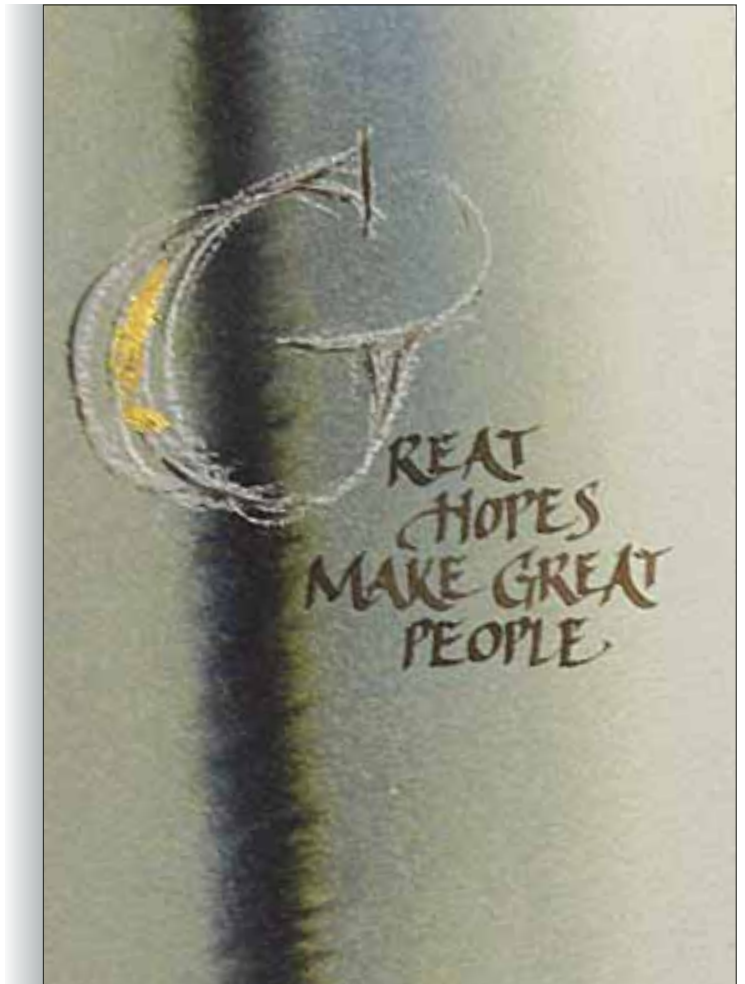


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AUTUMN 2005 » ISSUE 5
MAGAZINE OF THE MERCIAN SCRIBES





ABOVE » **Deborah Morton**
 Inspiration/scrap book notes from Clare Whittaker 'Dancing with a Pencil'
 workshop Calderdale Summer School 2005.
 Water colour, pastel pencils, ink and gold transfer.

FRONT COVER » **Celia Lister**
 Foxglove®
 From a series by Celia Lister and a prize won by Tina at
 Calderdale Summer School 2005

New Programme 2005-2006

24 Sept 2005	10.00am - 4.00pm	Peter Thornton, The Ruling Pen
22 Oct 2005	10.00am - 4.00pm	Wyn Griffiths, Book-making
26 Nov 2005	10.00am - 4.00pm	Suzanne Murray, Papers and Calligraphy
28 Jan 2006	10.00am - 4.00pm	Paul Antonio, Copperplate
25 Feb 2006	10.00am - 4.00pm	Peter Halliday, Colour Pigment and Miniatures
25 March 2006	10.00am - 4.00pm	Kathy Sedar, Roundhand Variations
April 2006 (TBC)	10.00am - 4.00pm	Peter Thornton, Design and Layout
20 May 2006	10.00am - 4.00pm	Steve Delaney, Silk Screen Printing
24 June 2006	10.00am - 4.00pm	Kath Partington, Paper Revisited
15 July 2006	10.00am - 4.00pm	Margaret Morgan, Texture and Pattern with Capitals

Here is the new programme for Mercian Scribes workshops 2005 - 2006. All workshops this season run from 10.00am - 4.00pm. Please make bookings for workshops with Derrick or Deborah and book early to avoid disappointment, places may be limited!

