



SUSSEXSCRIBES

Newsletter JULY 2019

Dear Members,

I have been in recent contact with quite a lot of calligraphy tutors. This provided a good opportunity to ask their opinion on nibs and nib holders in a series of questions thought up by our editor Helen Gibbs.



The results are documented in this newsletter: "Q & A - Pen Craft". Tutors who have taught at Sussex Scribes were among the contributors – Mary Noble, Gaynor Goffe, Gerald Mynott and Josie Brown. The results are interesting. One type of nib is particularly popular for broad edged pen calligraphy.

Our Sussex Scribes exhibition is being displayed at Arundel Cathedral from 3rd August. It may be a fairly small exhibition as the subject was very specific but do try and see it if you can and do also put the AGM in September in your diaries. It would be great to see you there and you may be able to find a calligraphy book to add to your collection.

We are finalising the programme of workshops for 2020 and are pleased to welcome back Eleanor Winters in September for a 2-day copperplate workshop. Eleanor was forced to cancel this workshop last year due to ill health and I know that many of you who had booked it were disappointed. If you were one of these, please rest assured that you will get priority booking in 2020.

Other workshops next year will include "Cursive Italic" with Gaynor Goffe, "Gothic Capitals" with Julia Baxter and many more besides so please remember to book early to avoid disappointment.

Happy summer holidays everyone,

Cathy Stables, Chair

Sussex Scribes AGM 2019

at

**Broadwater Baptist
Church, Dominion Road,
Worthing, BN14 8JL**

2 - 4 pm

with special guest speaker

**Nancy Ouchida-Howells
"David Howells: Sources
of Inspiration"**

**We have about 300
calligraphy books to sell
which have been donated
by a former member.**

Sold in aid of group funds

Quiz, Tea and Cake

(donations of cake welcome)

We will also announce the new program of workshops for 2020 so come along, have some fun, meet other members, renew your subs and elect a new committee.

Member's Pages



Papermaking Equipment For Sale

Large plastic trough - brand new
An A4 Mahogany Deckle - brand new
Quantity of new cotton linter/pulp
Liquidiser/blender - nearly new
Japanese reed mats for couching
Jay cloths for layering
Large heavyweight plastic sheeting
Numerous related odds and ends for layering, couching and pressing.

Several books :

Handmade Paper by Maureen Richardson
Creative Handmade Paper by David Watson
The Art and Craft of Papermaking by Sophie Dawson
Making Paper by Hand - Wookey Hole Papermill
The Art and Craft of Paper - Premier Editions

If interested, please contact Teresa Stephens
Tel: 01273 508895 Mob: 07745 486 511
Email: teresamstephens@gmail.com

Don't forget subs for 2020 are due in September. There is a membership renewal form at the end of this newsletter and also on our website. We thank you for your ongoing support. We wouldn't have a group without you.



Sussex Scribes Exhibition 2019

at

Arundel Cathedral

August 3rd -13th

opening times

2 - 5 pm

www.arundelcathedral.org

CLAS Exhibition

"A Way With Words"

at

THE LETTERING ARTS CENTRE
Snape Maltings, Snape, Suffolk
IP17 1SP

Open daily 11am - 5pm
Please call if you intend to visit
midweek, as they are occasionally
closed for a workshop.

Artist talk by Mary Noble
Friday, 9 August 2019
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm
Tickets £10

info@letteringartstrust.org.uk
Tel: 01728 688393 / 01728 688934
www.letteringartstrust.org.uk

Member's Pages continued

Flirting with Bâtarde

Early last year, in our weekly class, Nancy brought with her an original page of an old manuscript, beautifully written in a Gothic cursive hand. She suggested that

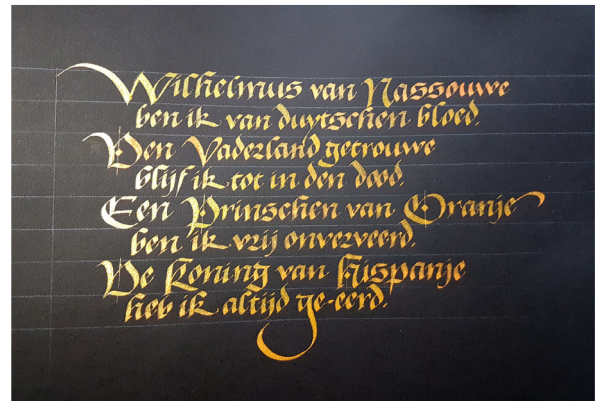
we might study and analyse the hand, and see where it took us. I loved the exercise and the hand, and worked on it during the Spring term, finally having a go at creating a piece on vellum. It came

out a little spindly, but it was a wonderful learning experience.

