleasure attending a similar workshop when Deidre was here last.

## POSTSCRIPT, VIC

AUG-SEPT '12

[www.calligraphysocietyvictoria.org.au](http://www.calligraphysocietyvictoria.org.au)

Postscript has published a fascinating look at carving text into stone. The front cover, several photos and an article on italic calligraphy all inscribed into stone makes very interesting reading. Ian Marr, who lives close by in Braidwood, sources a lot of his stone in the Clare Valley SA.

## NEW ZEALAND CALLIGRAPHERS

WINTER '12

The New Zealand Calligraphers held an exhibition celebrating 21 years of calligraphy. See this edition for some fabulous examples of work from this exhibition.

## Books recently donated to the Canberra Calligraphy Library:

*Thank you to Paul Rothwell for donating these books.*

### THE BOOK OF KELLS

BY BERNARD MEEHAN

The Book of Kells is the most spectacular of a group of manuscripts created in Ireland and northern Britain between the seventh and tenth centuries. The manuscript takes its name from the Abbey of Kells that was its home for centuries. Today, it is on permanent display at the Trinity College Library, Dublin. This edition includes fully decorated pages plus a series of enlargements showing spiral and interlace patterns, human and animal ornament. The illustrations and ornamentation of the Book of Kells surpass that of other Insular Gospel books in extravagance and complexity. Accompanying the illustrations is a new, up-to-date text by Bernard Meehan, the current Keeper of Manuscripts at Trinity College Dublin. It provides a scholarly analysis of the artists, the text and the writing, and a full account of the historical background to the miraculous world of the book Kells.

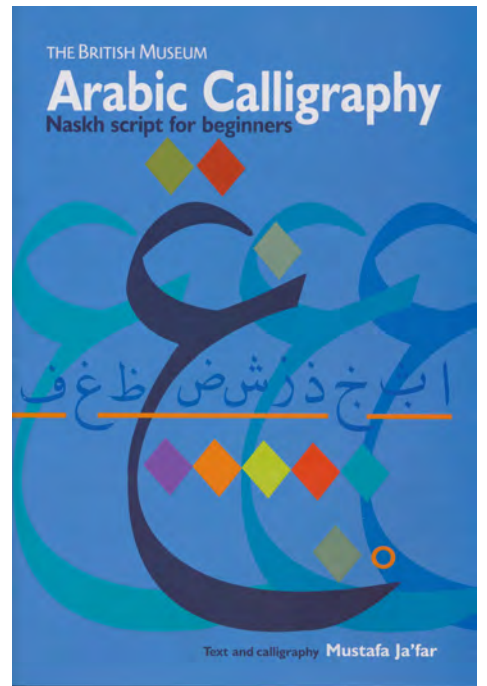
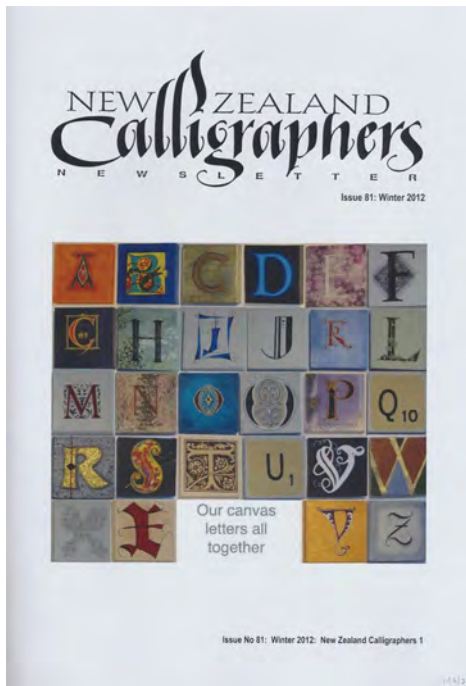
### ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY:

NASKH SCRIPT FOR BEGINNERS

BY MUSTAFA JA'FAR AND THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Naskh is one of the six major cursive Arabic scripts. The Arabic script belongs to the same family of scripts as Hebrew, Greek and Latin. The Naskh script can be traced back to the late eighth century AD and is still in use today. This introductory workbook makes it possible for everyone to learn and enjoy the beauty of Arabic calligraphy. The author, Mustafa Ja'fa, has had considerable experience running workshops and demonstrations at the British Museum. In this book he has created an easy to follow guide to this beautiful script.