'The brush dances, and the ink sings.'
Karlgeorg Hoefler

Welcome back

EDITORS COMMENTS

We hope you had a good summer, are feeling relaxed and rejuvenated and ready for all the Mercian Scribes has to offer this time around. Opposite is the programme of workshops 2005 - 2006 which, due to numerous requests, are all full days this season, there's something for everyone we're sure you'll agree!

Although only our second year, this looks like being a very busy one! This issue covers what's in store for the Mercian Scribes; workshops, exhibitions, visits, as well as hosting the CLAS Regional Day.

We hope you enjoy the coming year!

Members noticeboard

WHAT THE MERCIAN SCRIBES WILL BE GETTING UP TO

CLAS Regional Day... big things in store for Mercian Scribes

We, Mercian Scribes, have been invited to host the CLAS Regional Day next year. This is a huge honour – and hopefully we can live up to it! I'm sure Peter Halliday won't mind me saying that he has had a hand in this happening and that he was indeed one of the organisers of the first CLAS summer school held at Repton School.

DEBORAH MORTON

None of us have ever been to a Regional Day, so a few of us will be attending this years' event in Falmouth (which you will have seen advertised in the Edge magazine). It consists only of one day, but in that day there is such a lot packed into it. There is a morning and an afternoon lecture given by recognised calligraphers (or

something interesting of a very high standard), exhibition of work by local calligraphers, sales by various calligraphic dealers etc and demonstrations by CLAS tutors. All this needs to be organised over the coming year, slowly but surely to get it all right.

We have a small committee of

immediate helpers at the moment – more will be welcome as we sort through the things that need to be done. If you would like to be involved, please get in touch. We are talking of about 150 – 200 people expecting an exciting calligraphic day. I'm sure that we will be able to make it happen! At the moment, the date is October 28th 2006, but this is dependent on the venue.

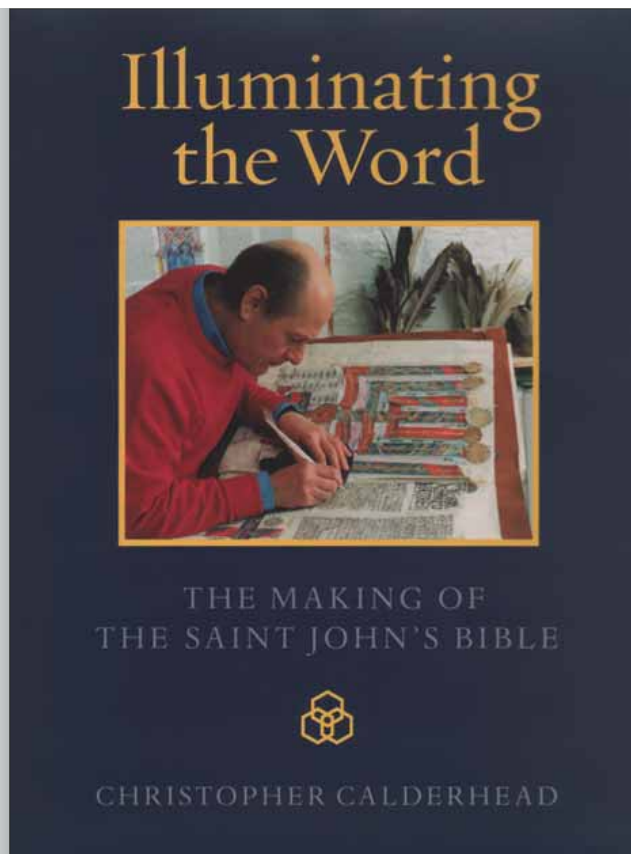
Mansfield Museum Calligraphy Exhibition

I was approached at the beginning of this year by Mansfield Museum to see if we, again Mercian Scribes, would like to be involved in an exhibition that would involve other Midlands calligraphers.

