



# SUSSEXSCRIBES

## Newsletter April 2020

Dear Members,

I hope that you and your families are all keeping well. It is a worrying and difficult time for everyone and our thoughts are with all those people who are still having to work - in the NHS, in supermarkets and as carers and so on.

I hope that the lockdown is turning out to be an opportunity for you to practise calligraphy. If you are looking for something to do, Helen has provided an excellent book project to try (p8). We have also included some study sheets: lettering from the 16th and 17th centuries (see pp17,18).

We are sorry to have had to cancel a number of our workshops due to Covid-19 but will aim to run them again next year. Our next scheduled workshop is in July with Julia Baxter so hopefully things will be back to some form of working order by then so that it can go ahead. **You can still book any of the workshops advertised in this newsletter and we will refund any bank transfers or tear up the cheques if they are cancelled.** We now have details of our Christmas themed workshop with Jan Mehigan, which will run in November. (p13)

**Please note in your diaries, the change of date for our AGM, which has been moved from October 31st to October 17th.** This was due to circumstances beyond our control. We will also have to change the venue and this will be confirmed in our next newsletter.

We are hoping that our exhibition in Arundel Cathedral will go ahead as planned in August and now would be a good time to work towards that.

I do hope that you will be able to keep safe and well during this time.

Cathy Stables, Chair



Artwork by Ann Jamieson

*A bumper issue so here is a guide to what's inside....*

Page 2	Notices
Page 3	Postings
Page 4	Member's Gallery
Page 5	Board Talk
Page 6	Printing in Hampshire
Page 7	Studying Online
Page 8	Housebound Book Project
Page 9	Workshop Review
Pages 10-13	Workshop Details
Pages 15-16	Memory Lane
Pages 17-18	Study Guides
Page 19	Workshop Booking Form

## Member's Pages

### Exhibition Time

#### Sussex Scribes are planning a group exhibition for August 2020

The exhibition will coincide with The Arundel Art Trail and the venue will be **Arundel Cathedral.**

This year, there will be no theme but there will be a size limit of A3 maximum.  
**Works should be mounted but not framed please.**

*Dates and more info about submitting your work to follow when we know a bit more about how things will be.*



### Competition Time

#### Make a Birthday Card for Sussex Scribes and Win a Prize!

Sussex Scribes is 30 years old and we would like to celebrate with a fabulous display of birthday cards at our AGM this October. All you have to do is design a card and bring it along on the day or post it to one of the committee members. More details to follow.

### Some Online Classes for Calligraphers

Something you might want to think about if this isolation thing goes on for an extended period of time. Let us know how you get on if you enrol for something.

*(Please note this listing does not necessarily mean we recommend them.)*

**Yves Leterme** runs online courses periodically. Coming up: "Drawn Caps" - a six week course starting May 13th. All levels but especially for beginners.  
[www.yvesletermeletters.com](http://www.yvesletermeletters.com)  
*(Also see Helen's article on page 5)*

#### Gaynor Goffe

Gaynor teaches a number of subjects by post/email. Suitable for both beginners and improvers, cost is £60 for four lessons.  
[www.gaynorgoffe-calligraphy.co.uk](http://www.gaynorgoffe-calligraphy.co.uk)

**Sunita Auger** runs online courses in foundation and modern  
[www.gloryletteringstudio.co.uk](http://www.gloryletteringstudio.co.uk)

**Jilly Hazeldine** runs online courses in lots of scripts.  
Cost £36 per lesson  
[Gillianhazeldine.co.uk](http://Gillianhazeldine.co.uk)

#### SSI Capital Letters

This event, which was scheduled for May 16th has now, sadly, been cancelled. There will be an online exhibition of lay members work instead. For more information about this, please go to their website at [calligraphyonline.org](http://calligraphyonline.org)

Do you have work in an exhibition? Have you read a great book about calligraphy recently? *Tell us about it here!* You can also ask a technical question and we will find a panel of experts to answer it for you.  
Please send copy to Helen:  
[hemgee22@gmail.com](mailto:hemgee22@gmail.com)



## Member's Pages

### *Did you know that Sussex Scribes runs a letter and birthday card exchange?*

How it works:

We keep a list of people who want to be involved in the exchange. When you join the project, we add your details to the list and circulate it to everyone else who is taking part.

You can opt in or out of each of the different kinds of "postings", so some people like to write letters, some like to make and send birthday cards and some do both.

We would like to extend this project to include an envelope exchange too. I think you would just send a calligraphic envelope to someone on the list, perhaps one a year to everyone, something like that. we don't have strict rules on that.

So if you would like to join the "postings" project, please send your details in to Helen by email [hemgee22@gmail.com](mailto:hemgee22@gmail.com). You should indicate which of the above you would like to do - cards or letters or envelopes or all of them if you want to!

*Helen G*

## Postings



I have been exchanging envelopes with my ATS group since 2012. We found it was a good way of keeping in touch creatively, rather than just by email. We have a rota so that we each send and receive one a month.

The hardest part is thinking of something new each time. Some arrive beautifully decorated, some with ornate copperplate, some quirky on wallpaper oddments, another with machine stitching, I do wonder what the postman must think!

*Janice*

*"It can brighten your day to receive a beautiful envelope from one of your calligraphy friends now and again. So go ahead and sign up and have some fun."*

*Irene*

### **Royal Mail Stamps**

The Royal Mail have issued a new set of first class stamps celebrating the romantic poets. This set of striking designs would look great on your calligraphic envelopes.

