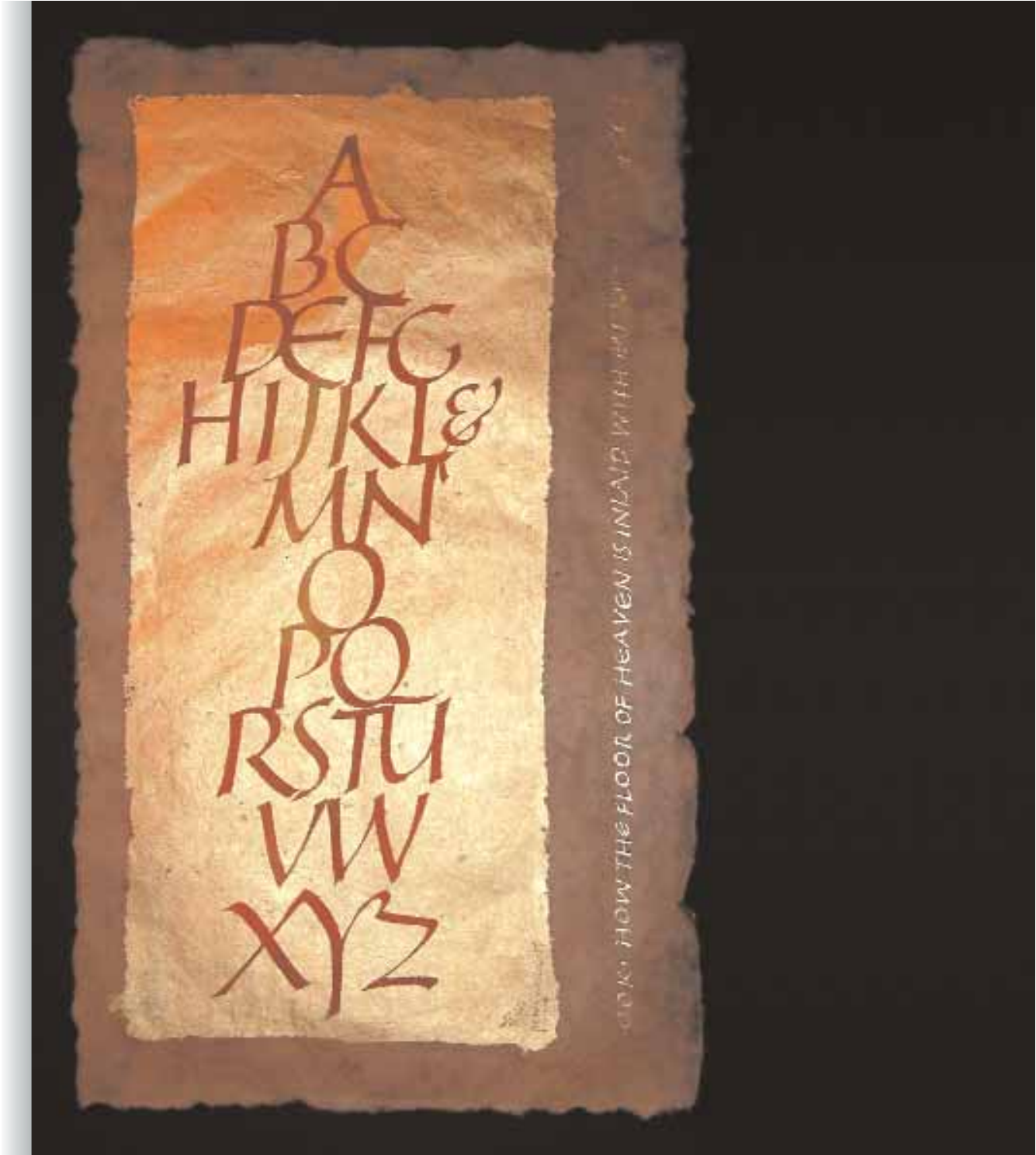
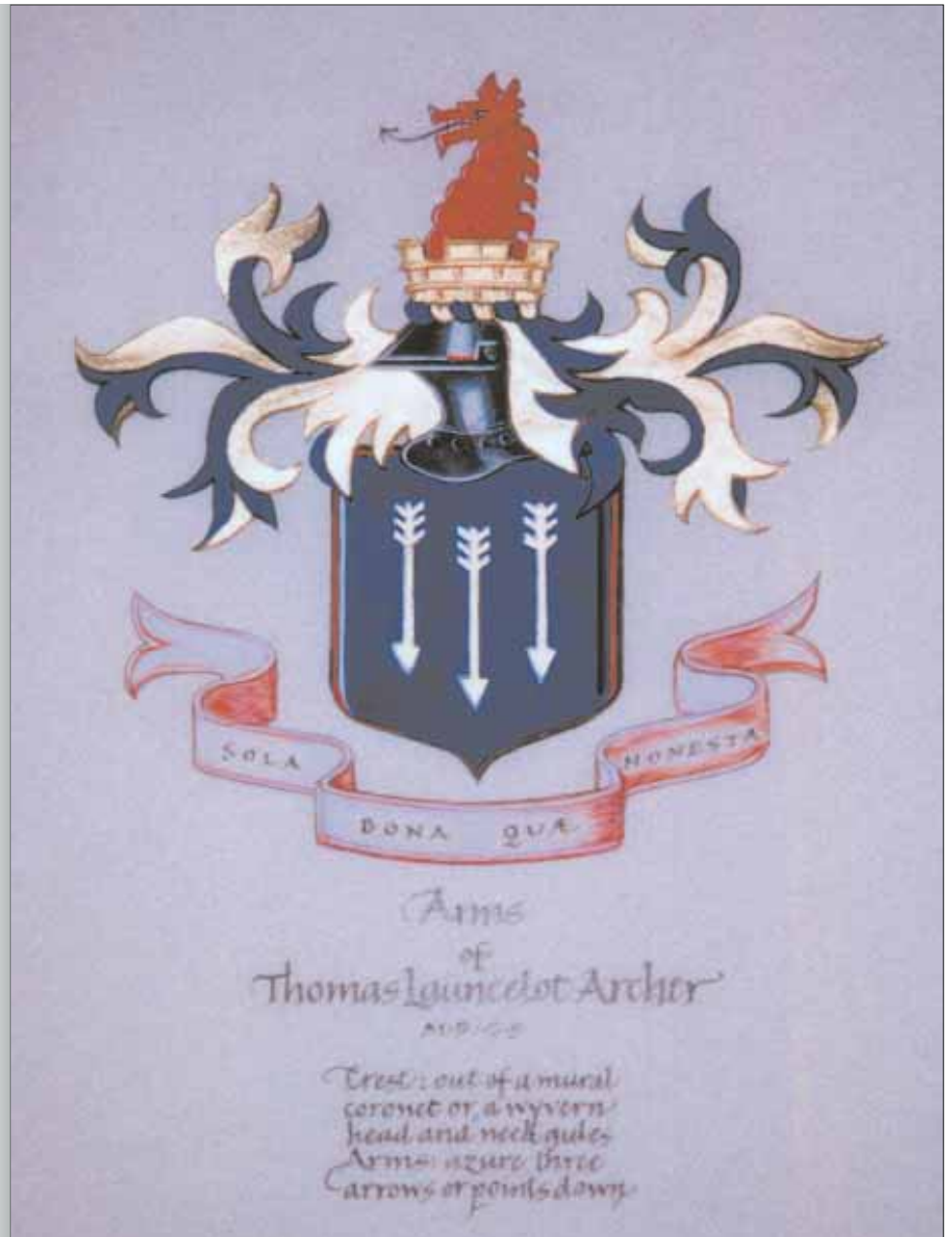