DEBORAH MORTON

The exhibition will be from April 8th 2006 – June 3rd 2006 in the Lecture Room at the museum. At the moment, others involved are the Nottingham Calligraphers, and Lindsay Scribes which isn't quite what I expected, but others may appear yet! The Nottingham Calligraphers were the instigators of the idea and are still hoping for a few more takers. At this stage, we don't know exactly what is expected of us, but I am hoping for a meeting at the Museum soon. But it does mean that you can start working on things for our first

exhibition. All levels will be welcome I am sure – promoting calligraphy is the aim, so we will need beginners and experienced work. Work used in this exhibition can then be used for the CLAS Regional Day – so it really will be worth doing something! As soon as I know more, I will circulate the information.



Book review

Christopher Calderhead – Illuminating the Word. The Making of the Saint John's Bible.

Telling the story of the Saint John's Bible. Why and how it is possibly the major calligraphic work of the millennium.

"Perfection is not an option", a quote from the book is a mantra used by the calligraphers and illuminators working with Donald Jackson on a bible that will ultimately reach seven volumes, let's hope they get close!

A huge insight into the processes required for a manuscript of this scale. Portrayed with photographic evidence showing flow charts of various bible projects, samples of computer printouts, the hand developed for the bible and outstanding illuminations.

A beautifully designed book and a real source of information and inspiration. So, if we can't all run to the cost of buying all seven volumes to complete the Saint John's Bible, then this gives all the information we need to know and comes a great second best!

★★★★★

ISBN 0-8146-9050-5

Show and Tell

Show & Tell and Bring & Buy. This was a strange title for a workshop, but it was one that developed over the year. Our first 'Show & Tell', when we were a fledgling group, was a nice meeting in which we got to know one another a little better, without realising what we were doing. This meeting proved to be the same. There was friendly chatter throughout the morning as people circulated around the wonderful selection of books that were brought in by those brave members who were willing to part with them from their bookshelves. I think everybody found something to their liking and there wasn't too much left over at the end of the morning. **DEBORAH MORTON**

And then there was the friendly chatter and banter as everybody discussed the individual pieces of work that were presented for us all to look at. As you can see from the photographs, there was a huge selection. No two pieces were the same – or resembled each other in approach. It was a genuine source of inspiration for all levels.

It was a very good note to end

our year on – and we must make sure that we repeat this form of meeting to ensure that we do keep in touch with each others progress in the calligraphy world. Or rather that is how I feel, because I'm nosy and love to see what other people are doing! I am therefore very grateful to everybody who contributed to this meeting – but also to the Mercian Scribes members in general for their support

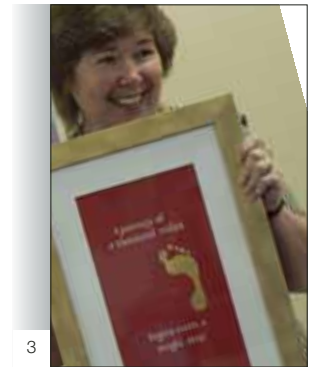
throughout the year in attending meetings and generally ensuring that our society continues. Our next year is going to be a busy one – and I think quite challenging. I am looking forward to it, and hope you are too.