Please note that all these newsletters, books, and more are available for loan for \$1 per month. In particular, the library has quite a number of books that are good for beginners.



# WORKSHOP EQUIPMENT

Please note there will not be a workshop in October. Instead, please consider attending the Artist's Talk by Gemma Black at the Belconnen Arts Centre. See Calendar (p2) for details.

The first workshop in 2013 will be a 3-day extravaganza from 8-10 Feb taught by Massimo Pollelo.



## Please bring "The Usual Calligraphy Gear" plus:

- angled nib holder
  - looks like a funny shaped elbow attachment that fits on to the end of most nib holders
  - also called a Copperplate holder, a left-hander's holder, or an elbow holder
  - there will be a few extras to borrow, please contact tutor
- your favourite fun w-i-d-e writing tool
  - 2 cm if you have it, other widths welcome too
  - could be balsa wood, paint brush, foam wedge, yoghurt pen, plasterers spatula, bark from spotted gum tree, etc!
- 1 or 2 of your favourite colours
  - can be ink, gouache, watercolour, etc (not oil paint)
- \$3.50 for cost of extra supplies from tutor (includes particularly sized nice paper)

In response to popular demand, the February CCS newsletter will contain a comprehensive Beginner's Guide to "The Usual Calligraphy Gear". In the meantime, if in doubt, please ask any member of the CCS Committee (from page 2) for help or clarification on any item mentioned throughout our newsletter. *If you have never done calligraphy before* and just want to see if it might be the new hobby for you, please let our workshop coordinator know you're coming and ensure to bring the first three items, as we will lend you the rest if you don't have them.

## The Usual Calligraphy Gear:

if you happen to be short one of these items, do not fret!; we are a friendly bunch and often share

- an open mind
  - 2B pencil and eraser
  - old rag or towel
  - pad of A3 bond paper
  - few pieces of good quality paper (A4)
  - several broad edged dip nibs & holders
  - 40-50cm rulers (clear and metal)
  - bottle non-waterproof black ink
  - several colours of gouache or watercolor paint and palette or mixing containers
  - medium size glass jar
  - old toothbrush
  - masking tape, blu-tak, or other gentle adhesive
  - drawing board just bigger than A3
- (not much gets done without one)*  
*(always need these for sketching things, erasing things, and warming up)*  
*(for making, or rather, cleaning up a mess!)*  
*(or any paper that is bleedproof and slightly transparent)*  
*(so you can take home a finished piece of work and put it on your fridge)*  
*(brand, size, and quantity do not matter unless specified by the tutor)*  
*(metal rulers make good cutting edges, clear ones are handy for when you need to see what is going on underneath the ruler)*  
*(brand does not matter; waterproof tends to clog the nibs)*  
*(brand and colour do not matter; anything you think will be fun)*  
  
*(for rinsing ink off nibs)*  
*(for cleaning the nibs at the end of class; if you forget yours, you get to ask the super-strange question: can I borrow your toothbrush?)*  
*(for holding paper in place)*  
*(most of us prefer to write at an angle rather than on a flat table)*

M · I · S · C · E · L · L · A · N · Y

## MASSIMO POLLELO WORKSHOP

Massimo is a celebrated Italian calligrapher and will be holding a workshop at our very own CCS from **8-10 February 2013** entitled Rhythm, Sound, and Writing. You can learn more about Massimo at his website <http://www.lacalligrafia.com/>. To register for his workshop, please contact our workshop coordinator Christine at [cm.wilde@bigpond.net.au](mailto:cm.wilde@bigpond.net.au)

## ORNASO NOVA

Wills Quills is no longer. Their supply has been taken over by Derek Amos at OrnasoNova. Please do consider visiting their online store at <http://www.ornasonova.com>, or [info@ornasonova.com](mailto:info@ornasonova.com), or ringing 0469-895-203 between 9am-5pm M-F.

