



## Newsletter JULY 2022

*Dear Members,*

It's holiday time - who would have thought summer would be this hot? Keeping cool whilst trying to enjoy the best of the weather is proving to be a real challenge!

Gerald's decorated Versals and Lombardic Capitals workshop in May was informative and enjoyable, mostly due to Gerald's generosity and knowledge of his subject. We have recently had a workshop with Julia Baxter, learning to write Celtic Angulars. Those who participated produced some interesting work, which can be seen in the workshop write up in this newsletter. The Blooming Letters workshop via Zoom with Els Van den Steen attracted an international audience and garnered plenty of positive feedback.

There is still much to look forward to - Helen will be running an in person workshop in September, which is an opportunity for us to make some exciting zig-zag book structures. There are still some places available, so please contact Lynda if you are interested. We will be meeting at the Broadwater venue.

We also have our AGM to look forward to on the 15th October. Margaret Morgan is our guest speaker, and there will be a quiz! It will take place via Zoom, so make a cup of tea or coffee, grab a biscuit or two and join us for a few hours.

Our hard working committee will update you with all there is to know about our finances and membership. Anyone who would like to join the committee would be very welcome!

We are looking to hold another exhibition next year, but an appropriate venue is proving elusive. We would welcome any suggestions as to where we might be able to hold one, so feel free to send in any



Above: Cathy Stables and David Skipp, Chair Of Horshams District Council with a vellum scroll made for the Queen. Pages 6-7.

### **Sussex Scribes AGM**

**October 15th, 2022**

**2-4pm on zoom**

*with guest speaker*

**Margaret Morgan**

possibilities for us to consider.

We look forward to seeing you at the AGM, and wish you all the best of summer and happy holidays!

*Cathy Stables and the Sussex Scribes Committee*

# Sussex Scribes Workshop Programme for 2022

We will soon be announcing our programme of workshops for 2023. Mariette has assembled a varied and exciting list of workshops including a new certificate course. Details will appear in the next newsletter and on our website.

In the meantime there are still some workshops to come along to this year including two LIVE workshops - bookbinding with Helen and another with Cathy in November. We hope you will feel safe to come along to these as we cannot offer them on zoom. Details below.

## Change of Venue

Please note that we have changed our main venue to Broadwater Baptist Church, Dominion Road, East Worthing, BN14 8JL.

### \*Saturday September 3rd, 2022

"Zig-Zag Variations", a bookbinding workshop with Helen Gibbs.

In-person at Broadwater Baptist Church

*More info on page 3*

### October 15th, 2022 AGM

**"How I Got Here From There: A Calligrapher's Journey"** with guest speaker, professional calligrapher and teacher, Margaret Morgan FCLAS. We also anticipate a quiz. The AGM will be a zoom event, 2-4pm. Zoom codes will be emailed out nearer the time.

### \*November 26th, 2022

"Illuminated Miniatures" with Cathy Stables.

In-person at Broadwater Baptist Church

*More info page 4*

***\*Most of our workshops are suitable for beginners unless the tutor suggests you need to know a script beforehand. We welcome new members and non-members to all our workshops. Why not give it a go!***

***See right for full terms and conditions.***

## Workshop Bookings

T's & C's for workshops in 2022

Our bookings person is Lynda Marsh. Please contact her by email to reserve a place on a workshop:

**lyndamarsh2013@gmail.com**

We welcome non-members to most of our workshops but priority will be given to members if demand is high for a particular workshop.

Please note that the workshop price varies depending on if it is a zoom workshop, in person or a "Members Special".

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

We would prefer it if you could pay by bank transfer - please identify the payment you make with your name.

**account number 53122093**

**sort code 20-20-65**

Cheques should be made payable to "Sussex Scribes" and be dated two weeks ahead of the workshop date. Please send to Lynda Marsh, 18 Graydon Avenue, Chichester, PO19 8RF and include your name and contact details.

## Cancellations:

To cancel your booking please notify the bookings officer (Lynda) ***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 less than one month before the workshop date, Sussex Scribes can only refund you in full if your place can be filled from the waiting list.

*If Sussex Scribes have to cancel a workshop due to Covid-19, your fee will be refunded in full.*



## “Zig-Zag Variations”

*Bookbinding with Helen Gibbs*

**Saturday 3rd September, 2022, 10-4pm**  
**at Broadwater Baptist Church, Dominion**  
**Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN14 8JL**  
**Cost £25 members /**  
**£30 non-members**

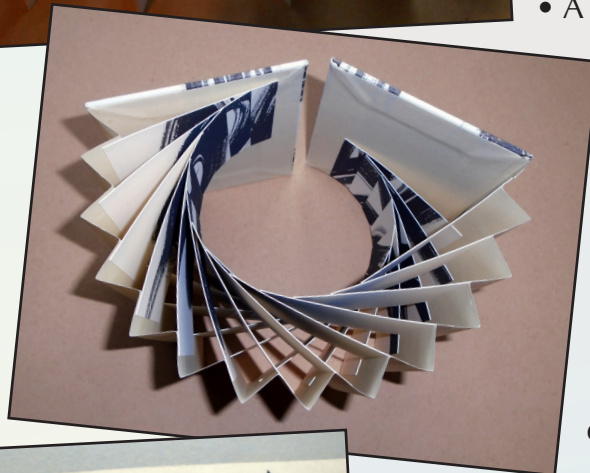
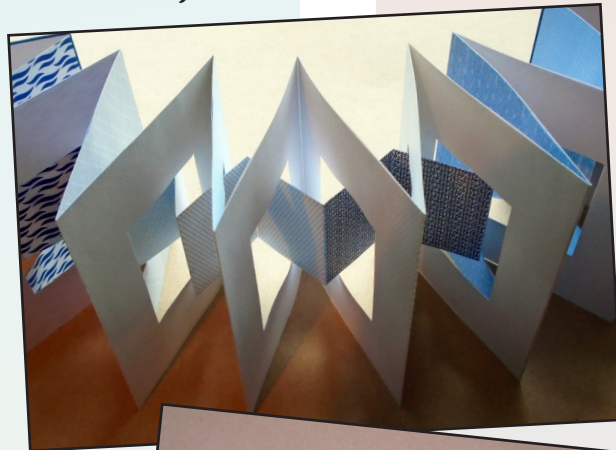
Don't throw anything away – save your rejected artwork and practice sheets for this experimental workshop!

