



# SUSSEXSCRIBES

## Newsletter January 2017

*Dear Members,*

2017 looks set to be a great year, calligraphically speaking. Suzi Faber has organised a series of very interesting workshops. I hope you'll be able to get to some of them.

Among other things, we have a summer school with Rachel Yallop over two days in July, newsletter editor Helen Gibbs, back by popular demand with another book binding workshop, our AGM with Tim Noad, talking about his career as a calligrapher and heraldic artist at the College of Arms and our annual exhibition, this year in Brighton. There isn't a theme this year and hopefully everyone will be able to enter a piece.

**We are looking for a Treasurer to be part of Sussex Scribes' committee. Sadly for us, our new treasurer Ros has decided to move to Cornwall. We wish her well. Please get in touch if this is your area of expertise. We would love to welcome you on to the team.**



*Group photo from the recent workshop with James Farrell*

Calligraphy is becoming a very popular thing to do, I keep hearing. One of the people I teach told me recently that it is recognised as a form of mindfulness. It's quite difficult to focus on anything but the letters sometimes and even then we all know how easy it is

to make a spelling mistake!

The CLAS AGM is coming up in March at the British Library and the SSI's Lay Members Day in April so all in all a busy time ahead.  
*Cathy Stables, Chair*

## Sussex Scribes Programme of Workshops for 2017

February 11th	CLAS Certificate of Skills Part 1 with Josie Brown
March 18th	Uncials with Gaynor Goffe
May 13th	Brush Lettering with Mary Noble
June 10th	CLAS Certificate of Skills Part 2 with Josie Brown
July 8th and 9th	Looking Beyond the Literal Letter with Rachel Yallop
August 12th	Sewing Pages - More Volume . Bookbinding with Helen Gibbs
September 23rd	AGM with guest speaker Tim Noad
October 14th	CLAS Certificate of Skills Part 3 with Josie Brown
November 18th	Calligraphic Handwriting & Contemporary Cursive with Veiko Kespersaks

# Sussex Scribes Exhibition September 2017

## "Sussex Scribes – 25 Years of Creative Lettering"

Jubilee Library, Brighton

September 4th - 17th, 2017

It's time to dust off your picture frames and review your back catalogue because in 2017 Sussex Scribes will be staging a retrospective show at the Jubilee Library in Brighton. This is a popular venue in Brighton and the exhibition space is close to the front entrance so the work will be seen by many library visitors.

All our members are invited to submit a piece of work for the show. As space is limited, we will only be able to show one piece per person. So choose your best work!

The piece you choose can be new work, recent, or from way back when. We will be looking to display a range of lettering styles in order to reflect the work of the group over the last 25 years or so. Your artwork will have to be mounted and framed and fitted with mirror plates so that it can be securely attached to the wall.

Because space is limited this will be a curated exhibition, i.e. works will be selected. With this in mind, the committee would like you to first of all submit a small photo of your piece. If you are not sure which of your pieces to submit, you could select up to three to send in as images and the committee will select the one that works best in the show as a whole.



### HOW TO SUBMIT IMAGES OF YOUR ARTWORK FOR SELECTION

- Please send us a small photo of the piece or pieces you would like to be considered for the show. You can send up to three images but remember we will only select one from each person for the final show.
- **This should be submitted before the end of June, 2017** and can be emailed as a jpeg or posted to Helen Gibbs: email: [hemgee22@gmail.com](mailto:hemgee22@gmail.com) or 60 Southall Avenue, Brighton, BN2 4BB

*NB. Jpegs should be no more than 5mb in size and if you are sending in a print by post, roughly postcard size would be fine.*

- Please tell us the size of your piece and whether or not the size is framed or unframed. And of course, include your name if submitting by post. The images don't have to be perfect renditions of the artwork as it is just to give us an idea of how it will all look together and how much space it will need.