Subscribe

SUMMER 2005 » ISSUE 4
MAGAZINE OF THE MERCIAN SCRIBES





ABOVE » **Joan Archer**
 'Archer Coat of Arms'

Black Higgins Eternal ink, red and blue gouache and transfer gold leaf on P.V.A.

FRONT COVER » **Peter Halliday**

Alphabet – 'Look how the floor of heaven is inlaid with patines of bright gold'
 Gold leaf on oil pastel/PVA on Indian Paper – 2004

Finishing up in 2005

11 June 2005	10.00am - 1.00pm	AGM and Graphic Design – Two in one with this meeting
9 July 2005	10.00am - 1.00pm	Show and Tell – Please note change of date and content of this session

Our programme for the rest of 2005 and into 2006, which is now complete, will be listed in the next issue of *Subscribe*, but for a preview of what coming up take a look at page 4.

*'The making of letters in every form is for me the greatest pleasure.
It was and is for me the most happy and perfect expression of my life.'*
Rudolf Koch

What a year

EDITORS COMMENTS

The final **Subscribe** for this year! And what a successful year it has been. We hope you have enjoyed all the Mercian Scribes have achieved this year and there's plenty more planned for our second year, see page four for more details.

This issue contains a gallery of work by some of our members, giving you all a chance to see what people are working on. There is helpful information on suppliers of materials and equipment as well as useful books. Reviews of workshops to inform and remind us. Marlene Gray, our CLAS Northern Regional Liaison Officer, has supplied details of exhibitions and workshops in the near future – something for you Scribes to look forward to.