You may already be familiar with the zig-zag or concertina book format but did you know that there are a myriad of different variations to discover and play with?

This workshop will guide you through a few of these adventurous and sculptural forms, demonstrating some useful skills for making folds and joins along the way.

In the afternoon, you will be able to choose one or two of these models to explore with your own artwork towards a finished piece. This can involve thinking about how paper weight affects the performance of the book form: right paper, right job!

We will also take a quick look at contemporary page layouts and ways to crop artwork, which will help to further extend the intriguing qualities of this playful book form.



## Tools and Materials

- Cutting mat, at least A4, kraft knife or scalpel (or both) with spare blades, metal edged ruler 30cm or longer
- bonefolder, sharp pencil, any other bookbinding tools that you have
- PVA and a variety of glue brushes
- Scrap paper to glue up on
- Water pot
- Two A4 (ish) pressing boards with a weight
- Scoring board if you have one.
- A variety of plain and lettered papers. The more the better as this is an experimental workshop. Old practice sheets are perfect for this workshop including layout paper, cartridge paper and better quality papers.
- Some thin card (300gsm), A4 is fine, mixed colours
- Pieces of heavier (2mm) grey board for hard covers

Helen will bring some pieces of book cloth for small covers and a mix of papers for prototypes.

To book a place on this workshop,  
please email Lynda with your details:  
[lyndamarsh2013@gmail.com](mailto:lyndamarsh2013@gmail.com).



## Illuminated Miniatures with Cathy Stables

Saturday November 26th, 2022  
Broadwater Baptist Church, Worthing  
Members £25/non-members £30

Using examples of medieval animals found in the Bodleian Library, Oxford we will copy an animal and paint on vellum or hot press watercolour paper. Each miniature includes an element of gold and for this we will use gum ammoniac and transfer gold leaf.

This is a great exercise in detailed painting combined with gilding.

*Cathy will have artwork to choose from or you can bring something with you.*

### Materials

- Ruler, propelling pencil, eraser.
- Tracing paper
- A4 vellum or HP watercolour paper\*
- Any gouache colours you have
- water pots, palette.
- Kitchen towel
- Brushes for mixing.
- Kolinsky sable brushes size 00, 0, 1\*\*
- Transfer gold leaf

*\*Vellum, HP watercolour paper, gum ammoniac and transfer gold leaf can be purchased on the day.*

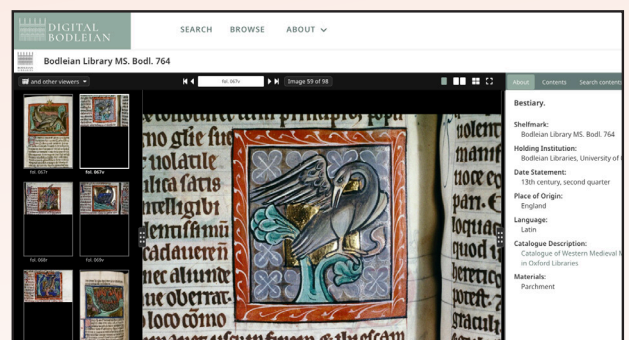
*\*\*supplied by [www.handover.co.uk](http://www.handover.co.uk) or we may organise a group order of brushes for this workshop. Tell Cathy if you are interested.*

To book a place on this workshop, please email Lynda with your details:  
[lyndamarsh2013@gmail.com](mailto:lyndamarsh2013@gmail.com)



### Did You Know?

The Bodleian library has digitised a lot of their treasures and you can see lots of bestiary pages online for free.



Just go to [digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk](http://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk) and type "bestiary" (or anything else you would like to look at) into the search bar. A list of digitized documents will appear and you can browse these by clicking on the thumbnail image. The pages are straightforward to navigate through.



## Member's pages

**Membership subs of £12 are due in September.** Why not set up a standing order? Contact your bank for details of how to do this. The group account details are on page 2.

Remember to use your name as reference so that we know who the payment is coming from.

We now have a group **instagram** account: @sussex\_calligraphy. It is early days so there is not an enormous amount on there yet. We will use it to promote group activities. Please follow us if you have an instagram account of your own.

**Hampshire Calligraphers** have presented their exhibition for 2022 on their website for all to see. There are over 50 pieces of work to look at and the theme is "Elements". Go to their website at [www.hampshirecalligraphers.co.uk/exhibitions](http://www.hampshirecalligraphers.co.uk/exhibitions) and start scrolling. Click on the images to see them fully.

**Cinque Port Scribes** is 30 years old and is celebrating with an exhibition which is being held in two venues. Until 1st August: Red Door Gallery in Rye and then on to SVAF Kaleidoscope Gallery in Sevenoaks, August 10th -20th.  
[www.cinqueportsscribes.org.uk](http://www.cinqueportsscribes.org.uk)

### Volunteers Wanted

If you are attending one of our workshops and would like to practice your reporting skills, please do offer to write it up for the newsletter. It doesn't have to be a long report and you can style it anyway you like. Just let Helen know sometime before the event or on the day. No prizes, just the glory of seeing your name in print! Thank you.

## What's On

### "A Gathering of Leaves"

Designer Bookbinding Competition

The theme of plants, flowers, gardens and anything associated with flora was chosen to help celebrate the 400th Anniversary of the founding of Oxford Botanic Garden.

WESTON LIBRARY, Bodleian Libraries  
until 18 September 2022  
[www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk)

SOTHEBY'S, LONDON

21 – 29 September 2022

The exhibition will be held in the Kiddell Gallery, 34-35 New Bond Street, London, W1A 2AA [www.sothebys.com](http://www.sothebys.com)

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

4th November 2022 – 25th February 2023

Main Library Gallery, University of Edinburgh, George Square, Edinburgh.  
[www.ed.ac.uk](http://www.ed.ac.uk)

### Words Made Beautiful

SSI Centenary Exhibition

Swansea Museum, August 5th -19th, 2022

### World Calligraphy Day

August 10th, 2022. Do something special

### Drawn To War

A full length documentary film about the life and work of Eric Ravilious is showing in cinemas from the beginning of July. Alan Bennett and the artist Grayson Perry are among those paying tribute in a film that draws heavily on Ravilious' letters and diaries, including those of his wife and fellow artist Tirzah Garwood. See Teresa's review on page 8.