You can buy stamps online at [www.shop.royalmail.com](http://www.shop.royalmail.com)





# Member's Gallery Spring 2020



Pat Crompton - two pieces for the Colour & Texture certificate

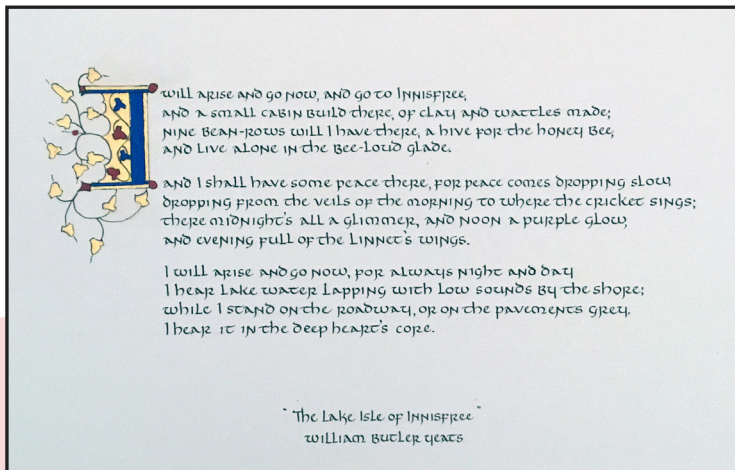


Thank you to everyone for sending in their images for the gallery. Keep sending things in so that we can keep this as a regular feature.

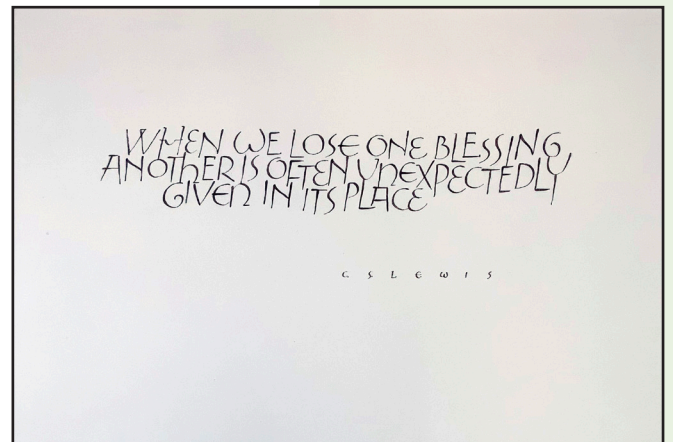
We would also love to see more of you sharing artwork on our Facebook page...



Ann Jamieson



Irene Willard



Teresa Stephens



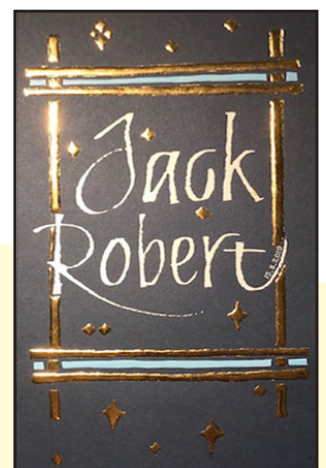
Dianne Heddy



Helen Gibbs (Colour & Texture)



Mariette Hardman



Patti Griffiths



## Member's Pages

## Board Talk

I had started calligraphy the year before and was keen to get a nice board. My brother is a carpenter and furniture maker so I asked him to design and make a sloped desk lectern for me to use. Even with a family discount it didn't come cheap, but that board is beautifully made of beech wood (*Fagus Sylvaticus*), smoothed and lacquered, and will last a few hundred years if necessary.

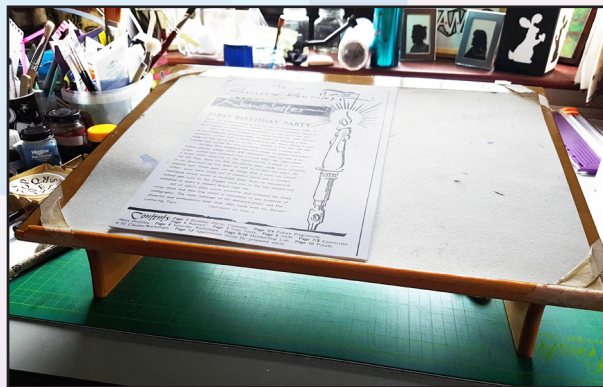
I love that board and it served me very well for a number of years until I started to feel the need for a board that allowed me to adjust the angle and work on larger pieces. I bought a good and functional new board that I now mainly use, but the old board still comes out on occasion, it is especially photogenic, and it makes me smile every time....

The first one is a small portable board which I bought from Art Discount over 10 years ago, it has a shiny surface so I cover it with blotting paper periodically, very useful for workshops, but limited angle range.

The next one is a larger hinged board which I have had for almost 20 years, it was handmade, I don't remember by whom. This is the one I use the most as it adjusts to any angle.

The last one is a table that adjusts to quite a steep angle if required, useful for large work. Hobbycraft stock these but I got mine from amazon.

Janice



PS. The piece of paper on top is the Sussex Scribes newsletter from 1991 that Nancy found and allowed me to copy!  
Mariette

*It looks like our writing boards are very important to us. Does anyone else have a story to tell or some technical tips to share?*

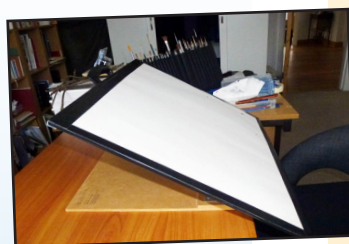
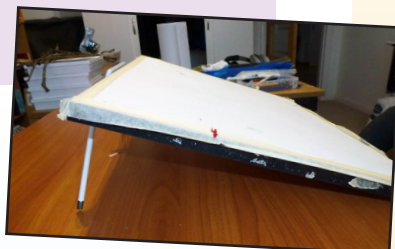
'Dad, please will you mend my driver's side wing. I just drove it into the garage wall'. Out came the baked beans tins, which were emptied, and he took himself off for half a day with filler, a riveter and some paint and, while I scoffed at his ridiculous ambition, he fixed my car.