- There will be a hanging fee of £5 per person, payable when you submit your artwork.
- Your framed artwork will have to be delivered to either Cathy Stables in Chichester or Irene Willard in Portslade by September 3rd, 2017.
- Please contact Helen Gibbs if you have any further questions regarding the above or anything else to do with the exhibition. [hemgee22@gmail.com](mailto:hemgee22@gmail.com)



## CLAS Certificate of Skills Part 1: Vellum

with Josie Brown

February 11th, 2017  
Pines Day Centre  
Worthing  
10am - 4pm

The first session will begin with a short overview of skins used for writing on and introduce a range of techniques for preparing vellum as a surface to work on. We will explore the characteristics of different skins, look at three alternative ways to stretch vellum and learn what to treat it with for specific purposes.

Everyone will complete a vellum stretch, make calligraphic trials with various tools and mediums on loose off-cuts, and learn how to carry out erasures and resurfacing effectively.

### Materials and Equipment

Usual calligraphic equipment including narrow or pointed nibs and bottled or stick ink  
Gouache and watercolour paints  
Scalpel or craft knife with curved blade no 10  
Fine emery wet & dry sandpaper  
Off-cuts and/or larger pieces of vellum\*\*  
Cuttlefish bone\*  
Gum sandarac\*  
Pumice\*  
Mortar & pestle\*  
Board for stretching - either plywood or MDF, approx 14 x 20 cm or smaller (could be square or long and thin). The board must be presealed with PVA mixed 1:1 with water both sides and all edges\*\*  
Cartidge or blotting paper for lining the stretch  
Piece of good quality paper for backing the stretch - best if handmade without a grain, but not essential\*\*  
Brush for pasting /



PVA glue  
Small sponge  
Small bowl or margarine carton (big enough for sponge)  
Craft or Stanley Knife with a new straight blade  
Cutting mat or back of an A3 size pad  
Ruler for measuring  
Steel rule for cutting  
Face mask  
Note book

*\*the tutor will provide these if you do not have them*

*\*\*the tutor will have vellum and various sized and shaped boards, ready prepared, for sale on the day*



*Preparing the board*

**This four-part course is fully booked now. We shall be running more Certificates in the future but early booking is essential as they prove to be very popular.**

# Workshop March 2017

## Uncials

with Gaynor Goffe

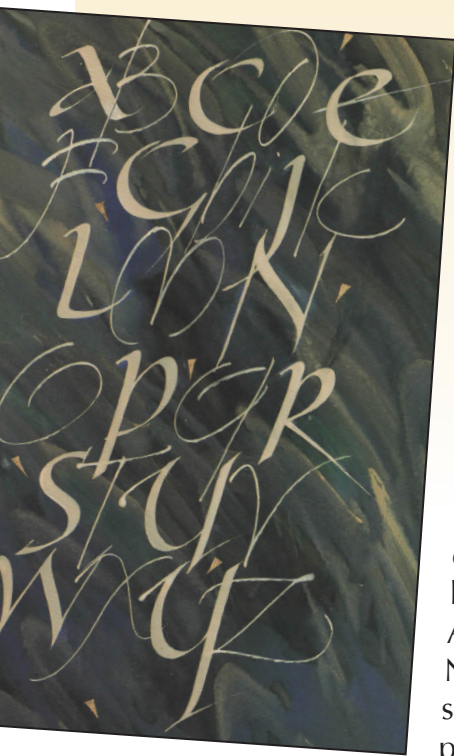
March 18th, 2017

Pines Day Centre, Worthing

10am - 4pm

This uncial workshop focuses on letterform, and is suitable for all levels.

Options will include learning/improving a basic angled pen uncial derived from the Stonyhurst Gospel or another, angled pen, historical, uncial example, or flat pen uncial derived from the Vespasian Psalter or experimenting with contemporary uncial variations through tutor-led exercises.