Then Gerald Mynott did a workshop for Sussex Scribes in Bâtarde, and introduced it as a Gothic cursive hand. The penny dropped. I had been working on something similar!

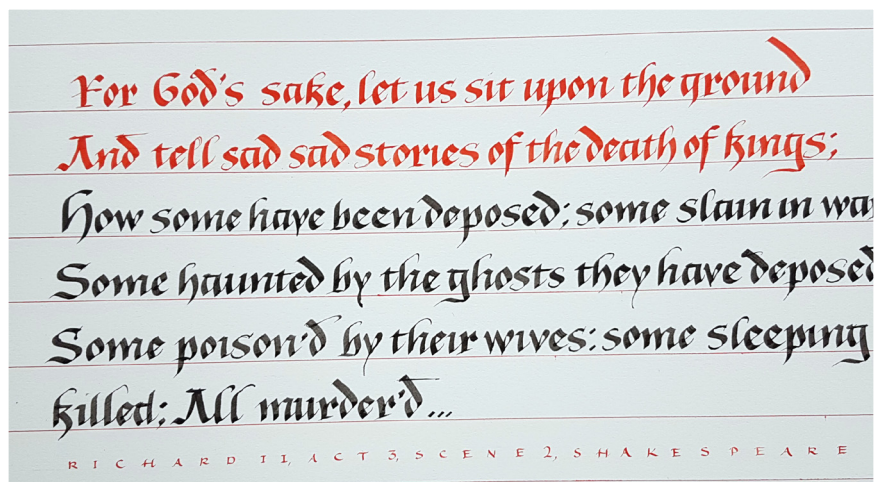
I produced a version of the Dutch national anthem in that workshop, which now proudly hangs in my study at home, a tribute to my Dutch upbringing. Recently I attended a workshop with Lingfield Scribes where Jan Mehigan covered the same topic – I cannot seem to get enough!

Each tutor has their own style of teaching and writing, so every time I find something new in this beautiful script. It seems to invite old texts – so



far I have played with Latin, Dutch and Shakespearean English – and keep thinking of new projects that I don't have time for right now but that I am mentally filing for a future occasion...

Do you have a hand that you find yourself fascinated with, returning to it time and again? If so, it would be great to hear about it and see some examples of your work in a future newsletter! Mariette



Send in copy for this page to share with your fellow members:

Ask a question, send in a photo, tips, book reviews, exhibitions etc

Send to Helen: hemgee22@gmail.com

**Exhibition at the
British Library**

**"Writing: Making Your
Mark"**

April 26th - August 27th

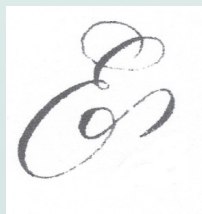
Book online at www.bl.uk

Member's Pages continued again

Thank you to Janice for passing on some visual info about the ampersand - how do you write yours?

The ampersand was first seen in old Roman cursive when the letters e and t were joined together. It has survived into modern handwriting where use of other ligatures has fallen away.

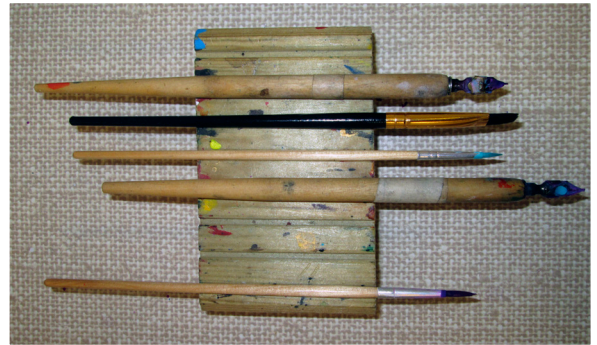
Here are a few examples to help you recognise it when looking at old scripts.



From the top:
79 AD Pompeian
810 AD Carolingian
1200 AD Uncial Versals
1800's Copperplate
20th Century after Edward Johnston

For more reading about ampersands try the following:

- Jan Tschichold "A Brief History of the Ampersand" 1953
- www.shadycharacters.co.uk which is the website of Keith Houston, author of a book with the same title published in 2014 which delves into the stories behind punctuation.