We hope you are all happy to be members of the Mercian Scribes, and enjoy what it has to offer in the pursuit of pleasurable and perfect calligraphy!

Members noticeboard

WHAT THE MERCIAN SCRIBES WILL BE GETTING UP TO

Next year... what's in store for the Mercian Scribes

In order to encourage you to re-join the Mercian Scribes next year, or even inspire you to join if you are not yet a member, I thought I would give you an outline of what is going to happen. **DEBORAH MORTON**

There is to be a full day Saturday workshop each month. Support for the workshops has been great and it appeared that the half-day workshops were just too short. Over the year there will be 10 workshops, 6 of which will be with a CLAS accredited tutor. These have been booked and I hope they meet with all your approval!

Peter Thornton in September – The Ruling Pen, legibility vs. visual interest. Peter will take us through a number of exercises to show us how to sacrifice legibility for visual

interest using traditional and non-traditional tools. The second part of the workshop will focus on letters and the need to read – we have to read them! The two elements will then be combined into a final project.

Suzanne Murray in November – Individuals Ltd. Suzanne will be bringing her huge paper selection for us to sample – and buy after the workshop if we wish. She has a web site that is worth looking at www.individualsltd.co.uk

Paul Antonio in January – Copperplate minuscule. Paul

is a very charismatic man who grew up in the Caribbean and taught himself calligraphy. His website is: www.PaulAntonioScribe.com and again worth looking at to see what we have in store.

Peter Halliday in February – colour pigments & miniature painting. Peter will show us how to mix real colour pigment powders and then follow this with painting miniature decorative letters.

Kathy Sedar in March – Foundational Variations. Kathy is a member of Leicestershire Scribes and has recently become an accredited tutor. She will be showing us how to take the foundational hand a little further. This workshop will require knowledge of basic foundational hand, but

I'm sure with some practise before the workshop everybody would be okay. Complete beginners would struggle – but by that I mean someone who has never done foundational at all.

April, May and June are still free but am sure we can fill them with some suggestions from members.

Margaret Morgan in July – Texture & Patterns with capitals. Margaret is back with the same workshop, but plans to take us further. People who attended the last workshop will remember how this was such a good workshop, but we did run out of time. This will be remedied by another session!

On the bookcase

These are some of the books I have often referred to and found very useful or inspiring. If you have any you have found particularly useful or just plain interesting, please get in touch with one of us and we can add to the list. There are a lot of books about but it is hard to filter through them all and find the really really nice ones. Text sources would be particularly useful – like a nice Haiku book or other inspirational poetry.

DEBORAH MORTON

The Calligraphers Handbook – H. Child
As recommended by Peter Halliday at the gilding workshop.

Calligrapher's Companion – Mary Noble and Janet Mehigan. Useful selection of calligraphic hands and examples.

Historical Sourcebook for Scribes – Michelle Brown and Patricia Lovett.

Calligraphy Techniques – Mary Noble. Nice step by step with good pictures and numerous projects.

Experimenting with Calligraphy – Margaret Daubney.

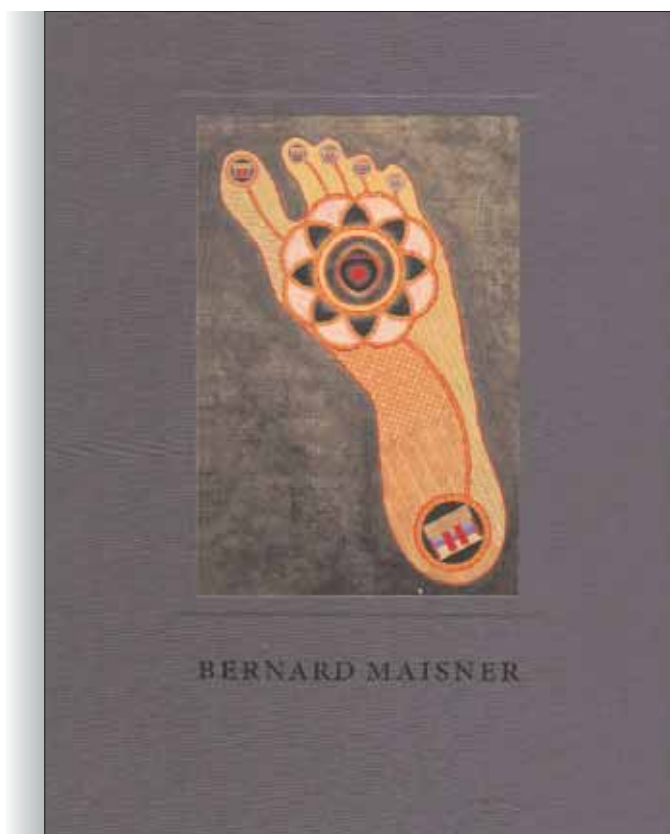
Illumination for Calligraphy – Janet Mehigan. A3 sized paperback with very nice examples.