'Dad, can you make me a spinning wheel please'. Christmas arrived, as did the spinning wheel and a carved low chair expressly for the purpose.

'Dad, please can you make Sophie a doll's house. Summer arrived and we brought home a doll's house that only just fitted into our estate car. It had a staircase and much mini furniture that he had made.

'Dad, can you make me a calligraphy desk thing please'.  
'What angle?'  
'Er, I'm not sure'.  
'Right. I'll give you three different choices'.

By the end of the day I had a bespoke calligraphy table which I've used ever since. Every time I use it I think of him and wish he was still here to work his magic.  
Patti





# *A Printing Trip to Hampshire - Teresa Stephens*

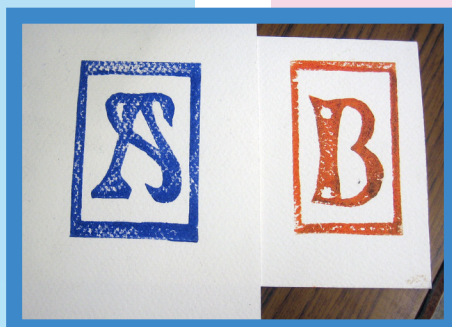
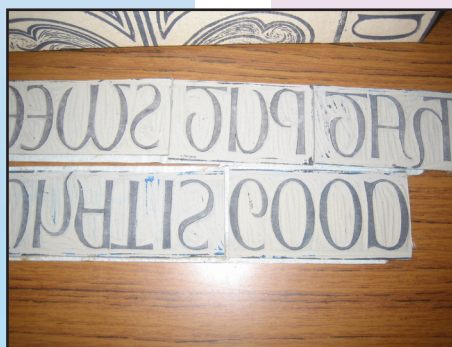
*Thank you to Teresa for sending in this report of her visit to one of our neighbouring groups for a print workshop last February. Sounds really good fun!*

On Saturday 8th February I was lucky enough to be able to join the Hampshire Calligraphers in their "Lino Letter Cutting for Calligraphers" workshop taught by Michela Antonello.

After a brief history of lino cutting, Michela showed us the various tools and different kinds of lino available, recommending the Abey Grey as having the smoothest grain enabling the finest cutting.

After spending a little time getting used to the tools by making various marks, Michela demonstrated how to use the 10A scalpel to cut round each letter at 45 degrees leaving the part to be printed on a 'mountain'.

We prepared the letters that we had brought with us by attaching tracing paper with masking tape to avoid movement, and traced around the letters using a 2B pencil. By turning this over onto the lino and fixing again with masking tape, we then rubbed firmly with a bone folder to offset the image. The drawing can then, if so desired, be



consolidated with a permanent pen so that the line does not get lost when printing.

Now was the time to test our skill with the scalpel – the silence and concentration in the studio was palpable!

Michela was constantly on the move advising and encouraging us in our attempts with the scalpel and we ended the morning ready with our lino cuts for the afternoon of printing.

Michela had already advised us to use water based printing inks and she demonstrated how to put out the ink using the roller in long forward strokes and not a continuous rolling movement. We were encouraged to look at the texture of the ink until it was smooth and listen to the sound until it stopped sounding 'sticky'.

We took initial prints on newsprint in order to examine them to discover areas where we could improve the cutting.

This proved to be a most rewarding day packed with good advice and detailed demonstrations and instructions. Thank you Michela and Hampshire Calligraphers for allowing me to join in the fun.  
*Teresa S*



# Studying Online with Yves Leterme

In January of this year, I started an online course with Belgian based calligrapher, Yves Leterme. The subject was "Trajan Capitals" and the course was going to run for six weeks.

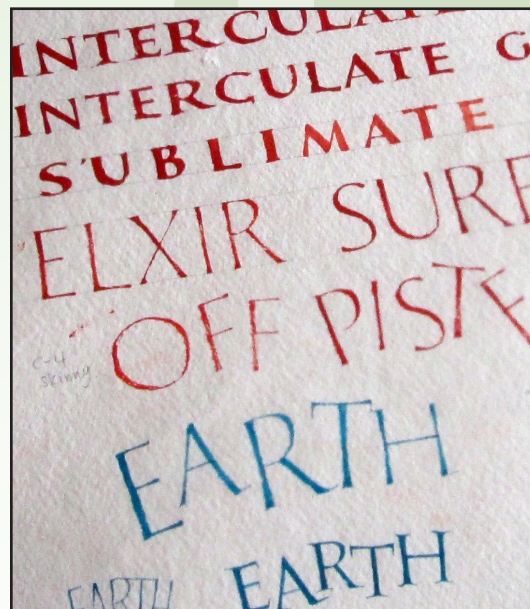
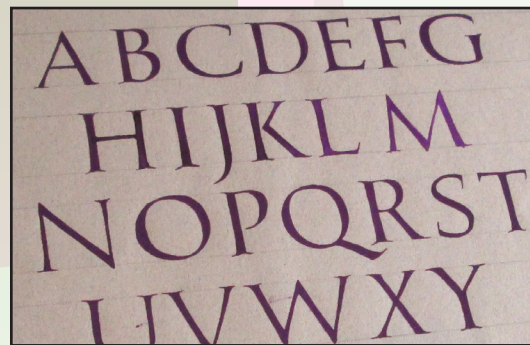
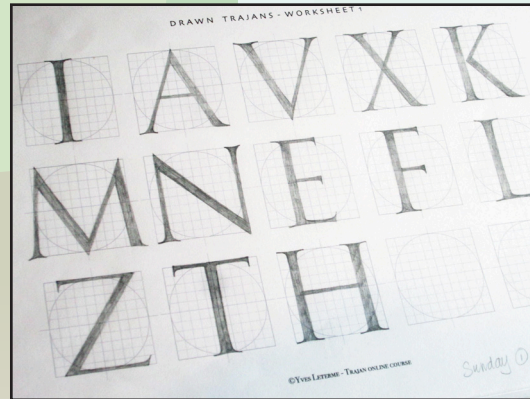
I had done some online bookbinding courses before and really enjoyed them – having all my materials and tools to hand and the space to play without having to clear up every time. But they are not for everyone.