Fed up with your pens rolling off the table? A simple pen rest is demonstrated here - a sawn off strip of decking board, the one with grooves in it. If you have made your own pen rest or adapted something unusual, please share it with the newsletter.

Join CLAS!

Membership costs £40 per year and benefits include a quarterly magazine, "The Edge", free entry to the CLAS annual "Art & the Letter" exhibition held at the AGM day, discounts for the annual festival and discounts from L Cornelissen and Son Ltd including a special offer to new CLAS members on a set of Schmincke Gouache paints.

To join CLAS, visit their new look website at www.clas.co.uk and download a membership form.

Did you know that the CLAS website has an online shop where you can buy all sorts of useful stuff from aprons and tote bags to pen holders and bonefolders?

For example, gum sandarac, which students on the Colour and Texture course may be looking for for the next workshop - 25g cost £4.50 plus £3 p&p.

They are also selling copies of the catalogue for the current exhibition "A Way with Words"

Kings and Scribes - A Trip To Hampshire

We are lucky here in Sussex to have two neighbouring groups who are very active and put on great programmes of workshops. Occasionally they have spare places on them and can offer them out to others.

I had been planning a trip to Winchester this summer to see the Winchester Bible so when the offer of a 2-day workshop with Celia Lister came round from Hampshire Scribes I thought it was just too good to refuse.

Winchester is just a little too far to do as a day trip on public transport so I booked two nights in an Airbnb giving myself time to visit the cathedral the day before the workshop.

Winchester is a beautiful centre to walk around and steeped in history. When I walked into the cathedral it actually took my breath away and I had to sit down for a moment to gather myself!

But it was the Bible I had come to see so I headed off to the south transept. This year, a new and permanent exhibition has opened at the cathedral: "Kings & Scribes: the Birth of a Nation". The centre piece of the show is the beautiful Winchester Bible and the exhibition tells its story: how it came about, the scribe (just the one!) and illuminators and then about its recent conservation when all the books were disbound, cleaned, repaired, digitised, and then rebound. The four books are now displayed in a low-lit chamber under glass and there was a helpful guide on hand to answer questions. I can thoroughly recommend a visit and a cream tea afterwards in the cathedral café.



Hampshire Scribes are a very friendly group and I was made very welcome at Badger Farm Community Centre, which is a short bus ride from the city centre.

Thankfully I hadn't had to carry the large sheets of "posh" paper we were going to use as they had ordered in a ream of it for everyone to share.

We began the workshop with a group exercise to loosen up. I think we all found it a bit scary but gave it our best shot. We decided on a couple of

words to write big on lining paper roll, each person writing one letter in black ink with a variety of large mark making tools that Celia had provided. The task was to create a thoughtful sequence of letters

but to be creative in our use of shape, layout and quality of line. There was a lot to think about but this exercise laid the foundation for the rest of the weekend as we developed our own texts with colour and the various mark making tools



we had brought with us. (Favourite tool was the water spray bottle!)

The ultimate aim of the workshop, "Woven Words" was to produce a small book - a calligraphic response to a chosen text. It was a simple enough idea but of course nothing that sounds simple is ever easy and we all worked very hard to produce something we could be proud of.

I would definitely do a trip like this again. I find the idea of the CLAS festival a little daunting as I seem to tire easily at workshops so this was a great way to have a mini break and meet other calligraphers without feeling too worn out at the end of it. *Helen*

Q & A - Pen Craft

We asked a group of experienced calligraphers (our teachers mostly) various questions about their use of nibs. Here is a summary of their answers:

1. Do you prefer a particular nib for a particular script?

- William Mitchell nibs were favoured for most scripts especially broad-edged work.

And then sometimes:

- Brause for uncial, larger italic, flatter angled hands such as flat pen uncial, pointed italic.

- Speedball for faster italics and gestural work

- Nikko G, Gillet 303, 404, Hunt 56, 101 and Leonardt for pointed pen.

A couple of calligraphers said their choice of nib depended on the paper, ink or script size rather than the script itself.



2. How do you clean and maintain your nibs?

Most of the answers described using warm soapy water (or bicarb) with a toothbrush and then occasionally using a special nib cleaner such as Zest-It or fine sandpaper. One or two of the more conscientious types take the nib out of the holder and wash each part separately, then dry off thoroughly before placing the nib back in the pen holder. *Some sumi inks which have a lot of chemicals can rust nibs unless thoroughly scrubbed and dried.*



3. What kind of reservoir do you prefer?

Various answers for this one: none, slip-on, microporous tape and one that fits the nib!