**Introduction to Uncial Calligraphy with Ewan Clayton.** An online course hosted by Ditchling Museum. Cost £60. More info on the museum website at [www.ditchlingmuseumartcraft.org.uk](http://www.ditchlingmuseumartcraft.org.uk)

# Fit For A Queen

A royal commission came my way earlier in the year. David Skipp, chair of Horsham District Council, asked me to design and create a vellum scroll which was to be a gift to the Queen to recognise and celebrate her Platinum Jubilee. I was thrilled to be asked as I have not done anything like this before. The process was quite straightforward but the deadline was not too generous so I had to make some quick decisions. I only had two months to complete and towards the end of the project, the deadline was pulled forward by a week!

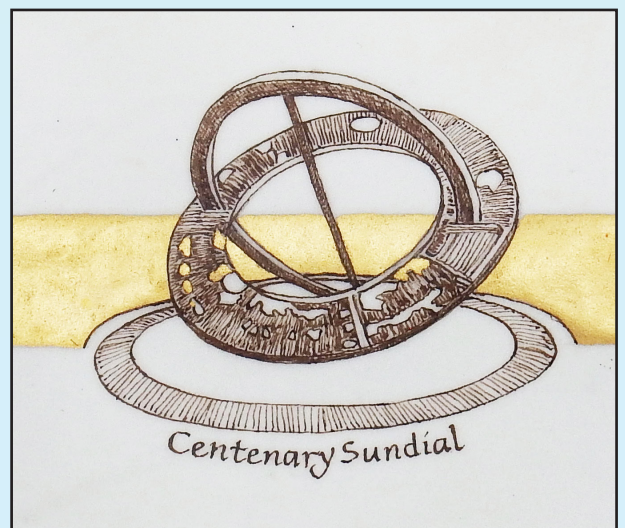
The scroll would have the coat of arms of Horsham District Council and some text that they provided. I foolishly made some suggestions for illustrations that made the job more challenging but they liked all my ideas so they were all included; a floral border to include the Sussex Rose, or rampion, which turned out to be quite a complex flower. I then added some butterflies to make the border more interesting. These were researched on the Sussex Wildlife website to be authentically local – the peacock and the painted lady. It was also agreed to include illustrations of some landmarks in Horsham. The most complicated of these was the Horsham Heritage Sundial, which is a large sculpture and quite tricky to draw. In the end I traced a photograph of the sundial on to acetate so that I could “see” it. *(continued)*



## HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL

*Your Majesty,*

*On the occasion of Your succession to the throne of the United Kingdom, and the celebration of your Platinum Jubilee, it is my great privilege on*





## Fit For A Queen cont.

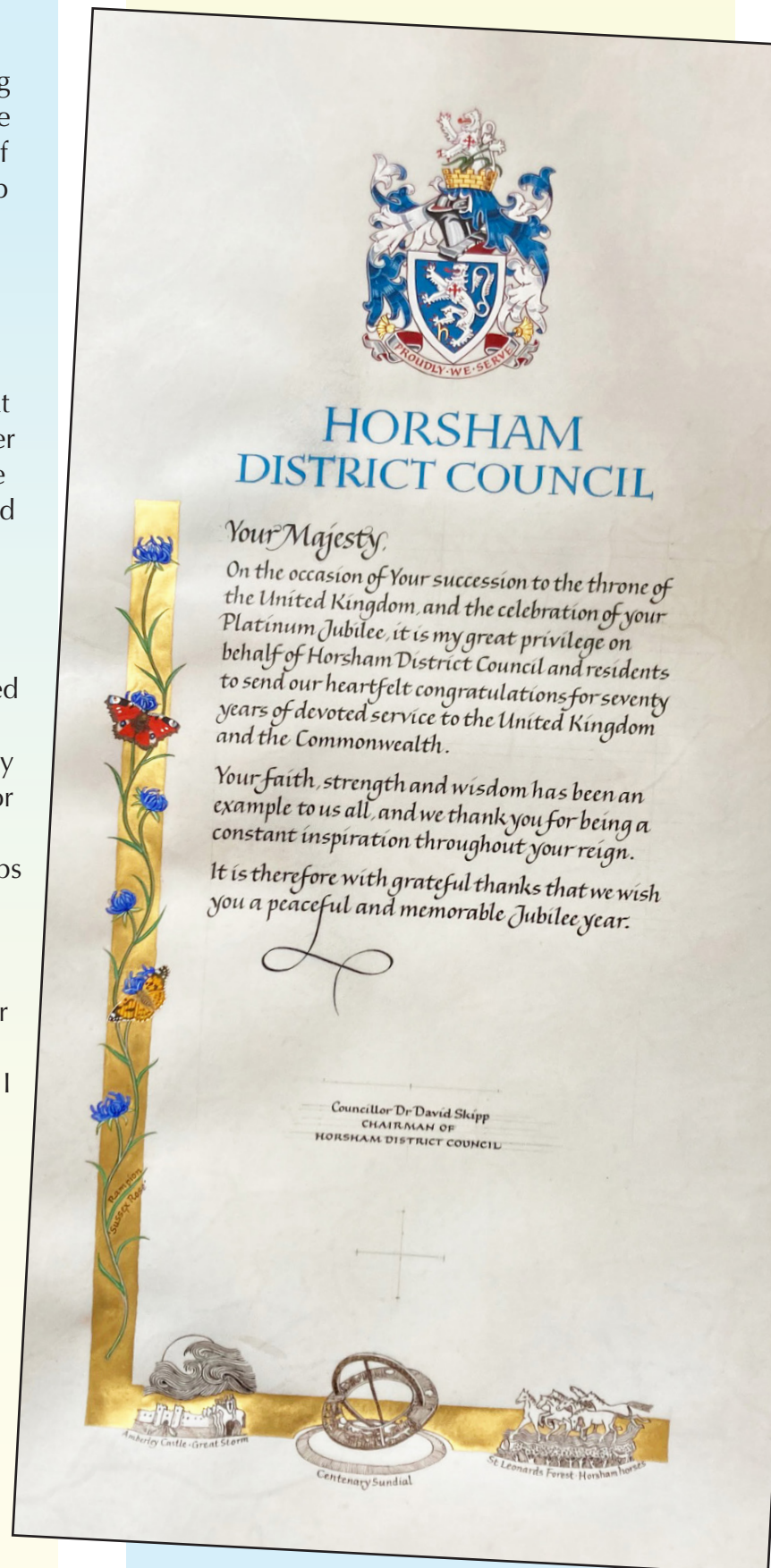
To actually produce the final piece took about two and a half days but the planning took much longer, especially as ideas were discussed with the council at each stage of the design process. I made both a paste-up and a colour rough to show to the council for them to approve. The final piece was on vellum and I used gold powder in the border which they also liked. This is an expensive, 23.5 carat gold which costs over £100 for a gram! The gold powder is mixed with water and gum arabic. The water is then poured off and the remaining gold sludge can be painted on and burnished. Results can be patchy but it worked well for me this time.