The most important thing is to have time set aside from your normal routine, whilst the course is running. With best intentions, it is just much harder to come back to something after the event.

Also, you have to be able to keep yourself going even when you feel dispirited as there is no one else in the room with you to turn to for encouragement. (Family members and pets aside). That said, these courses are usually very well organised and offer an online forum and one to one feedback from the tutor, so plenty of opportunity for online interaction if you want that. But, as we are all finding out, it is no substitute for the real thing!

The course was roughly divided into three parts. For the first two weeks we spent the time just drawing the letters in pencil on a grid. We scrutinised every nuance of

the curves and angles of these beautifully proportioned letters. This then laid the foundation for working with the nib and then with a broad edged brush in subsequent weeks.



The lessons were presented by Yves as videos that you could pause and repeat as much as you liked whilst the course was running and for a few weeks after. Yves voice became a sort of reassuring "mascot" in the room for me, as I got used to his patient tone and incredible attention to detail. His comments on my work were encouraging, clear and insightful and I could see for myself that my letter shapes were improving.

I would definitely sign up for one of these courses again and I am hoping he is going to run a course on Italics/Gestural later in the year.

The course cost about £250. I didn't have to buy anything in particular to do the course but did eventually succumb to buying some Arches MBM which is one of the lovely

papers he recommended – something with a bit of "tooth".

You can find out more about these courses on his website at [www.yvesletermeletters.com](http://www.yvesletermeletters.com)

Helen G



# Housebound - A Book Project for Calligraphers

A project for anyone who wants to have a go at using their calligraphy and design skills to make a simple 8-page book. *Designed by Helen G*

## Step 1

### It starts with the text.

Choose a piece of text that you would like to work with. It can be long or short, a collection of quotes, or even a list. Think about the text - does it evoke an atmosphere? Does it have a particular emotional character? Think about how you might create a background to describe this atmosphere or emotional content. Don't worry about this for too long as it is just a starting point.

## Step 2

### Choose paper and background medium.

A3 is a good place to start and will fold down into an 8-page A6 booklet. Your paper should be suitable for the medium you work with but try to use paper that is in the 150 - 300 gsm range. The paper doesn't have to be white of course.

## Step 3

### Lay down some colour

Keep in mind your atmosphere/emotional content and just get some colour (or b/w) on the sheet. You can cover the whole sheet or leave some areas uncovered. Let it dry completely and think about doing something similar on the reverse side. Can you extend your idea by expressing a "hidden" quality of the subject matter on the back?

## Step 4

### Develop your background.

This could be areas of pattern or texture or more layers of colour. Or you could select one key word from the text and play with it. Again, don't worry about how or why or what, just have fun with it. Make a mess if that is how you are feeling at the time!

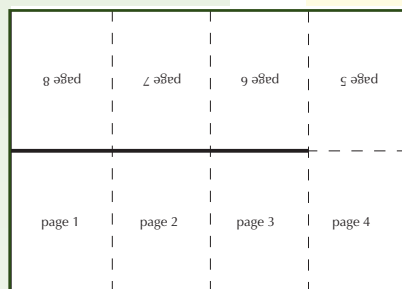


## Step 5

### Planning for the text.

Your sheet of paper is going to be divided into 8 pages but for now we just want to divide it into 4. Using a pointed bonefolder or the back of a knife, make two scores to divide the sheet into 4 equal parts. (see left) Keep the sheet flat at this point, no folding yet! Each quarter will form a two page spread - see diagram below left for page order and orientation.

Now, consider your text and how it will interact with the marks you have on the paper. How much text do you want on each 2-page spread? You may have to edit the text if it is too long, just selecting a few sentences or phrases for example. At this stage you will also be considering the script, size of lettering and writing medium. Again, think about the atmosphere or emotion of your text when making these decisions as well as what you think will look good! You could spend a lot of time on planning but I usually like to just get on and try something.



## Step 6 - Do the lettering.

Practice the layout first, what goes where. Make some rough sketches, use tracing paper perhaps to help you work out the layout. Then, go for it!

## Step 7 - Folding and cutting

When the paper is completely dry, make two more scores to divide the sheet into 8 equal parts. Then cut the paper along the solid line in the diagram. This pattern is called the "trousers". There are lots of different patterns for cut and fold books to try. I have chosen this one because I like it and use it quite often.

Fold down your book concertina style and step back to admire all your hard work!



## Step 8 - Reflection and moving forward.

A vitally important step in your creative development! Think about what worked well and what didn't. What would you do differently now that you can see how it all turns out? Remake the book with the changes you have identified or move on to another idea.



*This last session of the Colour and Texture course, was on February 8th at Broadwater Baptist Church. Sadly, this is the only workshop we have been able to run this year so far.*

One of the great benefits of all of the CLAS Certificate of Skills courses is the tapping into the wisdom of practitioners who have been at this calligraphy lark much longer than most of us put together, and who have an amazing wealth of experience and skills to share. The last session of the 'Colour and Texture' course run by Jan Mehigan was no exception.

Jan began by recapping the marking process and the importance of labeling everything clearly. She also reminded us to pick only our best works to submit; better one really good piece than several so-so ones!

She then took us through a packed day of demonstrations with opportunities to try things for ourselves. We started with the background effects possible with cling film, bubble wrap and a variety of media, including Plaka paint, acrylic ink, watercolour and gouache. Trocol gold was added to enhance the effects. We also looked at the results from sprinkling salt on to different backgrounds and then letting it dry completely, before brushing it off. It was fascinating to see how different techniques leant themselves to different themes.