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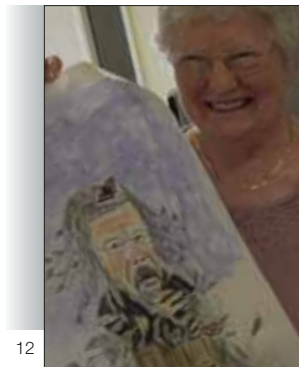
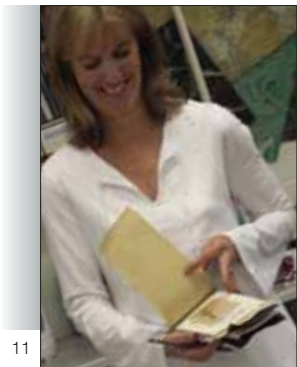
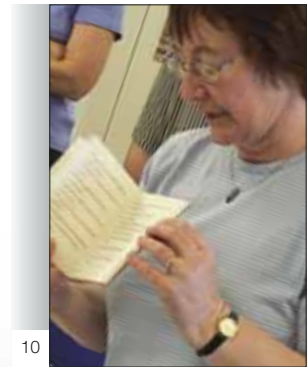
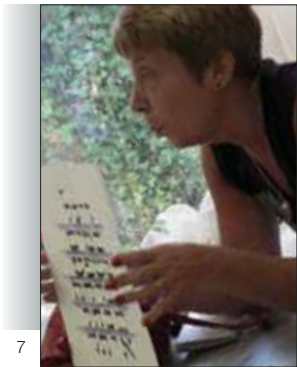
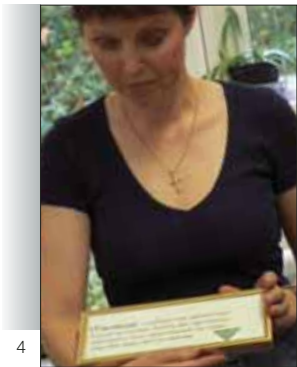
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- 1 » **Linda Hinton** – Lichfield City Centre.
- 2 » **Derrick Shelley** – A gothic piece.
- 3 » **Sue Glover** – A journey into gilding.

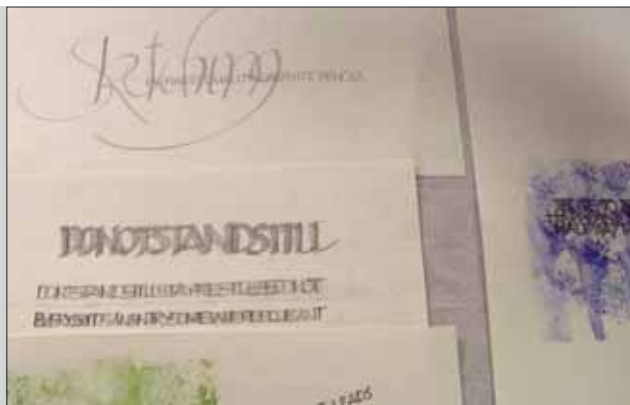
- 4 » **Vivien Harrison** – A prize winning piece.
- 5 » **Jenny Flavell** – A delightful Christening gift.
- 6 » **Linda Lewis** – A multi-meaning piece.
- 7 » **Ann Hughes** – Inspired by Islamic works.
- 8 » **Leslie Holmes** – A drinking dream.
- 9 » **Yvonne Cook** – Professionally applied design.
- 10 » **Kath Partington** – A riddle book.
- 11 » **Deborah Morton** – A inspiration book.
- 12 » **Joyce Davies** – An 'Oddie' and a 'Goody'.



Calderdale Summer School

This was an event I had been looking forward to immensely. Calderdale Calligraphers hold the summer school every year in an old mill near Halifax. There are between 80 and 100 people, with 6 to 8 tutors.

DEBORAH MORTON



Peter Halliday is a regular tutor, as well as being the Patron of Calderdale Calligraphers. He was there this year with his writing and gilding on glass workshop. I succeeded in enthusing Tina to enrol and we both got on to Clare Whittaker's Dancing with a Pencil workshop. Other workshops included bookmaking, variations on uncial and layering with gothic. Tina and I checked into our fabulous B&B first then drove on to the centre. The school is held in one large room, where coffee, tea and biscuits is available all day. Lunch is an easy and delicious buffet and dinner a 'sit down' meal.

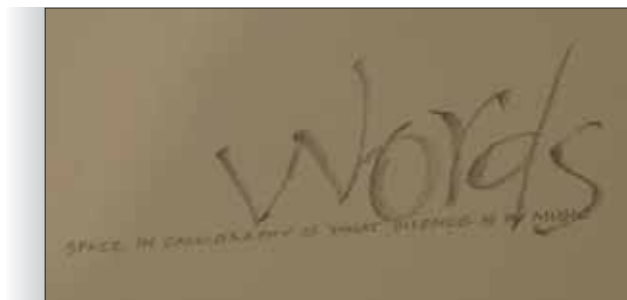
During the day, you can walk about the room and see what everybody else is getting up to – although you do find that you haven't actually got time to do this. On Saturday, after classes have finished at about 4pm and before dinner, you have a chance to relax, look at the calligraphy exhibition, do some retail therapy with Calligraphy, Blots and some nice paper supplier from Calderdale Calligraphers. It's a nice couple of hours before dinner! Dinner is a very pleasant affair, followed by a few words by somebody (usually Peter) and then the raffle is drawn. Tina was lucky enough to win one of the top prizes – a piece of work by Celia Lister!