I asked Helen Gibbs if she could make a box for the scroll and she came up with a design that had a felt-lined curved inner tray for the scroll to sit neatly in. Helen had made me two smaller box prototypes so that I could see how it was going to work and choose which one I liked best.

The final scroll was photographed with myself and David Skipp and appeared in the local paper. A copy of the scroll will be displayed in the local museum. HDC were really pleased with not only the final result but also with the process and that they were fully involved in the decision making along the way. For my part, it felt like an honour to do the commission and feel part of the Jubilee celebrations.

*Cathy Stables*





## Drawn To War

Directed by Margy Kinmonth.  
Foxtrot Films

I saw this film at the comfortable new premises of the "Depot" in Lewes. The first half of the film concentrated on Ravilious' young years in Sussex with a lot of shots of the local landscape – cliffs, chalk carvings and the Downs, where Ravilious grew up. The film also included interviews with Grayson Perry, Robert McFarlane, Alan Bennett and Ai Weiwei, who all gave different viewpoints of their appreciation of the artist and his work.

All of the screenplay came from primary sources. He was a prolific letter writer showing his wit, affection, general love of life and a youthful attitude to everything he did.

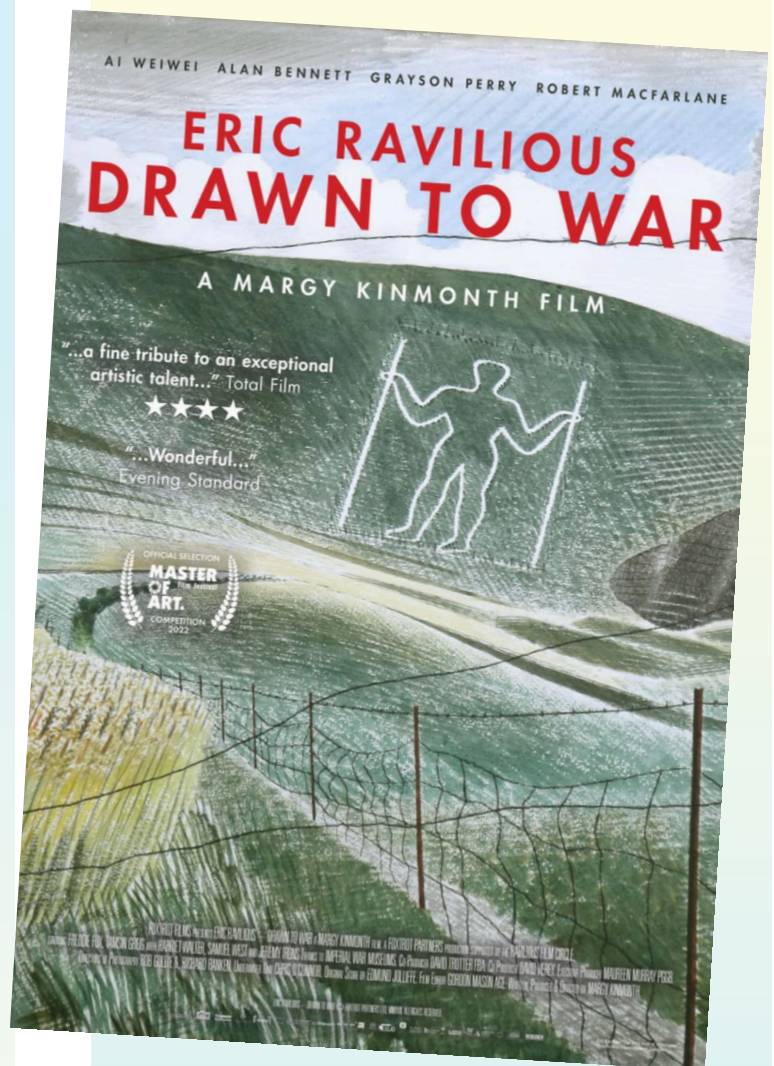
The design aspect of his paintings was discussed, Robert McFarlane pointing out that the paths always led the eye into the painting.

The film also covered Ravilious' personal life, his affairs and his attitude to Tirzah his wife and their three children. She was an accomplished artist in her own right who worked with him on their mural commissions and helped to support the family.

Then came his life as a war artist when he was appointed by Sir Kenneth Clark who was at the time head of the National Gallery. There were some outstanding shots of war damage in London, particularly the devastation of Morley College where the mural he painted with Tirzah was destroyed. It was in the role of a war artist that Ravilious was sent to Iceland and the film ends movingly with the plane crash in which he was killed.

A very memorable film and highly recommended.