We experimented with stencils and torn paper to create effects which could be repeated, in patterns or randomly, and then small rollers wrapped with string or rubber bands.

Using gelatine came next. We painted it on to paper and then, using leaves, grasses, or random shapes covered with white tissue paper, prepared backgrounds which were delicate and well suited to for example, poems about flowers or the natural world.

Jan then showed us how colour could be applied using different kinds of pastels. Using them dry, and then adding water to hard pastels to get very different effects. Again stencils were useful, this time acetate, so that for instance, the effects of a receding landscape could be created using successively stronger applications of colour.

She also demonstrated using wax crayons and oil pastels. Wax crayons can be written over with certain inks and oil pastels (or any non-soluble pastel) used impressed with gold, again to make an interesting background.

Personally I think it's been a really great course and I have learnt a lot of new things, as well as revisiting techniques that I might have done once years ago in a lesson or workshop, and never revisited. It's also been an opportunity to experiment with different media. Now to get back to putting together my submission...

*Lynda*



## Modern Gothic Capitals with Julia Baxter Saturday 11th July 2020

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

Cost £25 members / £30 non-members

An exploration day of the pen-written Gothic capitals, with all their flamboyance and character, that are perfect for modern Gothic.

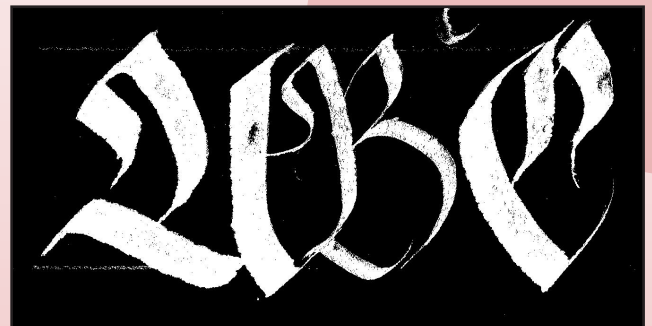
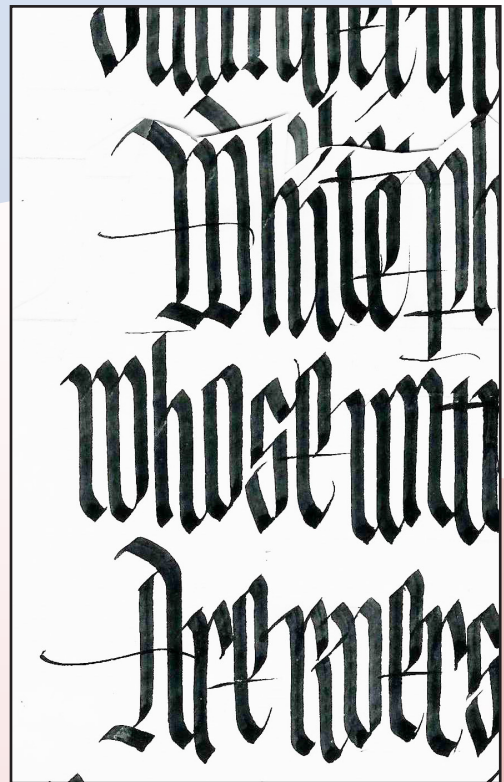
We will play with their possibilities too, starting with some main styles and work towards adapting them to sit alongside modern Gothic miniscales.

Some experience of a basic Gothic hand would be helpful.

### Materials to Bring:

- A3 Layout Pad
- Writing board, to work at a slant and large enough for A3.
- Usual calligraphy equipment
- Masking tape 1" width
- T-square (preferably 18")
- Black gouache paint with mixing pot and feeding brush
- White gouache paint (Permanent White if possible)
- White chalk pastel pencil
- A size 2.5mm Leonardt TAPE nib or equivalent
- Sizes smaller and larger nibs (ie. 1.5, 2, 3 and 4mm)
- Automatic pens if own already (large sizes like 3, 3A, 4 and 5)
- Black coloured paper, at least A3, a couple of sheets only

*Optional extra handouts will be available to purchase on the day at a cost of 20p for A3 and 15p for A4 sheets.*



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



## Case Binding with Helen Gibbs Saturday 15th August, 2020

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

Cost £25 members / £30 non-members

In this workshop we will make two versions of the case binding. This is a conventional hard-cover binding style which can be adapted for books with a small or large number of pages. There are many variations which we will look at and consider how they can be used for our calligraphic projects.

Paper for the pages will be supplied for students to purchase on the day. For one book we will use a cartridge paper and for the other we will use Zerkal, 120 gsm. The charge for these materials will not be more than £5. The books you make would be great to use as sketch books to practise your lettering in!

• Students are encouraged to bring some paper to use for covers which they have either decorated themselves or bought ready to use eg - marbled, calligraphic patterns, paste wash etc. This cover paper should be about 150gsm.

If you have other covering materials or paper for pages that you would like to try please do bring along to the workshop.



### Equipment and Materials to Bring:

- Cutting mat (at least A4), bonefolder, kraft knife with spare blades, metal ruler, set square if your cutting mat does not have a grid on it, pricker\*, pricking cradle\*, sharp pencil, paper knife\*, bookbinders needle\* and waxed linen thread\*
- PVA glue with glue brush and scrap magazine to glue up on
- Paper for endpapers: something like Canson 165gsm, at least A3 but bigger is better. One or two sheets depending on size. (NB. do not keep rolled up for longer than is necessary)
- Grey board - 2mm thick: 2 pieces of A3 or equivalent. The backs of old sketch books are ideal.
- Two pressing boards and a weight. Boards should be about A4 size, ply or MDF and the weight can be a small brick wrapped up - about 2 kg in weight or heavier if you can!

\* Helen will bring spares if you don't already have any of these.