The workshop itself – well, it was great too. Clare is a very enthusiastic teacher who really does try and get as much out of you as possible. There were about 12 of us, all different abilities. We started with warming up exercises with a pencil – to get our hands flowing. Then we progressed to writing small sayings in different ways, picking out words from the sentence to emphasise or decorate. Clare was very philosophical in her approach to teaching and encouraged

confidence in what you were doing. She regularly walked around the work tables to talk to you personally about what you were doing, why you were doing and what you were aiming for – in a non-threatening manner of course which encouraged you to relax and give things a go!

All in all, it was an inspiring weekend. I have just written up my notes for it in my scrapbook – and it reminded me just what a very useful weekend it was.



Art in Action

This summer I went to Art in Action which is every other year. There were over 40 stalls and marquis to wander through. The range of exhibitions and demonstrations from glass blowing to illustration.

SUE COOPER

I was fascinated by the Calligraphy etched onto coloured glass vases. Haiku poetry on chargers. Fairy tales being hand engraved with diamond tipped cutting wheels.

I left the Glass exhibition and entered the calligraphy tent. Isn't Timothy Noad handsome and his calligraphy is wonderful too! The height of his raised gilding is amazing. Mary Noble was giving demonstrations of painting letters onto a long roll of paper. Her instantaneous but perfectly formed letters were an inspiration. There were demonstrations by Qu Lei Lei of Chinese letter forms

and the tales of how they developed as pictures simplified. This was complemented by Yoko Takenami whose basic strokes of Japanese were incredible. Also Islamic texts written using only a reed pen. The Hebrew calligraphy was unusual as their letters look nothing like ours. Rosalind Wyatt did collages inspired by texts, so complicated. So I had a good top up of Calligraphy Inspiration.

One thing I was truly amazed at was a young oriental lady who painted miniatures - unimpressed? Well she painted them on the inside of tiny bottles! Her paint brush had two hairs which were bent at a right angle. She had to paint the highlights first then the details then the background colour. Want proof that I have not been drinking? Go to her web site - www.containedbeauty.com

I took my camera but the signs say not for publishing....

Top tip - Take butties as they were £4.75 each.

The Ink Spot

Dear Scribes. As a beginner I find it hard to source information and to find great tips. So I would like to run a little spot in the newsletter, built by us.

SUE COOPER

In the next issue the Spot will be about words to write. Where to find them, eg. web sites, books, in movies, sayings, children's rhymes, psalms, proverbs. Great or small. Daft or serious. Long or short. ANYTHING!

Something to share with each other. So when we are sitting there with nib poised over the paper, we will know what to write.

Can you email them to me at trevor.j.harris@btinternet.com ? I will put a few in the Spot and EVERYONE will be printed in a booklet and brought to the workshops.

I challenge you all – there's a quarter of jelly babies in it for the most unusual.

Love Sue.

Design Tips

We thought we would introduce a feature on 'Design Tips' to Subscribe, let us know if you find it useful or have contributions of your own - we'd love to hear from you. *TINA SCOTT*

Closure. The human brain is always looking for simplicity over complexity; pattern over randomness, we do this subconsciously and automatically. See in the example provided how you see first the circle and secondly the segment lines...

You can improve your design skills by being aware of this. Reduce the complexity or elements in your work and it can help to make it more

interesting. This is a common principle applied to logo design. Simple logos, where elements have been reduced so far as to allow the viewer to complete the 'pattern', are known to be very effective. Try it or look for examples in other people's work - it's ever so subtle, but very effective.



