



NEWSLETTER Summer 2015

[Editor: Brian Richardson]

Chairman's Notes

COMMITTEE NEWS

Annual Exhibition

Plans for the Annual Exhibition at High Cross Church in July are coming along well. Now it is over to you. Together with this Newsletter you will find 4 postcard invitations. These are for you and your family and friends to attend our Evening Reception on Thursday 16th July. Please distribute these liberally to everyone you know who might be interested. If you need more just let us know. The more the merrier!

Of course it is essential that there are lots of beautiful paintings in the exhibition. Once again it is over to you. Remember there are prizes to be won. The Winsland Prize for best watercolour/mixed media painting; The Gerry & Jill Seward Trophy for the People's Choice; The Themed Competition which this year is "Cosmos" and there is the Committee Prize for The Built Environment. This gives everyone plenty of scope for all kinds of ideas. Let's get painting!

Please note that the Submission Forms for entries must be in to Jenny Colquhoun by Friday 19th June 2015.

Liz Seward Workshop Saturday 17th October 2015

We are delighted that Liz Seward has agreed to give another workshop this year. The subject will be Acrylics and Mixed Media; there will be more details to follow nearer the time. The cost will be the same as last year which was £30 for the day from 10.30 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. at the art studio France Hill Drive where we meet every week.

Note this date in your diaries. There will be a limited number of places available so please register your interest by telephoning Carole Head on 01276 681889 or e-mailing carolehead@waitrose.com when you know that you are able to attend.

(The following reports are based on Sam Dauncey's write-ups for the website)

Watercolour Demonstration by Sera Knight, 13 March 2015

Sera was given only half a day's notice for this demo because the original speaker got laryngitis.

She had rummaged for a suitable photo, chosen what paper to use (Saunders Waterford High White), given some thought to composition (the photo and paper were different shapes) and started sketching in quite some detail, using Neocolor II instead of pencil.

As members drifted in she continued drawing, explaining that she liked the water-soluble Neocolor II because, unlike pencil, it did not leave permanent marks.

The subject was a sunrise in "Medieval Canterbury".

Normally she would wash over most of the paper with a background colour, let it dry and then get on with the rest of the painting. Tonight, time being short, she had decided to do much more drawing and to paint



individual areas, leaving naked white paper between them, so that colour did not bleed across.

She was using a thin 2" flat brush, fairly dry, starting with the dominant yellow (raw sienna) in the centre. As she worked around the paper she modified the colour, mixing in cerulean or cadmium yellow and introducing a grey made from orange and turquoise.

The sharp edge of the brush was generally kept vertical. The direction of the stroke followed the lines towards the perspective vanishing point.

It is amazing how much you can vary the size of mark made with a sharp flat brush. Just a little less pressure on one edge can shorten the mark until, if you use just the corner of the brush, it behaves much like a small round one. A round brush was used only when most of the paper had been covered.

There was some greenery opposite the taller buildings. This called for a much darker, quite strong green (Winsor blue and cadmium yellow) which could be cooled and darkened even more with some alizarin crimson.

Even darker, at the bottom, was a boat, painted in purple with a smaller (1"?) flat brush. The curves were done as short straight sections with the brush perpendicular to the paper.

There was a shadowed strip where one building was out of line with its neighbour: done with ultramarine and alizarine.

The patterns on the buildings (windows? shutters? half-timbering?) were indicated with single vertical and horizontal touches of the brush. This proved too stark, so she lightly washed some of it out.

So far, Sera had been painting mostly with either the dominant yellows or complementary shadows. It seemed as good a time as any to start adding orange specks of interest.

So, even before the coffee break she had reached the stage of making generally minor improvements.

In some areas she blurred detail, to make people look at the whole picture. In others she wanted detail, and so a rigger appeared. She added reflections using the sky colour - touched in a big roof to get the texture right.

To get a different dark she mixed burnt umber and ultramarine. Small runs were lifted out with a moist brush.

Suddenly we were addressing big areas again: The sky was painted over with turquoise. The reflections of the trees and houses were darkened substantially.

Whole areas were glazed thinly with unifying colours and to create aerial perspective (warmer, more orange colours in the foreground).

Don't be afraid to mix on the paper instead of in the palette, but be careful not to get mud.

The "magic brush" (simply white gouache) highlighted some edges and put lettering on a sign. Other edges, around a sign, a clock, windows etc. were defined by dark edges applied with the rigger.



By the end of the demo Sera had reached the stage where she needed to step back let the picture work on

her for a day or so. I had a message from her a few days later saying that "being watercolour it is best left light and fresh". So, she decided not to add anything to it.

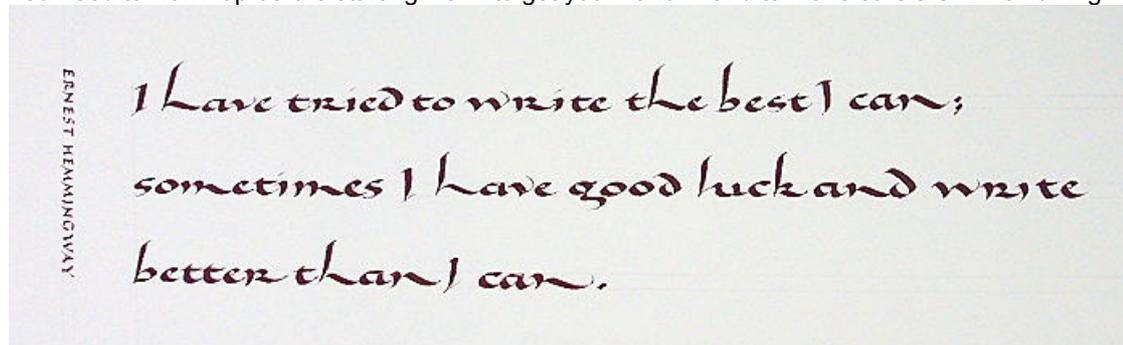
Thanks again very much Sera, especially for stepping in at such short notice.