The Art of the Illuminated Letter – Timothy Noad and Patricia Seligman. Popular book again recommended by Peter Halliday.

Hand Decorating Paper – Marie Browning.

Glorious Papers – Ruth Issett. Both useful books if you have never decorated your own papers before. Ruth Issett's in particular is really lovely.

Cover to Cover – Linda LaPlantz. Useful book for book-making, taking it more to an art level.



Book review

Bernard Maisner – Entrance to the Scriptorium. Contemporary Illuminated Manuscripts and Painting.

This is a wonderful book showing some beautiful and modern illumination – something to be inspired by after all the gilding we have been practising recently. It contains many colour photographs of Maisner's work. This is not step-by-step, this is how it should be done.

★★★★★

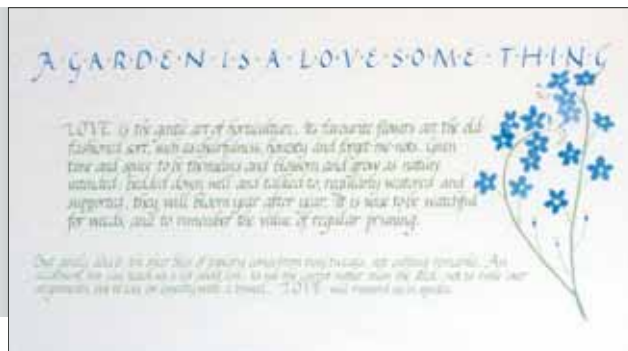
ISBN 0-295-97929-1

Members gallery

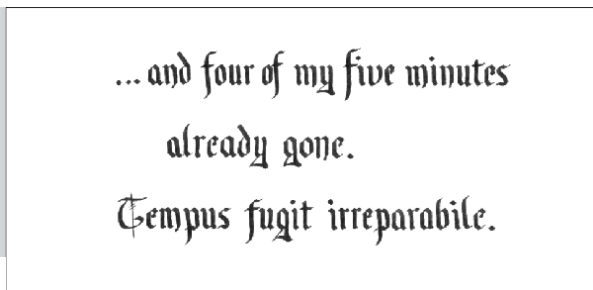
We thought it might be nice, at the close of our first year, to include in the newsletter samples of our work for all to see. Thank you to all those people who kindly sent in pieces to be included, everyone has been included. I think you will agree it is super to see such a varied collection of work. **TINA SCOTT**



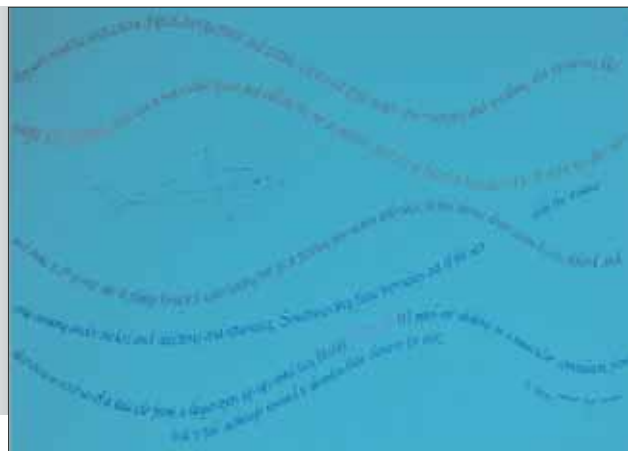
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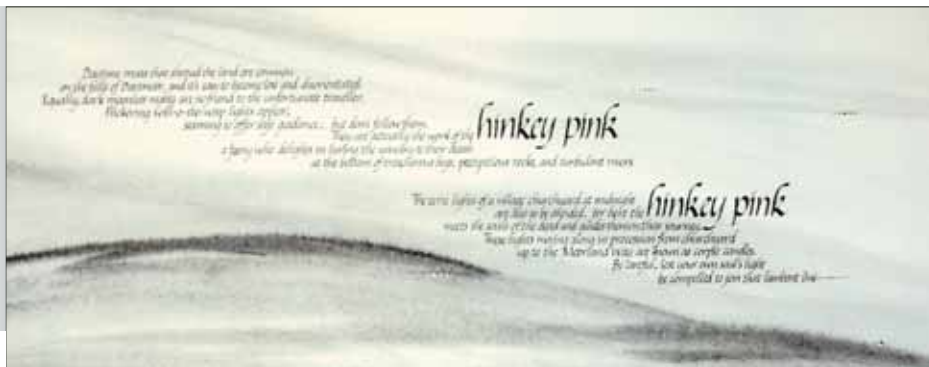
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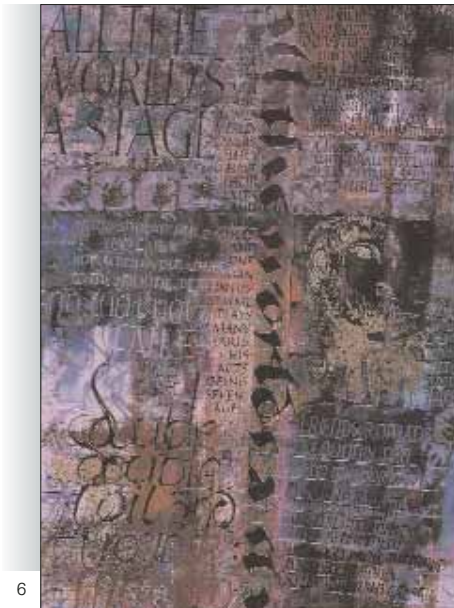