4. How do you know when you need a new nib?

The general consensus on this seems to be when you can no longer get the crisp hairlines. In addition to this - when the writing loses sharpness and becomes heavy or the nibs split and become scratchy.

Sharpening tip: If the nib is not writing crisply, try a few circles on 1200 grade wet and dry paper.

5. Do you sharpen your nibs?

Again a range of answers for this one from no, sometimes, never to yes all the time. Sharpen with fine grade sandpaper or an arkansas stone and hone with crocus cloth.



6. Do you have a preference for a particular style of pen holder?

A lot of personal preference here:

- I use lots of different ones
- Normal wooden ones, hate Brause, thin plastic or fat cork ones
- The grey ones you can't get any more.
- Bic lever penholders (*shown above*)
- The simple, marbled, circular shaft ones, not triangular or Brause.
- Rexel school penholders by Cumberland Graphics because they are easy to get nibs in and out of and there is no metal for rusting. *Penholders that hold nib too tightly may prevent nib from being sufficiently springy.*

If you have any questions for our panel of experts, send them in to Helen at the newsletter who will pass them on and report back.

The Inspiration of David Jones with Gerald Mynott

Heene Community Centre, Worthing

We started by looking at samples of David Jones' lettering, but for our work on the day we were not copying David Jones' work exactly. As it said in the title – this was about the "inspiration" of David Jones, so instead we moved on to Gerald's interpretation of the DJ lettering, using a broad-edged nib.

Armed with Wm Mitchell #5 and #4, some gouache paint and sheets with alphabet samplers, Gerald encouraged us to start by using his examples but then to find our own form using his lettering as our guide.

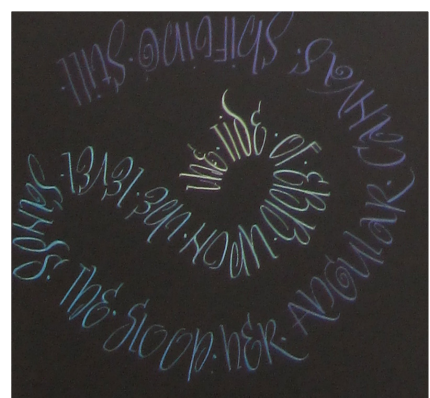
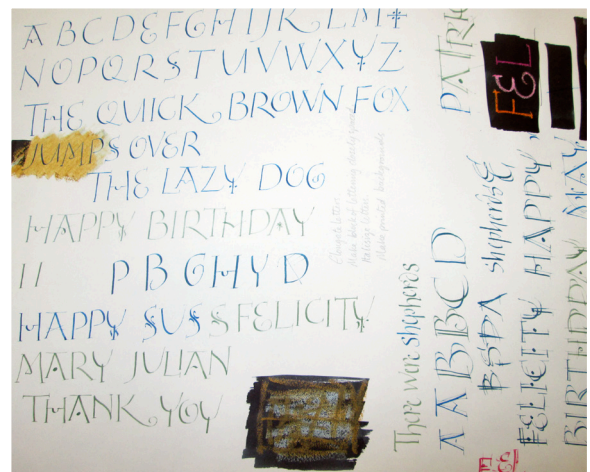
Each one of us choosing our favourite gouache colour combinations meant that the first practice sheets looked varied and interesting, and with practice we got more confident and the ideas started to flow.

We worked on alphabets and short quotes interspersed with Gerald's demonstrations and individual guidance. Then as a brief side-trip just before lunch we experimented with crayon lettering as a form of resist overlaid with Quink to give a very dramatic and colourful result. NOTE: You have to use proper wax crayons (Crayola works, Caran d'Ache does not) and water based ink (Quink is good, anything that contains shellac is not)!

After lunch Gerald gave us some colourful background papers to use as the base for a "finished" quote or

alphabet. These papers were off-cuts from printmaking students at Reigate, using oil-based inks, so the colour didn't run and mostly took the gouache paints very well. The results were fabulous, I am so pleased with the result that it will very likely become my input for our Sussex Scribes exhibition at Arundel in August!

Mariette



Colour and Texture 2 with Jan Mehigan

Broadwater Baptist Church, Worthing

We were so pleased to have Jan come and teach us this session on colour and texture, the second in a series of four workshops on the topic. We hope we didn't wear her out and wish her a speedy and full recovery from a recent illness.

Jan was on good form, giving us loads of info about colour pigments and showing us an alternative approach to the one we learnt in lesson one with Mary Noble. With Mary we used three colours plus black – the CMYK we are familiar with from digital printers. Jan showed us how to work with six colours and no black.