Teresa



*"Drawn to War"*

*is also showing at the Towner Cinema in Eastbourne until August 15th.*

*A big thank you to Teresa and all the other contributors to this newsletter. I love to read about what people have been doing with their calligraphy and I hadn't even been aware of this film until Teresa mentioned it so....let's keep passing info around the group and sharing things in the newsletter. It doesn't matter if you don't think you can write well as your enthusiasm will come across. We all look forward to hearing from you.*



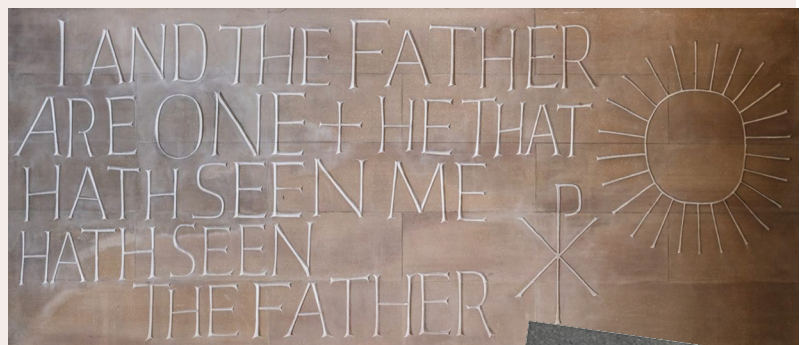
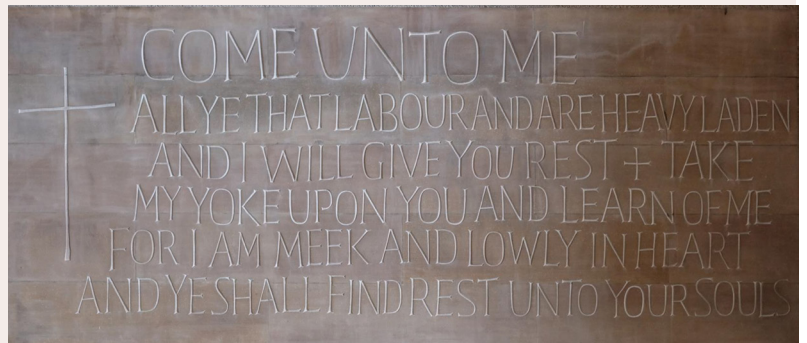
# Member's Pages cont.

## Tablets of the Word by Ralph Beyer

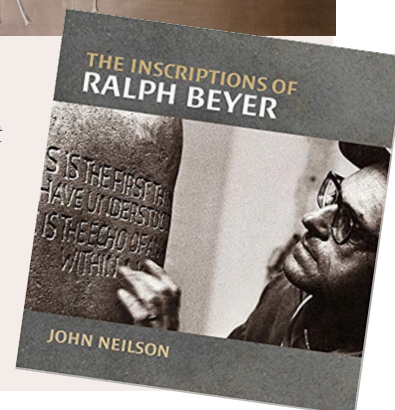
A set of eight sandstone tablets set on the walls of Coventry Cathedral.

I recently visited Coventry Cathedral to see the eight Tablets of the Word by the German letter-cutter Ralph Beyer. I thought they were very beautiful. They were hard to photograph as they hang in low light. Verity

Ralph Beyer was a German letter cutter born in Berlin in 1921 who came to England with his family in 1937. He was apprenticed to Eric Gill and then went to Art School where he was taught by Henry Moore. He died in 2008.



Read more about his life and work: "The Inscriptions of Ralph Beyer" by John Neilson. Published 2021



I was inspired by the hand itself, Saxon square minuscule, which I came across quite accidentally in relation to an Exeter Cathedral manuscript and found the ductus in David Harris' book "The Calligrapher's Bible".

I then chose an extract from Beowulf to use and thought to display both the original Early English/Anglo-Saxon alongside a modern translation. I've decided to make a book out of it and I hope that, because I have shared as far as I've got with you, this will spur me on to complete my summer project.

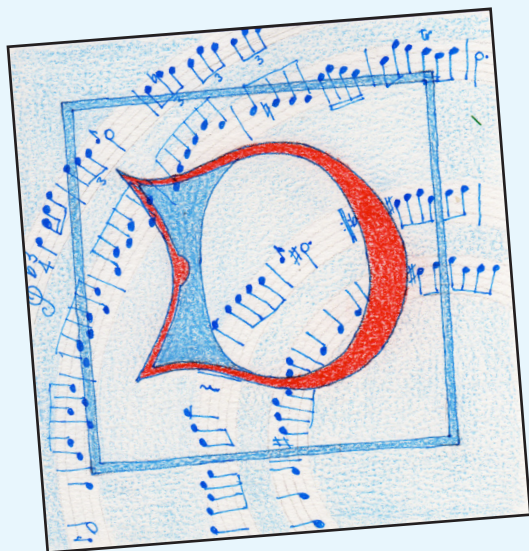
Good wishes for your summer calligraphy projects! Angie

## Work in Progress

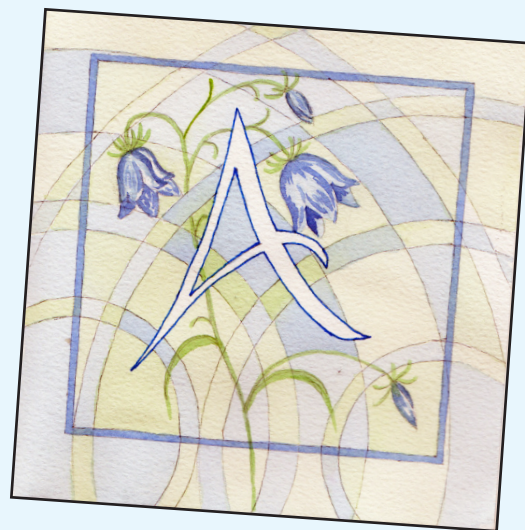
I don't know how other folk feel about sharing their "work in progress". I have got to a point now with this work where I think I know where I'm going! Originally, I had thought to work on a broadsheet piece but I was daunted by the size and layout, although I may come back to it later.