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

## Copperplate Weekend

with Eleanor Winters

September 26th and 27th, 2020

10am - 4pm

Cost: £50 members/£60 non-members

Venue for both days:

Heene Road Community Centre,  
122 Heene Road, Worthing,  
BN11 4PL

For students with some familiarity with Copperplate letterforms and the pointed pen, this workshop provides some answers to the question, "What next?".

The class will include a brief but intensive review of the basics, with an emphasis on improving skills such as consistency in shape and weight of the letters, as well as spacing. This will be followed by letter variations (both minuscules and capitals), as well as an introduction to copperplate flourishing.

### MATERIALS TO BRING

- Copperplate penholder
- Nikko G or Tachikawa G nibs (or your preferred CP nibs)
- Non-waterproof black ink, such as Higgins Eternal
- Layout paper, i.e., any calligraphy practice paper through which you can see guide lines
- Water container & cloth or paper towels
- Tracing paper (a few sheets)
- Masking tape
- Ruler
- Pencils (H, HB, or the equivalent)
- Eraser
- Pencil sharpener
- Guide lines, if you have any

*Jenny Kissed me when we met;  
Jumping from the chair she sat in;  
Time, you thief, who love to get  
Sweets into your list, put that in!  
Say I'm weary, say I'm old;  
Say that health and wealth have missed me,  
Say I'm growing old, but add:  
Jenny Kissed me.*  
J.H. Leigh Hunt, 1833

*Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;  
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,  
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;  
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells  
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,  
And still more, later flowers for the bees,  
Until they think warm days will never cease;  
For Summer has o'erbrimm'd their clammy cells.*

*John Keats To Autumn, 1819*

**This workshop is now fully booked and has a waiting list. If you would like to be added to the waiting list please contact Irene 01273 888798.**



## A MODERN ILLUMINATED LETTER for CHRISTMAS

with **Jan Mehigan**

Broadwater Baptist Church  
Dominion Road, Worthing

28th November, 2020

10am - 4.30pm

Members £25, Non-members £30

Anyone wishing to learn the techniques of gilding on gesso and painting a small jewel-like, modern, decorated and gilded letter will find the day most instructive and enjoyable.

A workshop for all levels but knowledge of Versals would be helpful.

We will, hopefully, be making gesso in the morning. Because the gesso needs to dry before we can apply the gold and to enable us to derive as much as possible from the day you will be creating two designs, one for PVA and a smaller one for the application of gesso that will be provided on the day. You will then carefully paint one of the designs. If you would prefer to apply the gesso to your own design that would be most acceptable.



## Tools and Materials to Bring

- Quality watercolour paper - about ¼ or ½ sheet only: 140lb or better still, 260 lb Hot Pressed paper - Waterford, Arches or Fabriano – and maybe another small piece about A5 size for a further design.
  - Layout paper and an A3/or two A4 pieces of tracing paper for planning any designs.
  - 2H and HB pencils and sharpener
  - An inexpensive technical pen (waterproof) would be useful but optional (costs about £1.50) - Or alternatively, a dip pen with No. 4 or 5 nib, or fine nib.
  - A useful selection of gouache and watercolour paints
  - Paint brushes with good points: No. 2, plus a finer brush - a No. 00 or perhaps a 000 (And a good synthetic brush 00 or 000 for applying P.V.A and gesso).
  - Two old paint brushes for mixing paint would be useful.
  - Two water pots and kitchen towel for wiping brushes
  - A mixing palette or similar
  - A small craft knife with a rounded blade (Swann Morton Knife and No.15 blade is ideal)
  - A burnisher is useful (but only if you have one). Alternatively, bring a piece of real silk as this can be used for polishing the gold or a very smooth agate stone.
  - If you wish to bring your own size (PVA) and gold, shell gold or gold powder, real or otherwise, I will be very pleased.
- \*Transfer Gold leaf, PVA and gesso will be available to purchase from the tutor.

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

# Back Page

## Sussex Scribes

### Programme of Workshops for 2020

Details of all our workshops can be found on our website at [www.sussexscribes.co.uk](http://www.sussexscribes.co.uk)

#### July 11th

#### Gothic Capitals with Julia Baxter

*Broadwater Baptist Church, Worthing*

#### August 8th

#### Bookbinding with Helen Gibbs

*Heene Community Centre, Worthing*

#### September 26/27th

#### Copperplate with Eleanor Winters

*Heene Community Centre, Worthing*

#### October 17th

#### AGM with Jan Pickett

*Arundel Baptist Church, Worthing*

#### November 28th

#### Illuminated Letter with Jan Mehigan

*Broadwater Baptist Church, Worthing*

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

*We welcome non-members to our workshops although priority will go to our members when a workshop is over subscribed.*

*We are working on a new programme for 2021 when some of the classes that were missed this year will be carried over.*

**[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 2020.  
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 July 15th, 2020**

## Your Committee

**Chair:** Cathy Stables  
01243 782240

**Vice Chair:** Janice Simmonds

**Secretary:** Denyce Aresti

**Bookings:** Irene Willard

**Newsletter/ Membership:**

**Helen Gibbs**

**Treasurer:** Mariette Hardman

**Committee Members:**

**Lynda Marsh**

**Sussex Scribes**

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# *Memory Lane with Peter Garnett*

*A little treat for you from one of our longest serving member's Peter Garnett, who wrote this article following a guest talk from Ewan Clayton. This was when the group was just starting out, nearly 30 years ago. Thanks for the memories Peter.*

Ewan Clayton's reputation ensured a very good audience at Southwick on Saturday 23rd November, 1991. We were treated to a fast moving, detailed and extremely interesting talk on the development of script and lettering styles from Roman times right through to modern computer lettering.