### Materials and Equipment:

Usual calligraphy tools and materials: a range of square cut nibs, especially No 2, slippon reservoirs, penholders, a bottle of black calligraphy ink eg Pelikan 4001 or liquid Sumi ink, A3 Winsor & Newton smooth surface cartridge pad 70 or 100lbs

(or other A3 cartridge or lay-out paper as long as you can write crisply on it without the ink bleeding!), ruler, tape, Pritt gluestick or similar, scissors, tissues, water pot, HB pencil, eraser.

**This workshop is now fully booked**



## Letter/Card Exchange

Sussex Scribes has started a letter and birthday card exchange. It is a very simple thing to do that brings pleasure to all involved.

The idea is that you can ask to join the group list - just contact myself or Suzi. You will then be given a copy of all the participants with their address and birthday date.

Some people are interested in writing letters to each other and some want to make and send birthday cards. Either of these things provide a great way to practise calligraphy skills.

Writing the envelopes in fancy scripts is fun and making cards can be a great way to design letters or write out small phrases in various scripts...and just imagine the joy of finding lots of handmade cards dropping through the letter box on your birthday.

So if you would like to join in the fun, send your details to either Helen [hemgee22@gmail.com](mailto:hemgee22@gmail.com) or Suzi [suzifaber@outlook.com](mailto:suzifaber@outlook.com).

Please indicate if you would like to write letters, cards or both and include your address and birthday date if relevant. Your details will not be passed to anyone outside the letter exchange group.

*Helen & Suzi*



## Brush Lettering

with Mary Noble

May 13th, 2017

Pines Day Centre Worthing

10am - 4pm

ITALIC WITH A BRUSH -  
Broad-edged and Pointed.

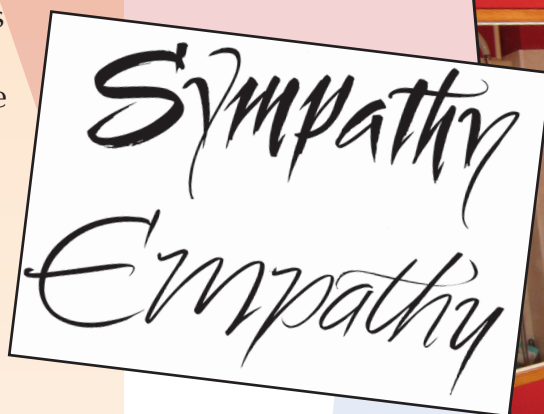
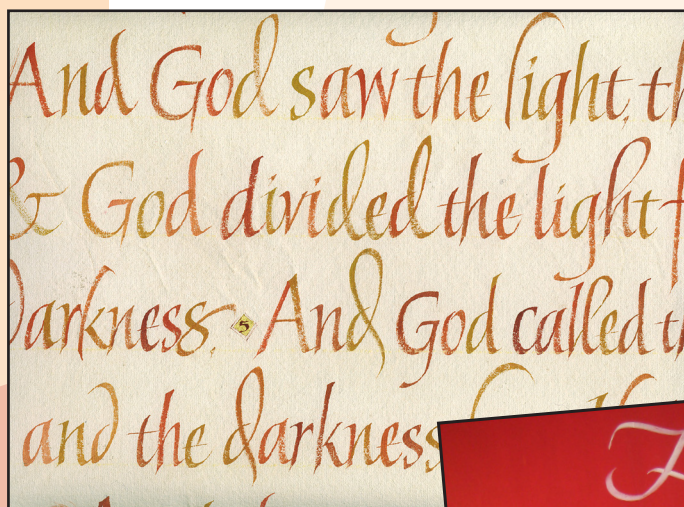
Brushes are amazingly versatile calligraphic tools. Explore their potential in a workshop where you can try out both broad-edged and then pointed - quite different effects - to see what suits your style and personality.

Italic is the ideal letterform to traverse these two worlds, so don't worry if you've never picked up a brush, but it would help if you could 'brush up' your Italic beforehand!