# Member's Pages cont.



Here are two cards - one that I have made for a musical calligraphy friend. Anyone who plays the piano just might recognise the piece of music. The other one was made from the workshop, Blooming Letters with Els Van Den Steen. Teresa



## Zoom Workshop - Adolf Bernd Letter Pictures with Ann Mason, hosted by Oxford Scribes - May 2022

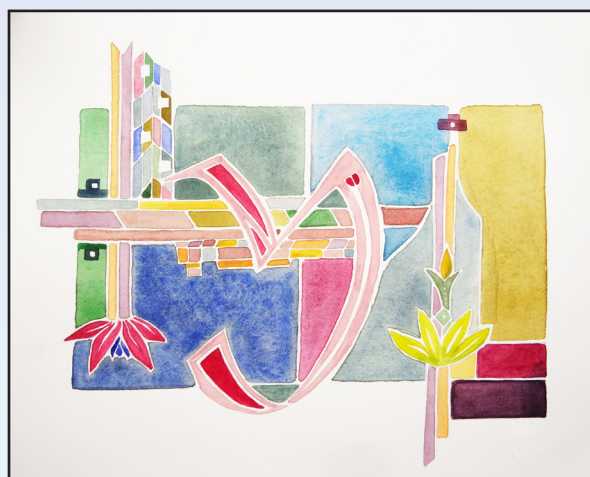
*"I take (although not always exclusively) one letter as the focal point, and by combining it with other forms, shapes and colours, attempt to create something new and harmonious.*

*By doing so I bestow on the letter a rank seldom attributed to it because of its normally functional role in life."* Adolf Bernd

Ann guided us through considering various aspects of drawing our letter - the focal point, contrast, tension and repetition.

She described how to use the rules of the golden ratio to arrange our composition and the additional symbols and design "tricks" that Adolf Bernd had used.

Ann then took us through some colour theory and her views on how Adolf Bernd had mixed his colours to achieve harmony in his paintings. I found this part of the tutorial extremely interesting and useful. Making letter paintings using what I learned is, I have found, a wonderful way to focus in a mindful way that can be calming and compelling.  
Angie



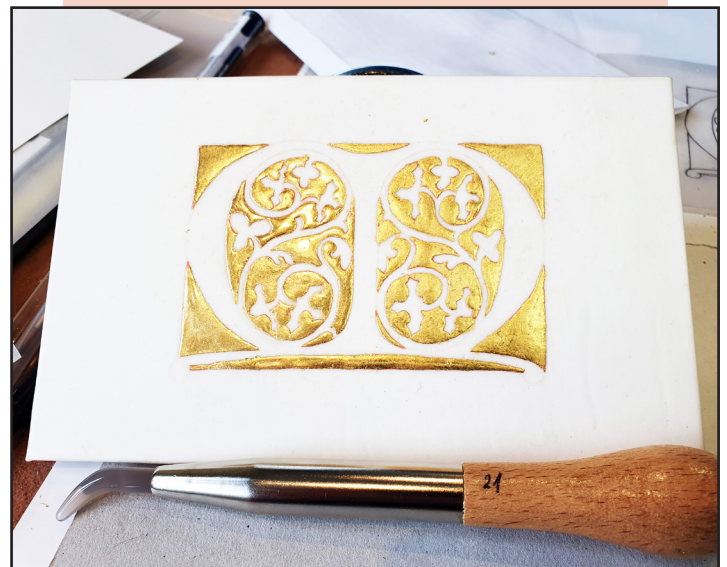
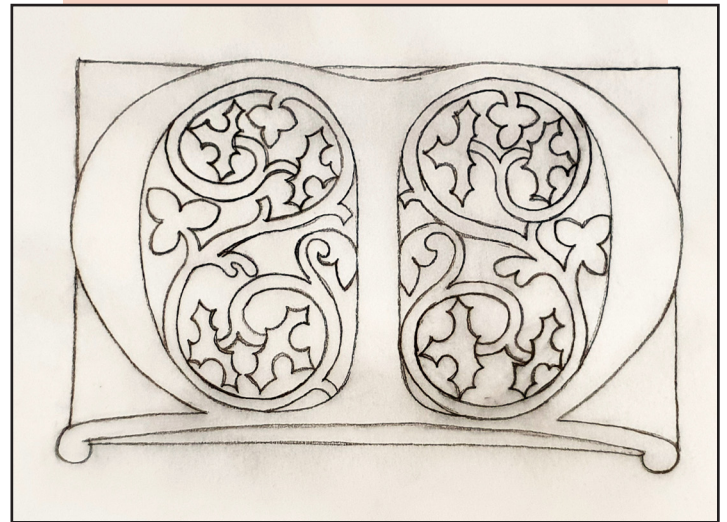


## Member's Pages cont.

Recently I had an opportunity to study with Gerald Mynott and learn how to do traditional skills such as stretching vellum, making gesso and using loose leaf gold.

It resulted in an illuminated letter M, approx. 2" x 3". Here are some of the interim stages and final result.

I'm still debating whether to make further touch-ups.... *Mariette*





# Member's Pages cont.

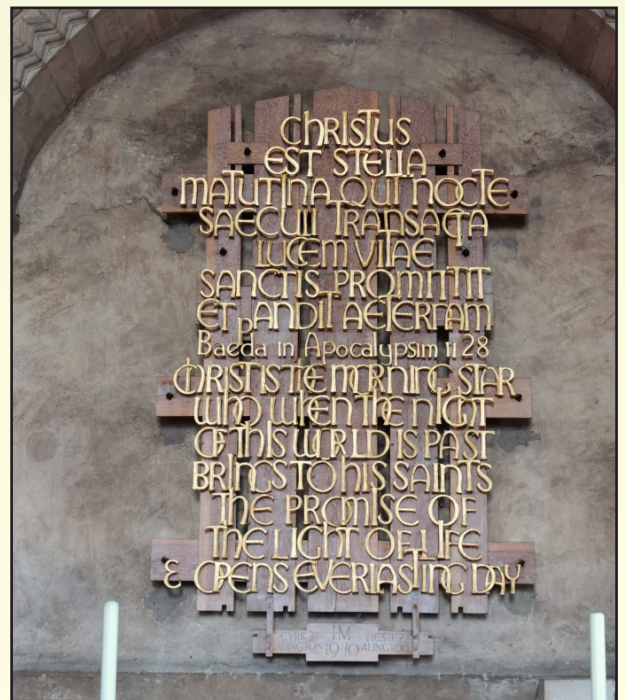


Above:  
From inside St Mary's Church on Lindisfarne  
Below:  
Vindolanda Museum  
Hexham Abbey altar cloth



A selection of wonderful images sent in by Kay from her travels to Northumberland earlier in the year. Looks like a fabulous holiday.