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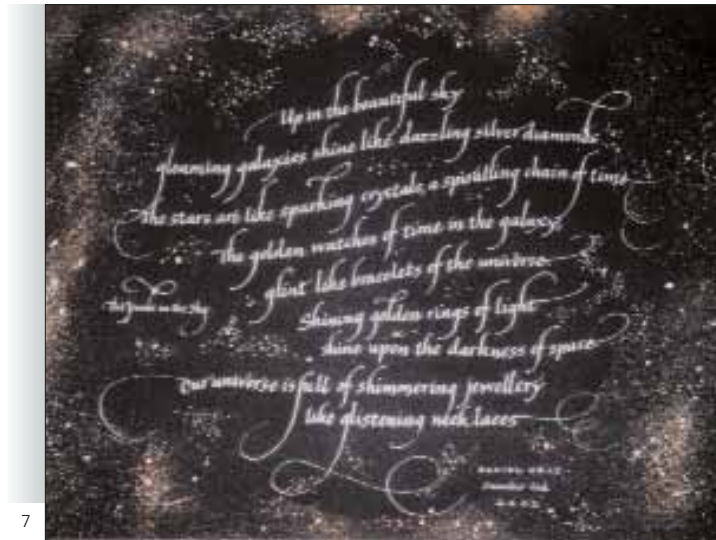


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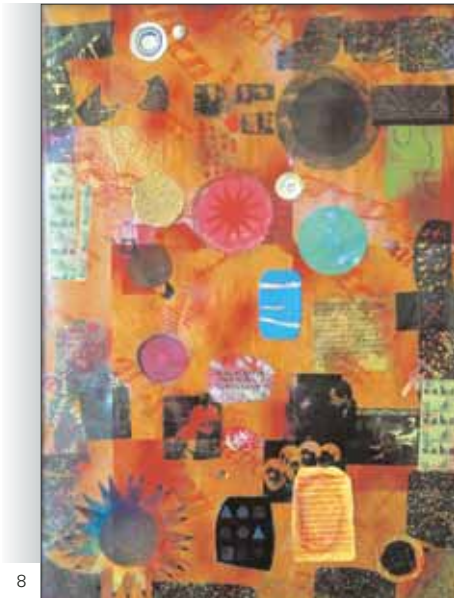
- 1 » **Deborah Morton** – 'Fibonacci series' Arches with watercolour using gothic.
- 2 » **Sue McGill** – 'The Garden is a lovesome thing' Saunders Waterford paper with gouache.
- 3 » **Derrick Shelley** – 'Passing of the years, after Virgil and Wendy Craig' Chinese Ink, lightweight copy paper.
- 4 » **Judith Thorpe** – 'Dolphins' Canford paper with gouache.
- 5 » **Tina Scott** – 'Hinkey Pink' Arches with gouache, ink and gold.



6



7



8



9



10



11



12

- 6 » **Linda Lewis** – 'All the world's a stage'
Saunders paper, watercolour and gouache.
- 7 » **Joan Archer** – 'Daniel's Poem'
Dark blue Ingres paper with gold and silver
gouache.
- 8 » **Gill Cooper** – 'Fensterbild'
Mixed media.
- 9 » **Ursula McKay** – 'Snowflake'
Brauser pen size 2mm and 3/4mm, gouache,
Saunders Waterford paper.
- 10 » **Yvonne Cook** – 'The definition of a waterfall'
Watercolour.
- 11 » **Wyn Griffiths** – 'A Fibonacci Fancy'
Calico sprayed with paint and Canford paper.
- 12 » **Ann Hughes** – 'World war II'
Watercolour and gouache, 56x47cm.