Watercolour was the medium for the day and the first task was designed to help us get to know the six colours by mixing them together in graded shades to produce something like 180 different colours.

In the afternoon, we learnt how to stretch paper on a board and apply a wash of watercolour or acrylic ink to make a smooth "background" layer of colour. The third task was to mix colours to match a sample from a magazine. This will test how much we have learnt from the first task.

Along the way, Jan gave us lots of practical tips and some interesting stories about colour pigment. It was a fun and informative day and I am looking forward to getting stuck in to the homework.

Helen



Workshop Review July 2019

Forza Foundation with Michela Antonello

Heene Community Centre, Worthing

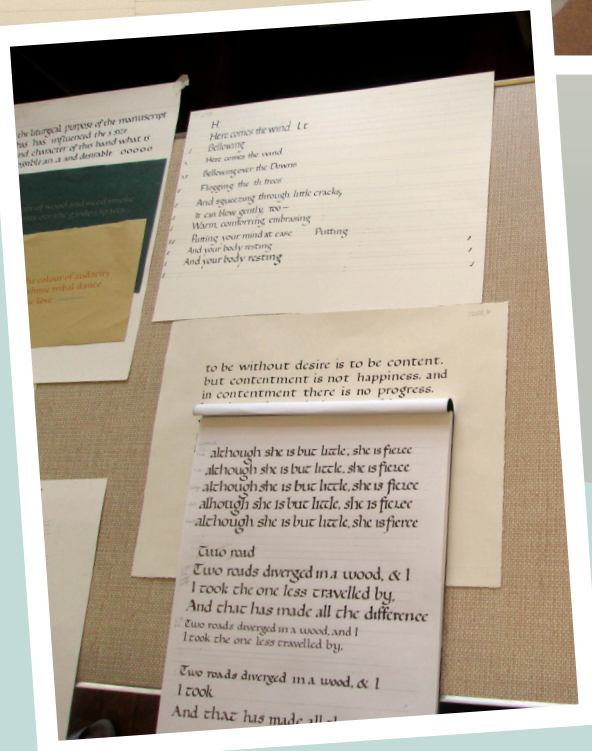
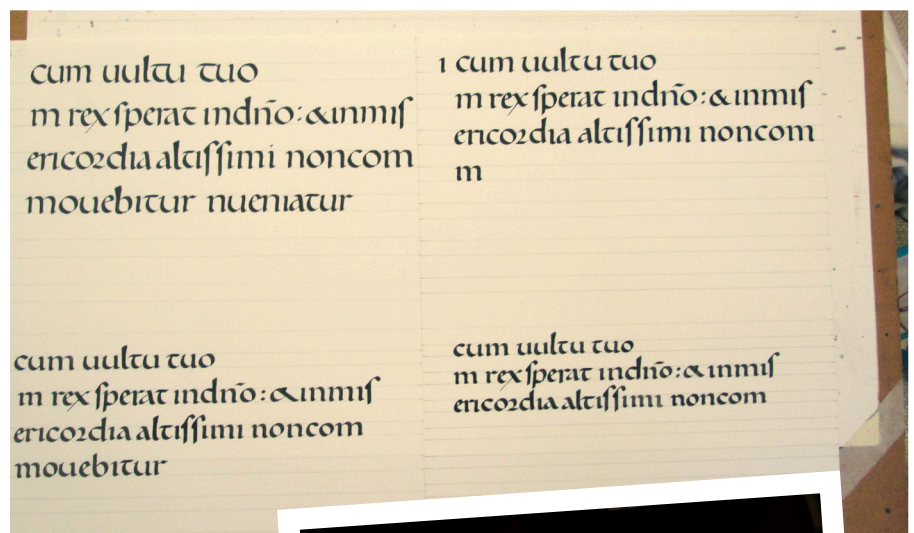
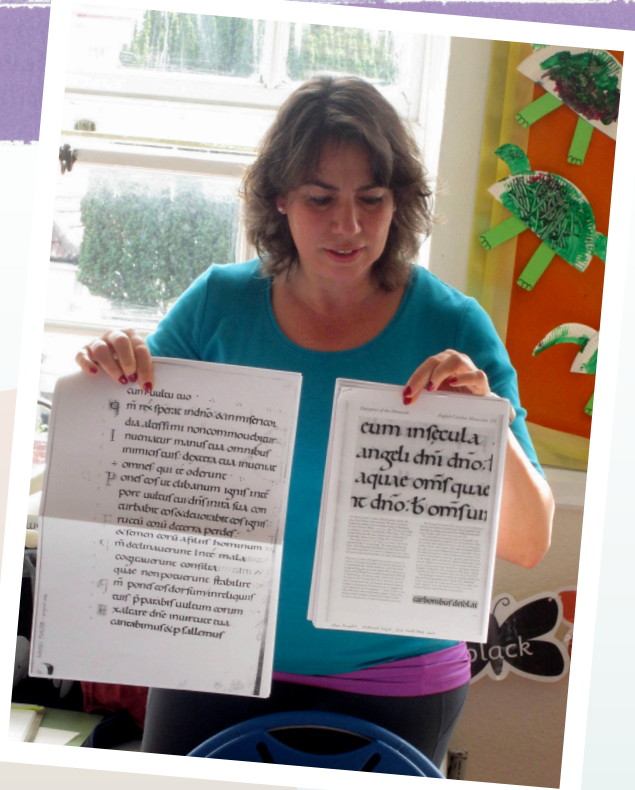
On a warm Saturday in July we came to the Heene in Worthing for our "Forza Foundation" workshop with Michela Antonello, current Chair of CLAS. Michela reminded us that the Foundational hand is based on the Ramsay Psalter from the late 9th century. Edward Johnston used it to develop his foundational or roundhand script, and these days it has become a very stylised straight hand that many of us learned at the start of our calligraphic journeys. For the purpose of this workshop though, Michela took us back to the original.