Below:  
Sculpture in the gardens of the museum at Vindolanda  
Durham Cathedral





# Exhibition Review

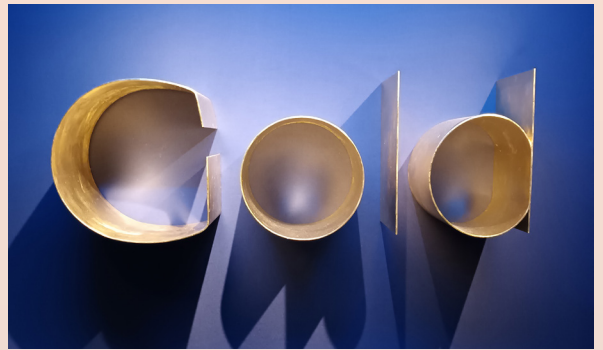
## **“Gold” at the British Library**

*Exhibition runs until 2nd October, 2022*

A small but glistening exhibition of 50 manuscripts down in the cool basement of the British Library, this show was a joy to look at: gold writing on dyed paper, polished sheets of hammered gold in coils enscribed, gold on silk, illuminated manuscripts and decorated fine bindings were all on display. The exhibition was further embellished with text panels summarising each section of the show and informative videos, which demonstrated processes and techniques.

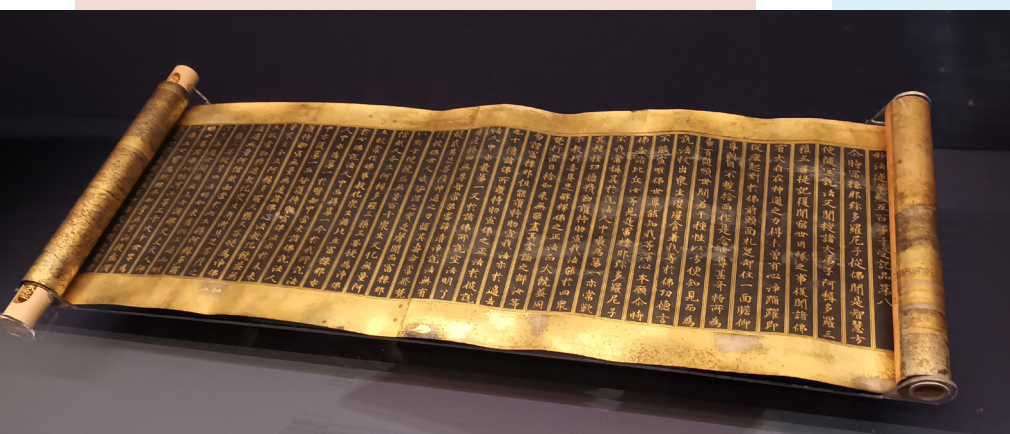
Everything was visually rich without being gaudy - the gilding just added another layer of sumptuousness. I was reminded that gold needs light and movement to really come to life and kept moving backwards and forwards around the show to play with the shimmering effect.

*“With its reflective properties, gold was ideal for representing sacred light.”*



I picked out three favourite pieces: a miniature girdle book of psalms dating from the 16th century with a textured gold cover, an open page in a large book with an extraordinary illustration of Robert of Anjou (1309-43) with Latin script inside gold fleur-de-lis (I could only imagine what was written here as I have no Latin knowledge to help me) and an exquisite Japanese indigo dyed paper scroll of Buddhist sutra with beautiful gold lettering and textured gold borders (1636).

*Helen*





# Workshop Review

May 2022

On May 7th a few of us gathered at Broadwater Baptist Church for our first in-person workshop of the year:

## **Pen-made Decorated Versals and Lombardic Capitals, taught by Gerald Mynott.**

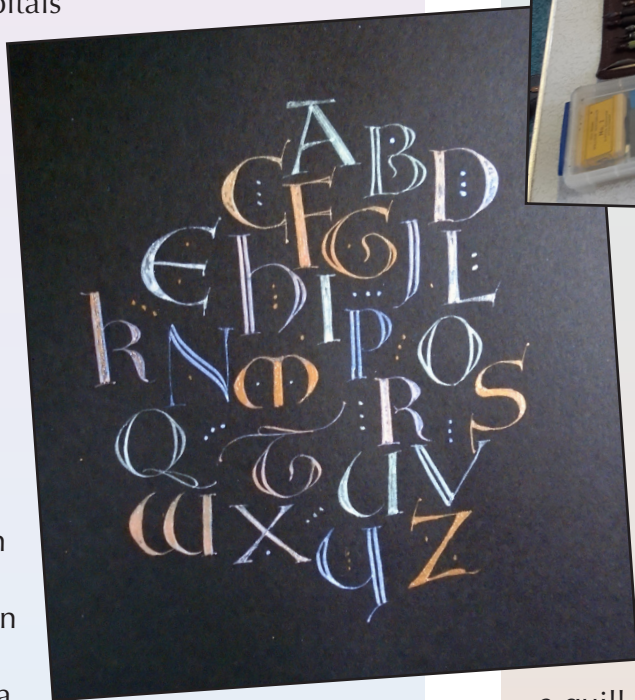
We started by mixing up gouache in the traditional blue/red/green of medieval manuscripts (tip: for a good, "traditional" blue mix half/half of ultramarine and cerulean blue, then add a tiny bit of permanent white for increased opaqueness). We then ruled some lines of  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch. Gerald had brought us some examples of capitals

from the Winchester Bible to study, and using a Wm Mitchell #5 we worked on copying those, as well as an alphabet sheet that Gerald had created based on those letters.

The afternoon was spent creating our own interpretations of the letters in a short quote, mostly working on dark paper with Finetec/Koliro paints, which gave a wonderful sparkly effect.

We were a small group, which meant Gerald was able to give our work plenty of attention and he provided suggestions and guidance throughout the day. He is such a generous tutor with ideas and advice. It was lovely to spend the day learning with friends, being able to wander around looking at each other's work, a luxury that, after the past 2 years, I find myself appreciating very much!

*Mariette*



## **Quill Cutters**

Ever since starting calligraphy I had always been under the impression that the only way to cut a quill was by hand. I can be quite klutzy though, so have never seriously attempted to attain that skill, figuring that it would likely lead to a blood bath. Imagine my delight at learning that a century or more ago someone invented a quill cutter! A quick online search shows they are very expensive these days, so if you spot one at a car boot sale it would be a lucky find!