[www.marynoble.co.uk](http://www.marynoble.co.uk)

### What to bring:

- Acrylic or other synthetic, springy broad-edged brush approx. 12mm wide. Test with water that it makes a sharp chisel edge. **ESSENTIAL.**
- Acrylic pointed brush, approx. size 2. Test with water that it goes to a fine point. **ESSENTIAL.**
- Tubes of gouache paint, any dark colour, plus mixing equipment, including an old paint-mixing brush.
- Paint palette with flat areas, or white plates
- Bottle non-waterproof black ink
- Paper: Roll of Lining paper - can share with several people (available at B&Q etc wallpaper depts). OR Pad of A3 cartridge paper, (nothing smaller, you will need lots) preferably with a matt surface, not too smooth. Note: layout paper is too slippery for good results with the edged brush



- Ruler (can be 12" but longer would be better), pencil, masking tape.
- A short sentence to write.

### Optional extras:

Chinese brushes, Pentel pointed cartridge brushes, broader or narrower edged brushes, BFK Rives paper, black textured paper and white gouache.

**To book a place on this course,  
please use the workshop booking  
form at the end of the newsletter**



# Workshop Review – Copperplate

with Joy Daniels

November 19th, 2016  
Pines Day Centre  
Worthing

Apart from displaying examples of her own and other calligraphers' work, Joy had prepared for us our own individual place names in beautiful Copperplate script. This gave us an immediate incentive as I think many of us were contemplating being able to write impressive invitations, greeting cards and place names!

We (12 pupils) all gathered around and Joy gave an explanation and demonstration of the basics of Copperplate. She explained how to write our script sloping at 54 degrees with a pointed, steel nib, dip pen and recommended writing on a flat surface. She stressed the importance of the right pressure on the bold downward strokes, then the need to alleviate pressure before hitting the baseline and curving with a lighter upward movement whilst, at the same time, keeping the nib flat to the angle.

As the angle was 54 degrees, it seemed to many of us quite difficult. We were encouraged to try out one or more of the many different pointed nibs she provided besides any we had brought with us. I personally found the oblique pen the easiest to use as it meant I did not have to turn the paper sideways quite so much. (Being new to calligraphy I had always wondered what those funny-angled pens were for!)

We practised the letters of the alphabet and then she demonstrated joining the letters with the correct spaces between. Using the excellent handouts



provided, our practice took up the rest of morning whilst Joy came around checking our progress, pointing out faults and how to improve our technique, demonstrating to each of us individually.

After lunch, it was time for the majuscules letters, the ascenders and descenders of which she said could be up to 3 times the x-height although twice that height was more common. I found these capital letters particularly exciting as it is the swirly bits that make Copperplate so attractive.

We watched the fluidity of her letters as she demonstrated. It all seemed effortless but we soon realised that achieving anything vaguely resembling it would prove elusive! However, I think those of us who had not done Copperplate before felt we were mastering a degree of progress. As a complete beginner, I was pleased with what I achieved. We were given excellent, clear handouts on each step.

During the course of the day, Joy also showed us how to draw scrolls holding the pen sideways and as flat as possible with delicate pressure. Incidentally, she explained how to rule up a guideline page with the correct angles for different styles of calligraphy using either a protractor and set square or an adjustable set square. Also, how to draw parallel writing lines to the correct width quickly and accurately using a Linex board and how to centre writing using a centring ruler. Valuable tips indeed.

I came away thinking myself fortunate to have had such a good tutor. We all had an excellent, instructive day and came away with renewed enthusiasm.

Thank you, Joy. Gill Payne



# Workshop Review

## Spencerian with James Farrell

January 21st, 2017  
Pines Day Centre  
Worthing

Thank you to James Farrell for running a workshop in Spencerian script with us in January.

This was a great way to start a year of what looks to be an exciting and varied programme of workshops.