To help illustrate the first part of his talk, Ewan had laid out a number of books from his library. I particularly noted Johnston's "Writing and Illuminating", Stan Knight's "Historical Scripts", "A History of Lettering" by Nicholete Grey and the recently published (1990) "Guide to Western Historical Scripts from Antiquity to 1600" by Michelle P. Brown, along with Cappelli's Dictionary of Abbreviations and some American Books on Palaeography. We were also privileged to see some fine original manuscripts, including two indentures, one from the time of James II and the other of 1736, as well as an exquisite, large, double page from a French Bible of 1320 – we were actually allowed to feel the extremely soft and velvety texture of the vellum, a rare treat!

The unfolding of the story was accompanied by Ewan's expressive hand movements: forming the letters in mid-air and showing the gradual and subtle change of shape over the centuries. We saw the 'deterioration' of the Roman capitals into cursive and lower case letters, the development of Roman script into rustic, to old Roman cursive, new Roman cursive

and to uncial (known to paleographers as the period of the 'national hands').

We were told of the sweep and spread of lettering styles outwards from Rome, across the Roman Empire, to England. Ireland was a very separate entity. It was cut-off from Europe by the 'war-zone' of Britain and the Irish hands were mainly influenced by Coptic styles, via their trading links with the north coast of Africa. Eventually, when the Romans began to leave Britain, the Irish styles started to filter in from the west and the Scandinavian and Danish from the north east.

Ewan continued the story with the development of writing styles in England and the things which influenced them over the centuries. There were many interesting asides such as the fact that the Stonyhurst Gospels were stored inside St Cuthbert's lead coffin and were marvellously preserved. Lindisfarne Monastery moved three times and naturally took the coffin with them. Also, we learned that when Alfred came to the throne in 871 he recorded that he could not find a man south of the Thames who could read and write Latin, so he taught himself.

In 943, Edmund I commissioned St. Dunstan to restore monastic life at Glastonbury and this signalled the revival of organised English monasticism (which had more or less ceased to exist since the Scandinavian invasions.) The king provided lands and St Dunstan supplied the monks. There were enormous pressures for the supply of books and, therefore, of scribes. There was a need to write fast, clearly and without fuss. Script styles changed accordingly.

## *Memory Lane with Peter Garnett cont.*

With the Norman Conquest, there were new influences. There was the rise of universities across Europe. Writing became smaller and more compact to speed things up. Books became smaller as parchments became scarcer. By Henry II's time (1154-1189) writing in legal documents had become more cursive.

In the mid 1300's the Black Death was sweeping across Europe. In England the effect of the plague on some of the monasteries was quite devastating. For example, St Alban's lost its abbot, prior, sub-prior and 46 monks within the space of a few days in 1349, and Westminster lost its abbot and 26 monks. Incidentally, Pope Clement VI (Died 1352) recorded that the number of deaths from the plague in the whole world was 42,836,486 – an amazingly precise number at a time when there were no computers!

The effects of the Black Death set back any developments in writing by several generations. But as Europe began to re-build itself, more and more people wanted to read and acquire knowledge. The production of multiple copies of manuscript books was very labour intensive, but the rate at which information could be spread took a massive leap forward when printing was invented by Johann Gutenberg in the first half of the 15th century.

In early books the type-faces were copied from hand lettering. In some books, the large coloured initials (and any illumination) were added by hand after the pages had left the press. By about 1480, the second generation of printers had begun to realise that they did not necessarily have to imitate a manuscript book and they

started to design their own type-faces. The influences of hand lettering can, however, still be seen in type designs five hundred years later.

Hand lettering continued to develop alongside printing, most particularly in the legal and administrative fields. Such styles as Cancellaresca (Chancery Hand) and English Secretary Hand appeared. Certain government offices in this country (Pipe Roll Office, Exchequer, etc) had their own writing styles. These were later followed by Copperplate, which more or less petered out in the very early part of the present century.

During the past 90 years, crusades by Edward Johnston, Marion Richardson, Alfred Fairbank and Aubrey West and others have attempted to improve the hand-writing of the masses, but, in the main, their calls have fallen on deaf ears.