There was certainly no feeling that it was "just another one of those stock demo paintings".

The evening benefited no end from being so fresh - we could almost hear you thinking as you worked.

Calligraphy Denonstration by Virginia Porter, 17 April

You need to warm up before starting work: to get your hand in and to make sure the ink is flowing.



Virginia used to design for De La Rue, the banknote and stamp people, but is now independent, doing small commissions and teaching.

Calligraphy is best done on a smooth surface: paper, parchment or if you are willing to pay a couple of hundred pounds a sheet, vellum made from the skin of a still-born calf. Acrylic ink will work on fabric.

The original writing implement was the quill but now metal nibs of various widths are generally used. These are very versatile because the width of the line can be controlled by the direction of the stroke. Dip pens (with their own built-in reservoirs) or calligraphic fountain pens are also used.

The ink can range from chinese sticks (which need some work to prepare the ink from the stick) to art shops' calligraphic inks, (which can be water-soluble or permanent acrylic-based, not shellac-based indian) to ordinary gouache (if you have the knack of diluting to the right consistency with distilled water).

Although calligraphy can include complex designs, tonight's demo concentrated on fairly simple script, starting with examples of some of the standard fonts.

Light pencil lines define the height of the text and a pen is chosen to give the required number of nib-widths for the font in question. Roman capitals (based on letters on Trajan's column), for example, need 7 nib-widths and a pen held at an angle of 30 degrees whilst Uncials need four nib-widths. For the more compact Insular Minuscules the pen is at about 45 degrees.

The alignment of the letters is always related to the shape of the "O", which may be round (as for Roman) or oval, perhaps aligned slightly off the vertical (as for Italic).

It is not commonly realised that the ascenders (the tops of letters like "d", "h" or "k") are normally taller than the capitals. Lower-case "t", on the other hand is a very short letter. Although there are standard fonts you may have to design your own shapes for non-traditional symbols: accents, question marks, apostrophes etc.

After coffee (and crisps and mini muffins!), Virginia showed us some more exciting aspects of her work.

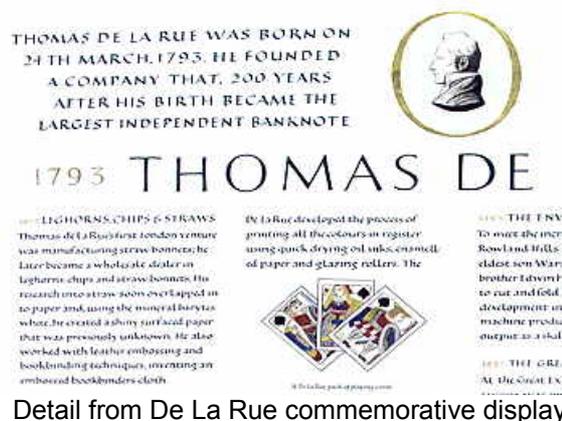
"Proper" work must be planned carefully: she would normally make a draft before starting a final version.

Virginia started one example with blue gouache. Part way through she loaded the nib with yellow and finally reverted to the blue. The result was an interesting spectrum-like succession of blues, greens and yellows.



Using a very broad nib with two slots cut into the edge, she put the blue in one side and the yellow in the other, again getting a range of colours, this time across the letters.

A 5-line music staff pen also produces interesting lettering.



Detail from De La Rue commemorative display

Virginia ended this most interesting evening by explaining to us a display she had produced before she left de la Rue to commemorate the 200th anniversary of its founders birth.

Painting Day at Tilsey Farm, 18 April

Early on the day our small party of 5 met at the riding stables on Tilsey Farm from where we set off along the dry dirt tracks to my chosen location, an old barn that was used in the film 'Nanny McPhee'. We seemed to travel for miles passing a house that was used in the film 'War Horse' and past bluebell woods, all the time I was hoping I had taken the right track. I did get it wrong once but fortunately was able to get us back on the right track.

Once we arrived at our location we felt ourselves miles away from anywhere (which indeed we were). We looked around the old barn buildings, a small pond with a wooden sluice gate and some very interesting trees, and everywhere we looked there was a picture to paint; we just had to decide which to choose.

Luckily I had arranged for a clear blue sky for the day which gave plenty of plenty of light and shadows. It was so peaceful and quiet apart from the odd bird song and the sound of brush or pencil crossing your paper. We spent about six hours painting and hopefully you will be able to see some of the paintings at our Annual Exhibition in July.

When we left our location I managed to take the wrong path and we left the farm by a different entrance and then back on to tarmac roads that took us home through the Surrey countryside.

A great day spent with fellow artists.

Peter Tuitt
FCSA Vice Chairman

Any contributions for the newsletter, preferably on an art-related theme, should be submitted to:

Brian Richardson, 6 Spring Woods, Sandhurst, Berks, GU47 8PX,
or by email to: bricha3691@aol.com.

Your views on any exhibitions you visit would be especially welcome.