We started by doing a formal 10-point analysis of the Ramsay Psalter hand and quickly realised that the angles and x-heights were not quite the same as the foundational hand we see in most current-day teaching materials. We traced a few lines to get a feel for the hand, and then tried writing at different x-heights to find one that felt comfortable for our individual hands.

The real challenge came when we looked at the various possible serifs – hooks, ticks, beaks, wedges and slabs anyone? In Michela's words, it was a bit like "deconstructing the hand and putting it back together again".

No finished pieces of work at the end of the day, but we did come out with a structure for understanding historical scripts and exercises to continue our discovery of the foundational hand..... I will look forward to experimenting.

Mariette



A Box Of Books *with Helen Gibbs* **Saturday 10th August, 2019**

Venue: Broadwater Baptist Church,
Dominion Road, Worthing, BN14 8JL
Cost £25 members / £30 non-members

In this workshop we will spend half the day making a small slip case and the second half making a collection of books to fit inside. The slip-case is the simplest of book boxes and a good place to start for beginner box makers.

Materials for the box will be supplied, cut to size, to make the process easier but full instructions will be given to show you how to measure for further book boxes.

Materials for the slip-case will be provided for a small charge on the day.

If you prefer to make a second box in the afternoon instead of the book structures, bring a small book to make it for and extra materials.

Make Your Own Bookcloth:

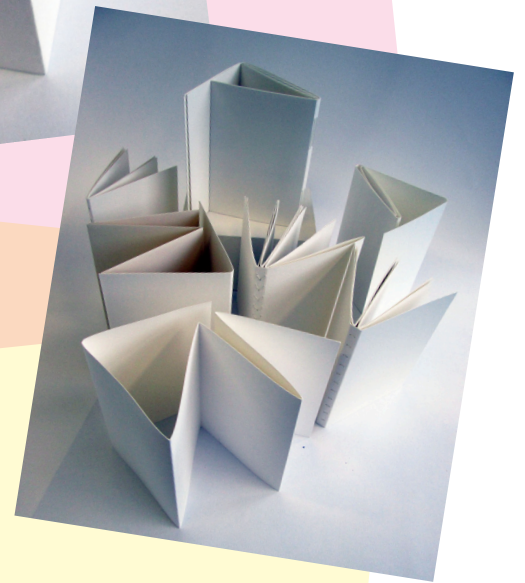
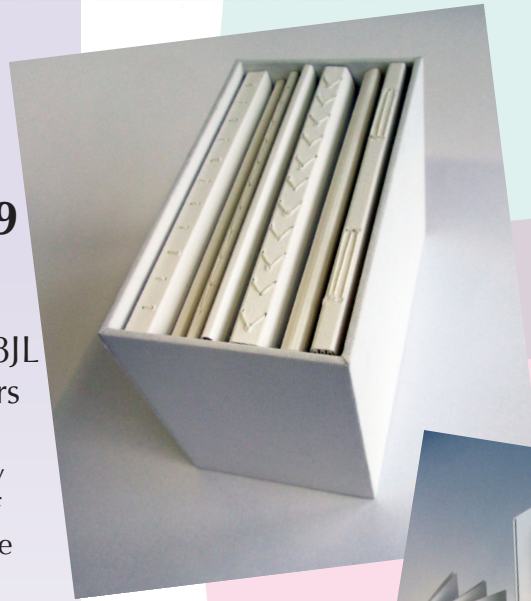
Book cloth is not always easy to get hold of and can be expensive so for anyone who would like to know how to prepare their own fabric for covering books and boxes please see separate materials list below.