Raised gilding workshop with Peter Halliday

After introducing Peter to the assembled class (there were some who had not yet met our distinguished Honorary Member and tutor) we gathered around the demonstration desk he had set up, to be introduced to raised gilding. **DEBORAH MORTON**



A book on the Winchester Bible was passed around to show us the exquisite mid-12th Century gilding in the Bible that is now housed in the Norman Scriptorium of Winchester Cathedral. Techniques and mastery were however lost over time – Edward Johnston’s solution was to send his students out to discover how the gilding was done. One of his students, Graily Hewitt, actually set up a mediaeval workshop and studied mediaeval recipes. The obvious outcome of this was that you couldn’t actually buy the items in the recipes any longer – and of course there were some things that had just not been mentioned or included in the recipes, as they were too obvious or common at the time.

A recipe however was established eventually and this was gesso, composed of slaked plaster of paris, seccotine (fish glue), white lead (binds it all together), molasses (enhances the stickiness).

These items are ground to a fine paste, coloured with Armenian Bole (a ferric oxide pigment) and allowed to dry in small patties. When needed, a patty is taken, crushed and soaked in a couple of drops of water overnight.

The Calligrapher’s Handbook offers the best “How to” on gilding, in the chapter written by Donald Jackson.

Peter showed us a number of examples of his work, both on paper and on vellum – test pieces that he regularly demonstrated with. None had lost their shine over time even with all the handling.

We were then given a demonstration of what we were to do –

- » *small test squares to familiarise ourselves with using gesso.*
- » *wet a fine paintbrush and squeeze dry to remove any air bubbles from hairs*
- » *slowly mix reconstituted gesso from the bottom, up. And keep mixing during use as it does slowly separate*
- » *dilute a very small quantity of gesso with a little water and use this as an undercoat in squares*
- » *leave to dry*
- » *flood a second layer of the undiluted gesso on to square and pull it out to the corners. The brush does not actually touch the surface of the paper*
- » *leave to dry completely, preferably overnight.*

It was then time to burnish the gold and Peter gave us a demonstration on burnishing – gently through glassine paper. The glassine paper is moved at short intervals to make sure that the gold is not sticking to the paper – and therefore not ready for burnishing. The tip for burnishing was that if you felt any resistance, or scratching or lift-off with or without the glassine paper, STOP, and come back later. Put more gold on perhaps and come back later. Basically, never rush it.

Peter also brought in a number of his pieces of gilded work for our admiration. But of exceptional interest was the memorial book of the Lancashire Regiment that he has been asked to restore. Beautiful gilding and writing which we were all amazed at. The restoration was to be a challenge – the back fly pages had been ruined by somebody adding names and dates in a totally inappropriate way (and inappropriate writing material!).

We finished the day with Peter demonstrating a few more techniques:

- » *pressing into the gilded letter or shape with a pointed burnisher can alter the reflective qualities of the item*
- » *writing with gesso – the gesso must be thinned slightly to allow a flow through the pen. And writing must be slow to get sufficient gesso in the strokes for the gold to stick to*
- » *line of gesso over a PVA gilded letter. Paint a very fine line of gesso down the centre, dry, then add another layer and gild. Burnish through glassine.*

It was a busy day and I felt that we learned a good deal about gilding with gesso. Many thanks to Peter for all the information. Now it is up to us to practise!



Nancy Ouchida-Howells at Leicestershire Scribes

This was the second invitation by Leicestershire Scribes to come to one of their meetings and I thought it would be a good idea to venture over – it's always nice to see what other societies do! **DEBORAH MORTON**

Although Sunday isn't necessarily a good day to go to a workshop, it was well and truly worth it. Leicestershire Scribes do have a lovely venue and Nancy was such a nice tutor. The Scribes were very welcoming and we had some good tables to work on with plenty of space.

Our goal of the day was to make calligraphic gifts. We warmed up making small cards

with single letters using Nancy's favourite automatic pens – potential birthday cards.

We then went on to make little boxes of various sizes that we decorated with calligraphy. It was a new approach to calligraphy to me – using it in a 3-dimensional manner. Nancy had provided us with skeleton shapes that we had to cut around and we provided the

decoration. It did take some planning, and was good fun and very satisfying. Nancy's positive encouragement made everyone comfortable with their level of ability. And



we all left with at least 3 little boxes and some ideas for future use. Thank you Leicestershire Scribes for an enjoyable Sunday.