Colour Printing Workshop with Tina

Tina had kindly offered to give us an introduction into the complex world of colour printing. *DEBORAH MORTON*

It was perhaps slightly unfortunate that we had to squeeze this workshop in between the AGM and a demonstration by Peter Thornton on the folded pen – but at the same time, the subject is so involved that perhaps touching on it was sufficient!

Tina was brilliantly organised and brought samples of work to demonstrate the colour layers that go in to producing a final print. We were taken through each level, appreciating what the addition of another colour to the print would do. And then there were the colour swatches – books and books of them to choose the exact colour you want to use. Forget Cadmium Red or Windsor Blue – you need the number for the particular tone on the swatch. It made perfect sense – but you needed to know. The little colour patches that you see on the edge of newspapers or magazines are the exact colours that have

been used in printing out that specific copy.

There were also brochures which Tina looked at with us to discuss how many layers we thought had been involved in their production. Some of the simplest were surprisingly complex. Glossy brochures suddenly looked like mini-works of art rather than just bits of paper that you could then put in the recycling bin. Printing small business cards could be as complex or as simple as you wanted.

Those are the basic facts that I took on board – but Tina worked with us for an hour. I'm sure I have missed something, but taken on enough for my needs – which I hope is what everybody did. Many thanks Tina for a very useful mini-workshop!

York Scribes Exhibition

During our summer break Trev took me up to York for our wedding anniversary. *SUE COOPER*

While we were there we called into the convent in Blossom Street where the exhibition was held. All convents are quiet and this set the mood as we went through to the Calligraphy room.

The first piece I saw was by Sheila Moxon St Crispins Day written with something like bleach which removed the purple/blue background leaving creamy white lettering. It was impressive.

Beside it was a 'joined Italic hand' in a lilac lettering of 'Be not forgetful to certain strangers...' by Dorothy Wilkinson.

Then two pieces of writing with beautiful borders and gilding. I was hungry for more.. I moved quickly to Fred Scott's work, it looked like a Cola pen style and he had coloured in some of the spaces formed by the letters in subtle shades of oranges and lemons.

Then my eyes rested on Elizabeth Grave's piece such a gifted lady. Her layout, style, finish, colour, lettering etc was flawless. Each of her nine pieces were totally different, after the first three, I could easily point them out.

Another favourite was a Japanese blossom branch and a haiku written in a delicate size lettering, so elegant, by Brenda Finnegan. Next to that was three Koi carp with lines of calligraphy between them, so colourful. The most unusual one was a cat - but the body was made up of a verse! by Barbara Stokes. The simplest message was three bundles of twigs bound by a leaf and verses written between them. Finished off in a very deep frame.

The best idea from York I can bring to the Mercian scribes was a patchwork made by every member of the group. Each panel was unique, showing the personality of the Scribe. The whole project just came together and summed up the unity of the group. I would love so see this idea done by our group hopefully on display to the world next November...

Two “Local” Exhibitions

Both the City & Guilds Calligraphy Exhibition at Westhope College and the Shropshire Scribes Exhibition at Bridgnorth were advertised in the Edge magazine. Having missed the Oxford Scribes exhibition at Stratford, I made a point of putting these two in my diary and making an effort to get to them. *DEBORAH MORTON*