Materials & Equipment To Bring

- Two large sheets of Somerset, BFK Rives, Fabriano or similar to cut into long strips. Should be in the 250-300gsm weight range and 76x56cm or so. Best carried to the workshop flat but if you have to roll it try to roll in a large diameter.
 - A few sheets A3 cartridge
 - Usual bookbinding equipment: cutting mat, metal ruler, kraft knife/scalpel with spare blades, pricker*, bonefolder, needles and strong thread, sharp pencil, eraser, scoring board*, scrap A4 paper, scissors, PVA with a variety of brushes, small decorators tray and roller*, scrap magazine paper to glue up on, pricking cradle*, set square, sanding block and sandpaper*, small weight (500gsm or heavier)
 - To make a second box, you will need 2mm board, lining paper, 300gsm card and covering material.
- * the tutor can supply these if you don't have them*

Make Your Own Bookcloth (optional extra)

Bring a piece of fabric A3 size. Must be cotton or linen, no synthetics and of a medium weight. Can be printed or plain, + a few sheets of A3 layout paper, water-spray bottle, rag for cleaning



**This workshop is now
fully booked.
Apologies if you missed out.
Remember to book early
next time.**

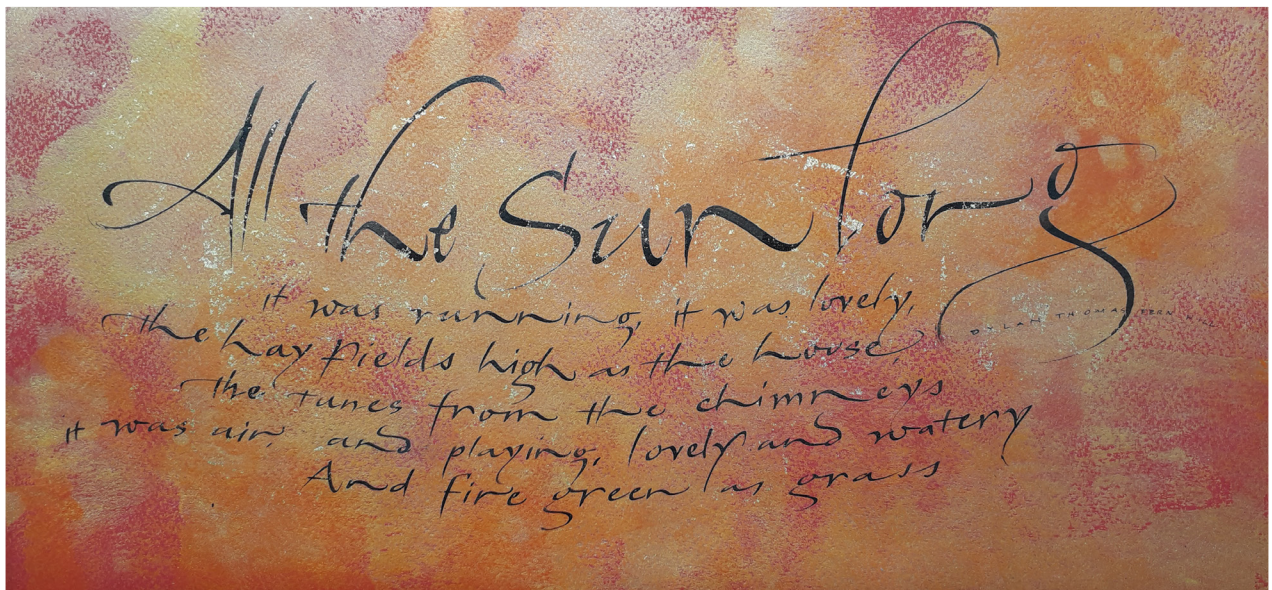
Colour and Texture 3

with Mary Noble

Saturday 12th October 2019, 10-4pm

Venue: Broadwater Baptist Church,
Dominion Road, Worthing, BN14 8JL

This is part of a longer course
so it is not possible to book as a
separate workshop



As a messy start, we shall make paste papers, using colourful and tasteful combinations, and use paste again to create collaged layers of thin papers.