Note from Marlene Gray our CLAS Northern Regional Liaison Officer

The following are a list of dates for exhibitions and workshops that Marlene has sent out to all the northern groups. Some will require some real enthusiasm to get to, but others are more achievable!

Exhibitions

Lindisfarne Gospels facsimile tour in Northeast

- » 12th July – 7th August:
Kirkcubbin Old Hall Museum
- » 13th Sept – 22nd Oct:
Stockton Central Library

Created at Lindisfarne Monastery circa 720 and is amongst one of the most important treasures of the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic culture. The Facsimile is an accurate copy; venues will be organising page-turning and other special activities.

Angels: and exhibition from art through the ages.

- » 21st May – 29th Sept:
Holy Trinity Church, Holmfirth, West Yorkshire

An unusual exhibition of over 50 angels painted by Celia Kilner, Douglas Beardsell and other artists from the area. Tues-Sun 11am-4pm; admission free.
Phone **01484 688 217**

A Flock of Words. NorthWest Calligraphers exhibition

- » 16th July – 18th Sept:
Lancaster Maritime Museum
- Open daily 11am – 5pm

York Scribes exhibition of calligraphy

- » 15th – 20th August:
Bar Convent, Blossom St., York.
- Open daily 9am-5pm

Thinking in Script. Northumbrian Scribes exhibition

- » 26th August – mid Dec:
Bede's World, Jarrow.

Workshops

Monthly Saturday workshops with Angela Dalleywater. St. Lawrence's Hall, York. 10am-3m. £12 each session. Designed to help people develop their ideas and work-in-progress. For further dates and more details, ring Angela on **01430 879 914**

Weekend workshops with Ann Hechle. October 22/23 at All Saints Church Hall, Halifax. A discussion weekend based around students' current work-in-progress aiming to develop a deeper understanding of individual work; not suitable for beginners.

For more details and cost, ring Helen Hayman on **0422 823 257**

Summer Schools

18-19th June: Calderdale Calligraphers host in Barkisland, Halifax. Tutors are Celia Lister, Clare Whittaker, Mick Paine, Hilary Henning, Peter Halliday.
Phone **01924 258699**

15th – 21st July: International Calligraphy Symposium, University of Sunderland. Tutors are Thomas Ingmire, Gottfried Pott, Susan Skarsgard, Georgia Deaver. Phone **0191 5153246**

1st – 7th August: NorthWest Calligraphers host at Burton Manor College in Wirral, Cheshire. Tutors are Jilly Hazeldine, Celia Kilner, Lorna Bambury. Phone **01244 351210 or 0151 3365172**

19th – 25th August: CLAS Festival at Ormskirk, Lancs. Tutors are Hazel Dolby, Gaynor Goffe, Veiko Kerspersaks, Peter Thornton, Jan Pickett, Tom Perkins.
Phone **02380 848020 or 02392 376072**

Hope some of them inspire you – or you may find yourself on holiday in the area.

Kath's Workshop – Gilding Part One

I had been looking forward to this workshop for a while. I had only very limited gilding knowledge and ability, and heard through the calligraphy grapevine that Kath Partington could make gold stick to anything. **TINA SCOTT**



And I really wasn't disappointed, it was a fabulous workshop, Kath really does know her stuff. I had made copious notes to remind me of the details as Kath covered so much. But there was no need, Kath has supplied these notes for everyone, so you can be guaranteed they are accurate (unlike my notes).

We watched as Kath demonstrated the various sticky substances that can be used (see list opposite), and yes Kath's gold stuck to them! I had less success on the day, but since have

achieved much better results. Kath had brought with her enough 'sticky substances' for everyone to try gilding on them all. She suggested we produce a test page like the one she did to demonstrate. This used all the sticky stuff with one, then two layers of gold as well as using a pen and trying to get the gold to stick. Hints and tips given

such as gilding on a mirror; or flowing the second coat of the PVA without disturbing the undercoat are things to help to achieve successful results.

I'd like to thank Kath for her time and effort in giving such an informative workshop and the back up information supplied for all our benefit.



Gilding Notes Summary

Below are the Gilding Notes Summary for part one workshop held on the 16th April. Included are recommended books for gilding and useful suppliers of gold and equipment. **KATH PARTINGTON**

Basic Flat Gilding.

The sticky substances used are:

- PVA - non-washable, e.g. Marvin Medium
- PVA - washable, e.g. Pritt
- Acrylic Gloss Medium
- Acrylic Matt Medium
- PVA-based metal adhesive "Wondersize"
- Gum Ammoniac - can be bought as a liquid or as small lumps of gum which are soaked in distilled water and strained to give a thin milky liquid.
- Gum Arabic - used neat or diluted 50/50 with water.
- Glair - the liquid which separates off when the white of an egg is beaten until thick foam (but not stiff) then left to stand overnight.