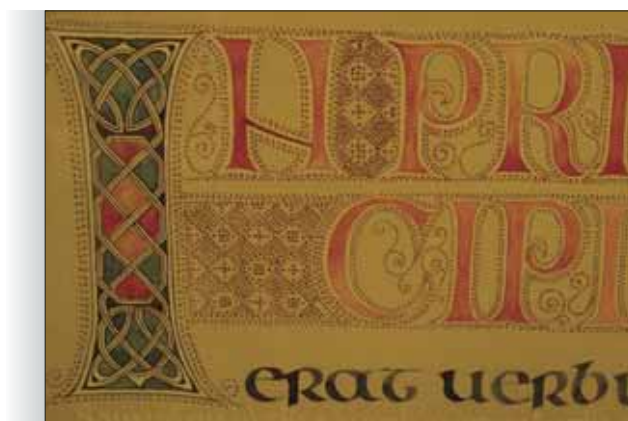
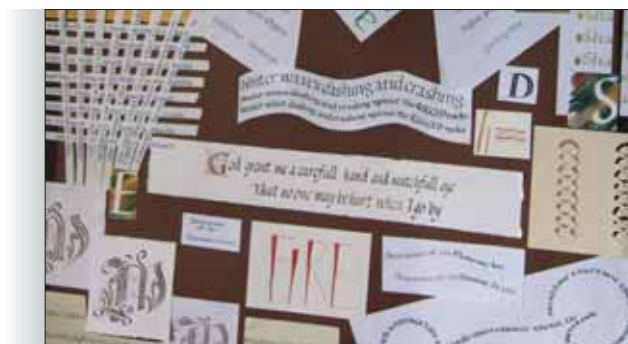
Westhope College was the first. In that a number of us are involved in the City & Guilds course at Lichfield College, I thought it would be interesting to go and report back. I know Tina managed to visit it too and was as excited by it as I was. The college is tucked away up a narrow country lane – it is a private house that has been converted into an art and craft centre. And it was a lovely venue. The exhibition was beautifully presented and the work of every student shown to best effect. There was calligraphy, ceramics, patchwork & quilting and creative embroidery. Each student had an area of his/her own to set up and best display their work. There was a lot of room for display and the impression created as you walked into each room was stunning. So much to look at and enjoy.

The calligraphy students had displayed all their work – the finished pieces and the background work and research for the entirety of the course they were on. It was very interesting to look through and see what other students do on a similar course. I met Linda Hayter, one of the tutors, and it was useful to talk through

some of the students work.

The second exhibition was at the library in Bridgnorth. Tina and I went together to this one – only to find that a meeting was being held in the library – all day! A phone call to check on the exhibition would have been a good idea – I do learn the hard way. We were advised to go and have a coffee and come back at lunch time when the room might be clear for a while. Luckily this is what happened, so we were able to see the Shropshire Scribes exhibition. It was lovely and worth the wait. The variety of subjects and approaches to work was so interesting – it always surprises me how styles of calligraphy vary so much.

Tina and I both signed the visitors book and left our contact details for workshop and membership information. It's not too far to go to Shrewsbury for additional workshops when we are feeling enthusiastic!



Sue's Travels Calligraphy 'n' Chips

So after the kiss and tell class at the College, Trevor and I walked to Lichfield Cathedral as there was a medieval market on. **SUE COOPER**

We met several ladies who giggled as they told Trevor his anatomy in my Calligraphy piece was wonderful!

We went anticlockwise around the grounds. We got a tray of chips to share and admired the beauty of the Birds of Prey.

We reached the front door of the Cathedral and guess what I spotted? A medieval scribes tent!

I went over to look at his display I loved his costume and his desk of leather books and writing slope. He had a bucket full of goose feathers. He showed me how to cut, clean and shape a quill. He did not put a reservoir in the quill, but he demonstrated how far the ink would go on one dip in the ink. I was surprised.

The day has so hot, his ox gall ink was drying up!

He showed me samples of parchment and paper. He wrote small pieces of medieval calligraphy. He even made samples of Elizabeth I signature with seal. He was wonderful discussing his work and shared so much knowledge, his enthusiasm was infectious.



I loved my time with him and came away with a quill.

You can always find Calligraphy everywhere you go!

Trafalgar Calligraphy

This summer I went to Portsmouth as Trevor is keen on Sail ships. Wooopie thought me. I'll take a good paperback. But I was as enthusiastic as him.

SUE COOPER

On the Trafalgar ship 250 years old, I found beautifully painted wooden panels showing all the battles it was in, another was the Coat of arms etc.

In the private quarters of Nelson, there was a writing slope.

In the museum next to the ship were letters from Nelson, such a tiny Copperplate hand, so beautiful. Another letter looked totally odd. A forgery thought I. Silly people. I wandered through the kids section and there were stencils of Nelsons signature that he had to teach himself to do with his left hand. He had lost his right hand in battle. So it wasn't a forgery, it

was by the great man himself using his left or only hand.