The frosty morning melted away as we strived for the lightness of touch and ease of movement that James had demonstrated both in the letters he drew on the day and in the portfolio of small artworks he brought with him. As we all know, it is practise that brings progress and a day with this script and its specialist pen movements was not going to give us more than a taster. But James presented the script in such an inspiring way and made it look if not magical, then certainly a script of great beauty and creative potential that we were going to be left wanting more.

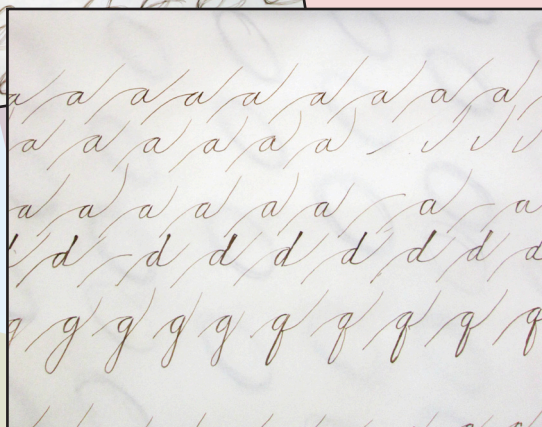
After a brief introduction to the script, which gave us a neat historical background and context to our work, we spent some time unlocking our forearms. Movement in lettering can originate in our fingers, forearms, shoulders or indeed the whole body so for a good half hour we focused on drawing oval shapes by rotating the muscles in the bottom half of our arms. This is so interesting to learn when you are relatively new to calligraphy and although it felt quite alien, I could understand the why.



We progressed to examine the construction of all the lower case letters during the rest of the day, considering the angles and the curves in close detail and beginning to look at

the areas of pressure in the strokes that make this script so full of character. James' enthusiasm for the forms was infectious and the

class worked for much of the time in quiet absorption. As we searched for the light hairlines, you could barely hear the sound of pen on paper!



A couple of websites for anyone who wants to study pointed pen scripts in more detail:  
[www.iampeth.com](http://www.iampeth.com) and [www.zanerian.com](http://www.zanerian.com)

*Helen Gibbs*



See more of James' work at  
[jamesfazzfarrell.blogspot.co.uk/p/about.html](http://jamesfazzfarrell.blogspot.co.uk/p/about.html)

# *My Work Space*

*by Tina Warren*

Eeeekkk!

Look away now if an untidy studio sends your head in a spin! This does occasionally get a bit of a spruce up in between commissions/blocks of teaching/exhibitions - but not that often!

As it's Christmas I thought I'd get a bit of the tree in! As you walk into our hallway my studio is right in front of you!

To the left (behind the door) are 5 crates with all my teaching gear in (books, craft materials, teaching aids, exemplars, register, small "shop", honesty box, theme/focus for the term etc). They get loaded in the car Monday night and unloaded on Thursday afternoon after my 3rd weekly class.

Next on the left is my book case - this is just calligraphy and illumination related books. I have too many books so have to rethink this at some stage!

On top are calligraphy magazine folders for all the various societies, craft supplies, more teaching aids, box files with various teaching exemplars for craft projects etc.

My Eastern European antique pine cupboard stores all my inks, paints, nibs, laminator, water colour pencils, pastels, charcoal, pumice, gum sanderac, glass engraving equipment, gold, ink cartridges etc.

Then there is my computer desk (an antique school desk) with my computer on. All my A4 paper is stored under the desk.

The window ledge is home to pots containing pens with nibs, quills, all my paintbrushes, scissors etc and porcelain crucibles storing my most commonly used pigments and my studio phone. My studio overlooks the garden which is rather lovely. My chair sits comfortably in the middle of my "computer" and "writing" space!

To the right of the door way (and out of view) is a 4 drawer wooden filing cabinet with my printer/scanner on top. Next to that are A1 portfolio cases with old pieces of work and some paper as well as blank tubes for posting work.