### Blooming Letters with Els Van Den Steen

Although we had to move this workshop to the zoom format it was still hugely enjoyable and we must thank Els for shifting her teaching online for us. We did not have enough people to run it in person but online we attracted an international audience with students from Australia and Hong Kong!

This workshop was packed with content and resulted in the flowering of beautifully coloured, decorated letters. In the morning session we looked at letter design. Els showed us a variety of mark making tools including cotton ear buds. Backgrounds were decorated with whatever patterns we wanted to use and could be simple or complicated. We were also encouraged to refer to our source of inspiration (a bunch of freshly picked flowers) in the design process, picking out a detail to create a motif for example.

In the afternoon, we cross examined colour mixing in order to find close matches for the flowers, selecting a palette that had a dominant colour and then some accents. We used watercolour paints and worked on good quality paper to allow the colours to sing and brighten up any cloudy day.

It would have been nice to have been able to see more of what everyone was producing but we were glad that the workshop was able to happen. We all learnt a lot from this well organised and meticulous teacher.  
*Helen*

## “Celtic Angulars”

A Zoom Workshop with Julia Baxter

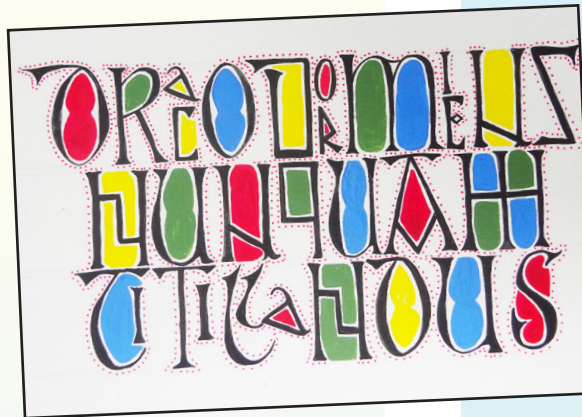
Julia Baxter, who has studied these beautifully exotic letters, guided us through her detailed exemplar in a stimulating workshop for the group.

These capital letters originate in Celtic manuscripts from as early as the mid 7th century and were designed by the illuminators for display and to work alongside uncials.

Julia had two versions for most of the letters: one a more rounded version and the second very angular. Some of the letters drift into illegibility and need to be read in context but these qualities can help steer the student towards a more contemporary interpretation.

During the morning session we looked closely at the nib movements, the angles and the fishtails, the letter widths and the rounded forms. The letters are drawn with a skinny nib – we used a 1mm (3.5 in Mitchells) – using two strokes for the verticals in the way that versals are constructed. Pen angles were 0, 20 or 90 degrees depending on the stroke. The nib width was 27!

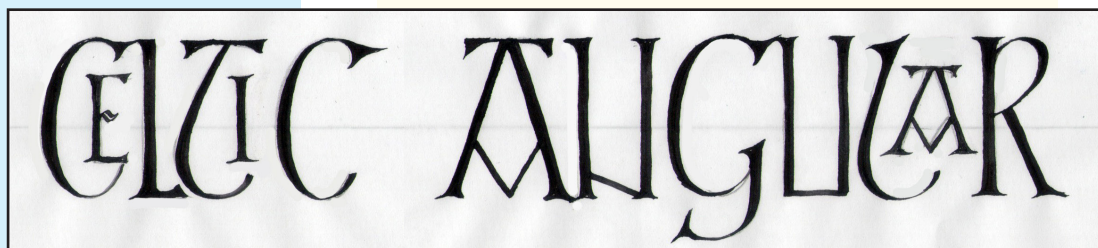
During the extended lunch break we practised our new found friends with 3-letter words to get used to drawing them and to look at spacing. We could mix the angular and the curvy alphabets together or not depending on the design effect we were looking for.



Artwork above by Angie Hatchette and Patti Griffiths

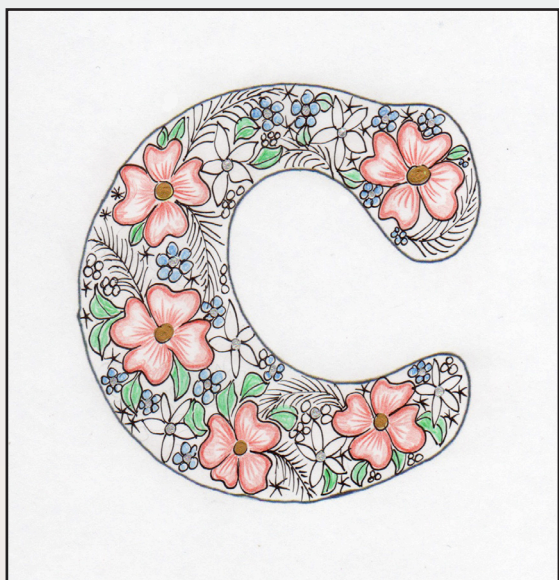
In the afternoon we looked at drawing half-size letters and ways to fit them inside other letters – a device used to save space in the old manuscripts. We also looked at decoration techniques such as Celtic knots, grid patterns, spirals extending from the fish tails and rubrication. Julia gave us a sheet of Latin quotes which we could then pick from and develop into a design in any way we liked using what we had learnt during the day. This was lots of fun and helped to round off a workshop that was not only packed with learning but also creativity.

Thank you to Julia for sharing her considerable knowledge and love of these letters, her great handouts and fun project ideas with us. *Helen*





# Back Page



*Above: Thank you Teresa for sending in these beautiful pieces of lettering that she created following the Joy Daniels workshop in the spring. They were both made into cards for lucky friends.*

*Keep sending in your artwork for the newsletter - something long and thin would fit this space well!*

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

The next newsletter will be sent out at the end of October 2022. Please send any copy to Helen Gibbs: email **hemgee22@gmail.com**

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

**Copy deadline October 15th, 2022**

## Your Committee

Chair: Cathy Stables  
01243 782240

Secretary: Denyce Aresti

Bookings: Lynda Marsh

Newsletter/ Membership:  
Helen Gibbs

Treasurer/Programme:  
Mariette Hardman

Committee Members:  
Position vacant

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