## WRAP WRITING PARTIES

are being held for each newsletter. Any CCS member is welcome. It takes only 2 hrs for three people and is a fun way to meet your fellow calligraphers! If interested, please contact your Newsletter Lady [sara.rawlo@gmail.com](mailto:sara.rawlo@gmail.com)

## HOLIDAY SALES AT MARKET

Several members are pooling together to have a stall at the Sunday Old Bus Depot Markets on **8 & 9 Dec**. If you want to join the efforts, contact Sara [sara.rawlo@gmail.com](mailto:sara.rawlo@gmail.com) or Angela [antnange@grapevine.com.au](mailto:antnange@grapevine.com.au). Any item you wish to sell should be mostly related to calligraphy. Please do consider stopping by to support your fellow calligraphers.

## ASSISTANTS NEEDED

Your newsletter editor will need an assistant before the April issue. Please get in touch with her if you are interested in helping out - it's fun! Also, please know that our website will soon be receiving a facelift. Please send any comments or suggestions.

## DAVID JONES VISITS TUSCANY

Gemma Black will be leading a calligraphic workshop in Cortona, Italy from 8-15 June, 2013. The workshop is part of Toscana Americana and is based on the works of writer, painter, and scribe David Jones (1895-1974). More information can be found at <http://www.ToscanaAmericana.com/gemmabcalligraphytuscan.html> or by emailing [infotuscany@aol.com](mailto:infotuscany@aol.com)

## ANNUAL EXHIBITION

The CCS annual exhibition is on until 11 Nov at the Belconnen Arts Centre. There is a large collection of calligraphic works, plus work from the Canberra Craft Bookbinders' Guild, with whom we're sharing the exhibition space. There are two calligraphic workshops: one on **21 October** entitled Italics for Beginners; and another on **27 October** entitled Starting Calligraphy (ages 10+). The Artist's Talk by Gemma black will be **3pm on 28 October**. Please do go have a look!

# Jindabyne RETREAT

OCTOBER  
2012

article author: Carol Perron

Here we (Angela, Ann, Carol, Christine, Elaine, Jill, & Pam) are once again ready for our Calligraphy Retreat Weekend at Rascal Lodge in Jindabyne. Susan and Marie would join us later. After settling in and relaxing on the deck with cups of coffee we enjoyed a walk along the lake. The air is so fresh and the place is so peaceful and tranquil.

Nick and Sara arrived a little later with a carload of fresh and exotic food. Sara's husband Nick loves to cook and came along as chef. In no time at all we were enjoying pre-dinner drinks and a platter of delicious prawn spring rolls with crisp lettuce and hot chilly sauce. Followed by a restaurant quality meal of salmon, asparagus, prawn risotto and salad. Just when we felt we could not take another bite Nick produced a heavenly chocolate and cream cake. As it turned out, this was a typical dinner; breakfasts would include a choice between blueberry pancakes or hickory smoked eggplant omelets, amongst other things!

Saturday was a cold rainy day but no one minded in the least. The lodge was warm and we were all doing what we like to

do best: calligraphy. Tables were set up all over the spacious living room and we settled down to enjoy our creativity, while quietly talking, sharing tips, techniques, ideas, the latest in new pens, pencils and other equipment. We really learn so much from each other on these weekend retreats.

Elaine gave us a small challenge: to prepare a calligraphy piece using Joss paper and a sheet of A4 paper marked with five crosses (which she provided). The only rules were to use the same quote, "All Shall be Well", and cover all the crosses. It was fun and the results were so interesting with no two alike.

After a scrumptious 3-course dinner, we enjoyed a cozy browsing thru the book collections members had bought.

Sunday morning, after another luscious breakfast, we were really in the swing of things and doing lots of work: Jill completed her two commissions, Ann drew colourful Christmas baubles on her Postscript envelopes, Elaine worked on her Letter a Month Jigsaw, and Sara did titles for her cookbook, to mention

a few. Everyone was busy working away doing their own thing or assisting someone else trying something new.

At lunch out on the deck Pam presented Nick with a Chef's hat and a paring knife as a thank you for providing us with such sumptuous food for the entire weekend. Nick and Sara had to return home on Sunday while the rest of us stayed another night.

Monday dawned another beautiful sunny day with more calligraphy in the morning, then a quick clean up, and pack up of our things.

Thanks to everyone who participated, shared their companionship, laughter, skills and knowledge, with a special thank you Pam for arranging for us to stay in this wonderful lodge in such unique surroundings. A BIG thank you to Nick for doing all the cooking for us: it was really appreciated and he did a superb job.