Whilst they dry, we'll explore writing in colour on coloured papers, textured papers, Khadi etc, and practise getting crisp, opaque lettering in bleedproof white and other paints.

TOOLS AND MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Pad of A3 cartridge paper
- Samples of white and coloured unusual papers to explore
- Textured watercolour paper
- Tissue, coloured and natural
- A4 smooth coloured papers, including black.
- Acetate sheet (like OHP transparencies)
- Acrylic inks and food dye
- Lots of plastic containers e.g. yoghurt pots

- Sponge or absorbent cloth
- Kitchen roll, cleaning cloths, newspaper
- Brushes for pasting (Mary will bring the paste)
- Sturdy scissors to cut card
- Scraps of thick card
- Plastic eraser
- Comb
- Potato and knife to cut, for mark-making

For writing:

- Gouaches, Bleedproof White, gold watercolour (optional)
- Pens
- Pointed Japanese brush (optional)

- Palette
- Paintbrush
- Water pot
- Powdered gum sandarac
- Notebook

3D Cut Paper Lettering "Plus" with Jan Pickett

Saturday 16th November 2019

Venue: Heene Road Community
Centre, Worthing, BN11 4PL

Cost £25 members / £30 non-members

The delightful craft of paper cutting began in China hundreds of years ago and still flourishes today.

Cut paper lettering adds a new and exciting dimension to calligraphy and if you love letters, then this is the course for you.

After an initial introduction or refresher of positive 'silhouette' and negative 'stencil' cutting, we will explore layered letters and super 3D sculpted letters.

Working both white on white, or colour as well if wished, come and enjoy the fun.

Suitable for all levels

To book a place on this workshop,
please use the booking form at the
end of this newsletter or contact
Irene 01273 888798

Materials:

- Cutting mat - essential
 - Exacto knife (or equivalent)
 - Spare blades (no 11) very long and pointed or scalpel and spare blades: No10a or 11 (very long and pointed). Whatever knife you use, YOU WILL DEFINITELY NEED SPARE BLADES
 - **For scalpel users, please bring a pair of pliers to change blades.**
 - 2H pencil
 - Masking tape.
 - Rubber, ruler, compass, eraser
 - Pritt stick, tracing paper.
 - Some cartridge/photocopy paper for possible planning
 - Sticky fixers - the tiny little padded type
 - Embossing tool (very small head)
 - Some watercolours, mixing dishes, brushes
 - White pastel pencil (for drawing on dark paper)
 - BFK rives paper (all weights ok- especially for sculpted letters) Other papers, such as watercolour papers, also work well.
 - Mainly white Canson 'Mi-teintes' or Fabriano 'Tiziano' paper, also some pale coloured if wished. Both types are 160gms, which is a good weight for making cards whilst still being easy to cut.
- *Patience and a sense of humour!*



Back Page

Sussex Scribes

Programme of Workshops for 2019

There is more info about our workshops for the rest of the year on our website at www.sussexscribes.co.uk

August 10th

A Box of Books with Helen Gibbs

September 14th

AGM with Guest Speaker Nancy Ouchida-Howells, "David Howells: Sources of Inspiration"

October 12th

Certificate of Skills 3 with Mary Noble

November 16th

Cut Paper Lettering with Jan Pickett

For workshop bookings and enquiries please use the booking form included with this newsletter or contact Irene Willard 01273 888798

Our new programme for 2020 will be announced at the AGM and available soon after on our website.

Sussex Scribes run a letter and birthday card exchange. To join this small but beautiful group please contact Helen (hemgee22@gmail.com) or Suzi (suzifaber@outlook.com)

Courses and Workshops with Ewan Clayton in Brighton: www.ewanclayton.co.uk with guest tutors and a 3-month intensive starting in January.

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 October 2019. Please send any copy to Helen Gibbs: email hemgee22@gmail.com

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

Copy deadline October 15th, 2019

Your Committee

Chair: Cathy Stables
01243 782240
Vice Chair: Janice Simmonds
Secretary: Denyce Aresti
Programme: Suzi Faber
Bookings: Irene Willard
Newsletter/ Membership:
Helen Gibbs
Treasurer: Mariette Hardman
Committee Members:
Lynda Marsh

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