It cost £15.50 which includes going on the Trafalgar ship, going on the first Iron ship called Warrior, the Trafalgar Museum, seeing the Mary Rose ship - Henry VIII 's fighting ship, the museum of the Mary Rose and a boat trip around the harbour.

I recommend the food there. I had a Prawn filled jacket potato which was so big I couldn't carry it!

And there are handsome young sailors scattered around the place.

Canterbury Calligraphy

This summer I went to Canterbury as it is so old. It was a place of medieval pilgrimage. Also has history as the 'Capital' of England for a time. **SUE COOPER**

It cost £5.00 to get in so I made sure I got my moneys worth.

There are Memorial books. Roles of people who died in the different wars. The stained glass windows have Calligraphy too. Best was the tomb of the Black Prince. Around the edge of the top of the tomb were beautiful Black Lettering of who he was. The heraldic shields around the sides of the tomb were painted. His tunic was hung above the tomb and colourful.

The place were Thomas Becket was murdered has a small plate, flowers and a single peaceful candle.

Down in the crypt were fine examples of the riches of the church. The Bible covers of gold and inlaid with precious jewels were incredible.

Attached to the Cathedral through the cloisters is a library/archive. You must be registered with the library before you can get to the treasure.

We were allowed to sit and study a book written in 1592 by a young man of 19. It was a beautifully bound leather book of PAPER! It was like a fantastic exercise book to be

proudly presented to his teacher. There were watermarks in the paper. And it smelled... old.

He was well educated and used three types of lettering in both Old English and Latin. We slowly picked through his words and found this to be a true treasure. He told about the history of HIS England, his beloved Queen, his life. He also drew hundreds of coins that he had seen. He illustrated and wrote religious stories. He had poetry and even funny ditties. The thing I found memorable were his drawings of animals, especially the ones he was told about but never seen. The Rhino was drawn with metal armour for legs!!! This was how it was described to him! I came away after an hour of reading his thoughts, wanting to chat to him as he was so alive to me. We returned the cotton gloves and the book and entered the modern world.

These few words cannot sum up how I felt after such an insight into someone else's life. It was like travelling back in time.

The tea and scones were okay.



Useful Websites

Discovering interesting websites

SUE COOPER

I wanted to know what the Americans had in the form of Illuminated Manuscripts. The Philadelphia Museums web site is incredible. www.leavesofgold.org It explains how to make an Illuminated Manuscript and there stock of Manuscripts are on the web site. www.leavesofgold.org/learn/children/how_made/scribe.html is the page with a photo and lots of information. Go and wander and not get jet-lag!

When I need a walk through Calligraphy and have exhausted my books I go to www.cynscribe.com This website is split into English/French/Canadian/Australian sites. It covers everything eg Calligraphers, Suppliers, Colleges, Guilds etc. You can always find something.

Aberdeen Bestiary www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/bestiary.hti To help get around the web site: From the above website address, click on 'full index'. Then click on 'Translation and Transcription, and see wonderful manuscripts.

Try www.codcottage.freemove.co.uk This shows samples of Alphabets, a Gallery and History

and finally for this issue

www.sca.org.au/scribes/gallery4.htm Gives a step by step guide on how to make your own medieval manuscript.

Cambridge Illuminations - virtually anyway.

I haven't managed to get to the Cambridge Illuminations exhibition, but I will. **TINA SCOTT**

26 July and 11 December 2005 at the Fitzwilliam Museum and Cambridge University Library the Cambridge Illuminations Exhibition. I couldn't wait to go so just had to visit to the website and have a look. I'll give the web address so you can get looking at it straight away: <http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk>

The virtual tour of The Macclesfield Psalter is amazing. A photo gallery allows you to view 23 pgs, all can be magnified and scrolled around. The photography is super and the detail breath taking. The site is easy to use and you can get close-up to the manuscripts, albeit in cyberworld. I want to see the real ones so much more now.

If you have any useful contacts, web addresses or anything worth sharing with your fellow scribes, please get in touch and we'll publish them. Information and materials for calligraphy are so hard to come by that sharing is essential!



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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