To lay the sticky base:

- » The PVAs and the acrylics, but not the Wondersize, must be diluted before use 50/50 with water to a thin creamy consistency. Add a touch of colour so that it can be seen when dry.
- » The area to be gilded is first painted with a very dilute mix and left to dry.
- » A layer of the 50/50 mix is added by dropping a little of it onto the area and with the brush hardly touching the surface pulling the mix out to the edges of the shape.
- » To write directly use a mix a little thinner than 50/50 or use two layers as above.
- » "Wondersize" is laid as supplied in one layer. It is not easy to achieve crisp letters.
- » Gum ammoniac is laid as supplied (or mixed). One layer is sufficient but a second layer laid as described above will give a much better shine. Gum ammoniac is perfect for writing as it flows through the pen smoothly.
- » Gum arabic is laid in one layer whether neat or dilute.
- » Glair is laid neat in a single layer.

To apply the gold:

- » The PVAs, the acrylics, the Wondersize and the gum ammoniac must be re-activated for the gold to be applied.
- » Breathe warm, moist breath onto the surface and immediately place the gold and rub down through the backing paper.
- » Repeat until the surface is completely covered with gold. More gold will result in a

deeper shine. Rub down only through a backing sheet or glassine. Leave to rest.

- » Burnish against the hardest surface available, e.g. glass, to polish the metal rather than just compressing the surface. Only ever burnish the gold directly with a specialist agate or similar burnisher. If using any other smooth object as a substitute burnish only through glassine.
- » Gum arabic and glair must be still moist on the surface for the gold to stick.
- » Judge the moment when the surface is still just moist, place the gold onto the surface and gently rub down through the backing paper. If the surface is still too moist the gold will be dissolved and the gum will transfer to the backing paper. If it is too dry the gold will not stick. Getting it right is a matter of trial and error.
- » Several layers of gold can be applied as gold will stick to gold.

Gold on Oil Pastel

- » Produce a thick, smooth layer of oil pastel, one or more colours, as desired.
- » Lay a sheet of gold onto the area of oil pastel and smooth down. Only transfer gold can be used.
- » Using a dry nib write on the surface cutting away the gold but leaving the oil pastel in place and revealing its colour.
- » Correct any mistakes or rough edges by laying more gold on the area and re-writing.
- » Gently burnish the whole area through glassine.

Useful books for information on gilding:

The Calligrapher's Handbook
Edited by Heather Child
Pub. A&C Black
ISBN 0-7136-2695-X

Tools and Materials for Calligraphy Illumination & Miniature Painting
Patricia Lovett
Pub. C. Roberson and Co. Ltd
ISBN 0-9529387-0-7

The Art of Illuminated Letters
Timothy Noad & Patricia Seligman
Pub. Headline Book Publishing
ISBN 0-7472-1112-4

Gilding materials suppliers:

Wright's of Lymm Ltd
T/A C.F.Stonehouse & Sons
Warrington Lane
LYMM, Cheshire. WA13 0SA
Tel. 01925 752226
www.wrightsoflymm.co.uk

Wright's supply a wide range of gold at good prices. This is the gold used at our April workshop.

Duchy Gilding Co.
The Old Mortuary Studio
13 Gyllyng St.
FALMOUTH, Cornwall
TR11 3EL
Tel. 01326 211692
www.duchygilding.co.uk

L.Cornelissen & Son
105 Great Russell St.
LONDON. WC1B 3RY
Tel. 020 7636 1045
www.cornelissen.com

Note that Cornelissen's transfer gold, even that intended for calligraphers, is proving very difficult to use at the moment. It stubbornly sticks to the backing sheet.

All of the above have clear, comprehensive web sites with on-line ordering.

Falkiner Fine Papers Ltd.
76 Southampton Row
LONDON
WC1B 4AR
Tel. 020 7831 1151

Not for gold etc. but, as its name implies, for papers of all sorts including glassine.

More Useful Suppliers

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An amazing collection of gilding equipment and materials. You even ask for the gold transfer to be loose or firm press! Small £2 delivery charge, but the materials are very responsibly priced.

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AP Fitzpatrick

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London
E1 5QJ

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Lots of calligraphy materials for sale including fine papers, inks, pens, nibs, gouache, vintage nibs, automatic and pilot pens penholders, materials for gilding, pencils, bone folders and all those bits-and-bobs that are hard to track down.

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If you have any more useful addresses, please get in touch with them. Information and materials for calligraphy are so hard to come by that sharing is essential!

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