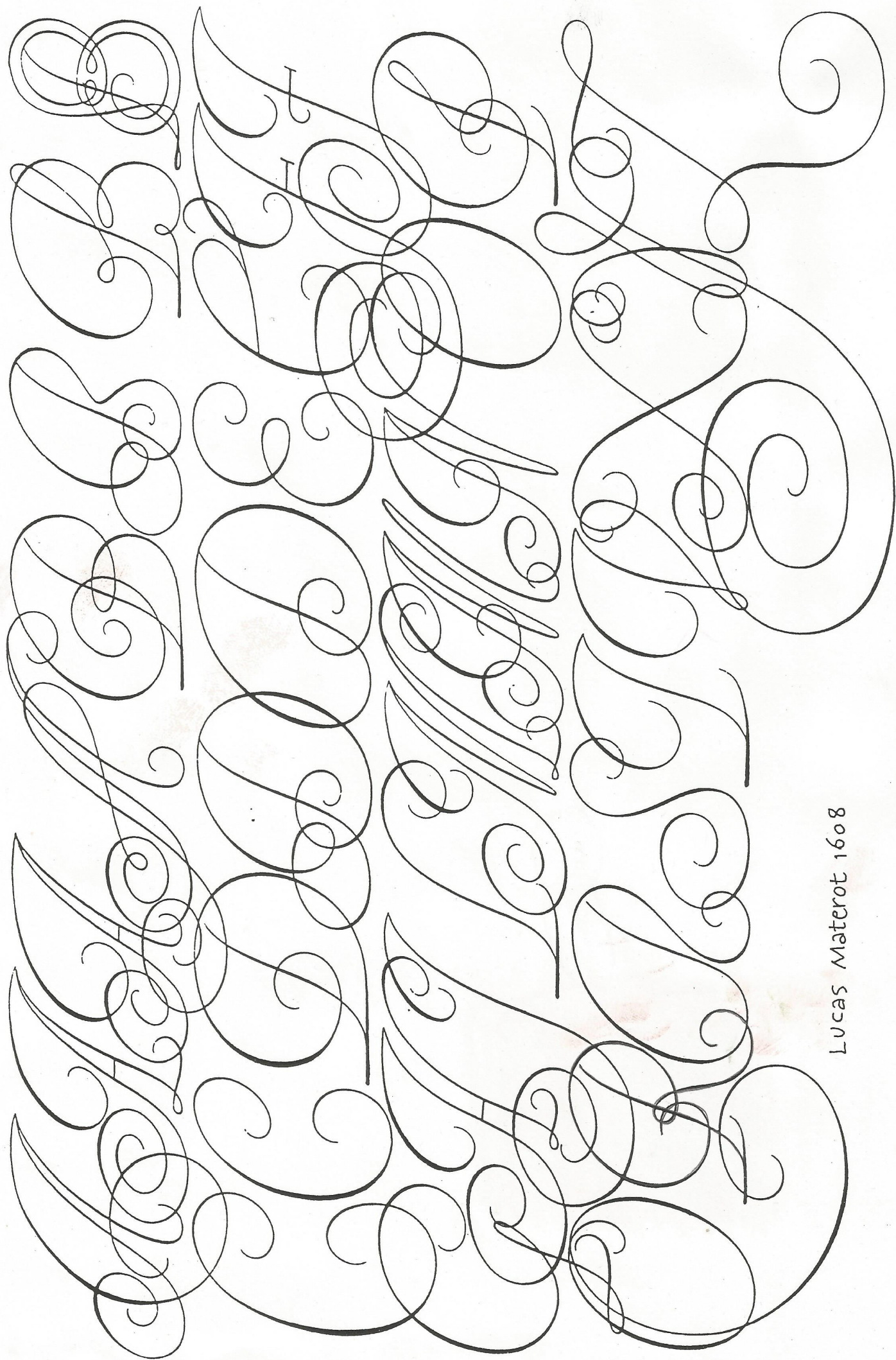
At this point in the talk we had a break for coffee.

When we resumed, the curtains were drawn and we were shown slides of many varied 'document' styles of lettering as used on posters and in books, official and other documents, as well as on computer screens, from the ornate and illuminated through to the modern and technical.

The applause at the end of the talk was loud and prolonged. A 'thank you' to Ewan for a most enjoyable and instructive talk, imparted with a very evident warmth and enthusiasm for his subject.

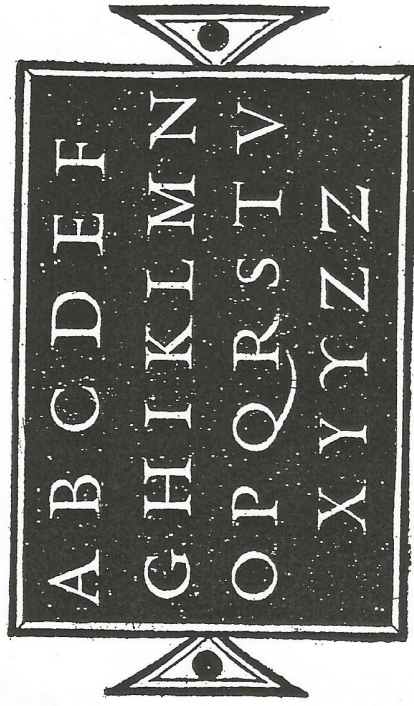
*Peter Garnett*





Lucas Materot 1608





Già mai tarde non  
 fur gratie diuine,  
 In quelle spero, che  
 in me ancor farano  
 Alte operationi, e  
 pellegrine.

Ludovico degli Arrighi 1522

Venite all' academi,  
 che ui chiam. Pe dona  
 ui de uirtu & fam

Que non e virtuo e Richeza  
 Il huom val tanto Quanto o l'apreza,

E ual di piu e di piu  
 I di di di di di di  
 e degno dei cercare,

Giovanni Antonio Tagliente 1531



# Sussex Scribes

## Workshop Booking Form

Please use this form to book any of our workshops in 2020 except the CLAS Certificate of Skills.

I would like to book a place on the following workshop:

Name of workshop \_\_\_\_\_

Date of workshop \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a cheque or I have paid by bank transfer *(please indicate which)*  
£25/£30 (member/non-member)

**NB. Please date your cheque two weeks before the date of the workshop**

Payment by Bank Transfer. Our bank details are as follows:

**account number 53122093 and sort code 20-20-65**

Please use your surname and the month of the workshop to identify the payment eg "SmithAugust20"

---

**Your contact details:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Tick box if you would like a receipt by email** *(sorry but we do not send these by post)* ☐

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Send the completed form with your cheque to:

**Irene Willard, "COHUNU", 2-B, Benfield Way, Portslade, BN41 2DA**

**or send this info to Irene by email : [i.willard@uwclub.net](mailto:i.willard@uwclub.net)**

*You may also contact Irene on 01273 888798 to see if the class is full. We may be able to put your name on a waiting list.*

## Terms and Conditions

**For workshops that run over a one or two day duration:**

To secure a place on one of our workshops please use the booking form on the left, which is included with each newsletter and sent to the membership on a quarterly rotation.

We welcome guests and non-members to our workshops and they should also use the booking form. Priority will be given to members if demand is high for a particular workshop.

Only when the booking form and payment has been received will your booking be complete and a place reserved for you.

If paying by bank transfer, please send confirmation of the BACS payment with the booking form.

### Cancellations:

To cancel your booking please notify the bookings officer (Irene) at least one month in advance of the workshop. Your booking fee will then and only then be refunded in full.

If you have to cancel your booking after the one month period has expired, you will only have your fee refunded if we are able to fill your place from our waiting list.