Then there is my plan chest which I adore. I would love to keep the top clear but in real life that's unlikely to happen! It has a big cutting mat, projects at various stages and my big pen wraps - one with all my different dip pens and the other has my folded nibs and

expressive tools and brushes in (they travel around with me). Inside are loads of sheets of vellum and exemplars for some of the regular documents I write.

Client commissions, Books of Remembrance etc are kept safe. It also houses packs of paper, some mounted pieces of work and prints I

sell at craft fairs and art exhibitions.

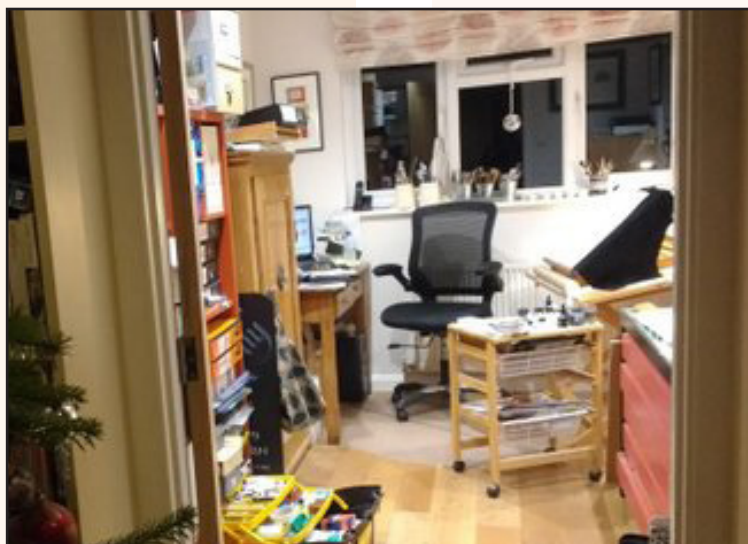
Between the plan chest and my writing desk are writing boards (spares for my classes and frames I have bought for "one day ...").

Finally there is my writing desk. Sometimes I work on the actual desk, as it can be tilted, and sometimes with a board. A piece of black pig skin suede under the latest piece of vellum I'm writing on stops the vellum from slipping.

I have day light spots in the ceiling and a lamp as well (I do quite a lot of work at night if there are deadlines when I have finished running around after the teenagers!).

On the walls I have framed pieces of calligraphy and illumination from my Reigate days and one or two others - a print from Sheila Waters and an alphabet wedding present from Rachel Yallop.

Although it looks chaotic it's my sanctuary and I basically live in there!





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## Clas AGM at the British Library

Saturday March 11th, 2017

Lecture with Dr Christopher de Hamel

"Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts"

[www.clas.co.uk](http://www.clas.co.uk)

## SSI Lay Members Day

Saturday April 29th, 2017

Imperial College, London

The Daubney Lecture with Nathalie

Moisy, "Modern Japonism in Western

Lettering Arts"

[www.calligraphyonline.org](http://www.calligraphyonline.org)



## For Sale

A0 Drawing Board

It tilts to various levels and can also be used as a flat table. £100 ono

Contact Anita by email [anitacallig@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:anitacallig@hotmail.co.uk) or phone 07815 798484.

[www.sussexscribes.co.uk](http://www.sussexscribes.co.uk)

Thank you to everyone who sent articles and photographs in for this newsletter.

The next newsletter will be sent out at the end of April, 2017.

Please send any copy to Helen Gibbs:  
email [hemgee22@gmail.com](mailto:hemgee22@gmail.com)

Copy can include: write ups of workshops, exhibitions and anything else you would like to share with the group.

**Copy deadline April 15th, 2017**

## Your Committee

**Chair:** Cathy Stables  
01243 782240

**Secretary:** Denyce Aresti

**Programme:** Suzi Faber

**Bookings:** Irene Willard

**Newsletter/ Membership:**  
Helen Gibbs

**Treasurer:** Ros Edwards

**Committee Members:**  
Janice Simmonds  
Claire Stenning

## Sussex Scribes

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