

# THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST

## OF AUSTRALIA

### **Report by Vanessa Crisp 2001 Churchill Fellow**

To investigate the production,  
Marketing and distribution of  
calligraphic art products for the  
Australian and overseas markets  
Undertake advanced studies of  
Freehand lettering and design  
Examining its incorporation with  
Computer graphics.

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## **Introduction**

My first step for this incredible journey was taken in 1997. In June 2000, my plans became a reality. Everything was right ... the timing .. my readiness and passion for learning was at a peak. All this helped make my Fellowship the success it was.

Lettering has always been a major part in my life. From the time I could hold a pen – ‘I was writing.’ Although my first scratchings weren’t recognizable as letters I believed they were. My love of letters truly began when I learnt the alphabet and could write.

In 1982 I began a two year Showcard & Ticketwriting TAFE course and developed a range of lettering and design skills for commercial uses but recognized, even then, I needed a greater range of skills and industry knowledge if I was to be successful in doing freelance work. In 1985-1989 I taught the course at Casino TAFE. In 1986 I discovered calligraphy which was the catalyst for commencing my own business in 1989. Although I’m often referred to as a calligrapher I have always felt I’m more a lettering artist/designer, as the work I undertake is well out of the realm of “just” calligraphy and is rather fine art, calligraphy, ticketwriting, sign and graphic design intertwined.

Since the advent of computers, I’ve expanded my work to embrace this new technology but soon realized my limitations. The Fellowship came at a time when I’d exhausted all avenues of study in Australia that would benefit in furthering both my own skills and which could be offered through my teaching.

In 1998, the opening of our Gallery was another addition to my growing business. My work and husband Justin’s furniture were showcased along with other artists of the region and I could see a need to develop products to suit the gallery market. The direction I wanted to take was to learn from lettering artists and designers who were actively involved in product development and who specialized in the combined use of hand generated lettering and computer technology. This would assist me upon my return in helping develop products of my own as well for the artists we represent.

**A thousand mile journey begins with one step .....Lao Tse**

## Acknowledgements

To the people I met and studied with, (they are individually listed further in my report) I extend my gratitude and thanks as they so generously shared their knowledge, philosophy and approach to the different facets of their own work.

My thanks on the homefront ..

- To Justin and our two sons, Jacob and Jordan who gave me the inspiration and determination to keep going after my first application and to see it through until my return home.
- To my parents Jessica & Jim who are there when needed for both myself and the three 'boys.'
- To Margot Irwin, Vi Wilson, Helen Malone and Colleen Little for their continuous friendship and encouragement throughout my career.
- To Mary Cameron – a special friend and calligrapher who sadly passed away before I had realized this dream but whose spirit played a huge part in inspiring me on my calligraphic journey. She keeps my hand steady when I need it most. To you Mary, my sincere thanks.
- To the Churchill Trust – Meg Martin and Margaret Bell for their help in getting all the 'necessaries' finished before my departure date.
- and last but not least to Elvie Munday who is such a treasure and has been there all the way. To you Elvie, my sincere thanks as you never doubted I could do it.

## **Executive Summary**

Vanessa Crisp

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Self-Employed Lettering Artist/Designer – Trading as Top Cat Calligraphics & Director/Partner of the Paperbark Gallery.

### **Project Description**

- . To develop, produce and market calligraphic products for the Australian and overseas markets.
- . To undertake advanced calligraphic studies and their incorporation with computer graphics.
- . To further develop the range of topics in my teaching programs.

### **Highlights**

- . California: San Diego Urban Art Trail & The Getty Museum
- . Arizona: The Dick Beasley Collection
- . Pennsylvania: Sheila & Peter Waters – 2 week private tutorial
- . Georgia: Atlanta International Gift and Stationery Fair
- . Florida: Eliza Holliday private tutorial & Lakeside Design Studios
- . Massachusetts: 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of Lettering Artists in Boston.
- . Windsor Castle: Royal Archives and Library
- . Dublin: The Great Book of Ireland
- . Amsterdam: The Van Gogh Museum

### **Major Lessons Learned**

- . Product Development – conceptual designs to finished product. Market strategies, market research and line planning for new products. The need for quality, unique and affordable products.
- . The benefits of calligraphic font development for the wider use of calligraphy in the graphic design and gift industry.
- . The main benefits of a varied repertoire of calligraphic styles and medium applications
- . The importance of effective studio design and workstation organization.
- . The different means of self promotion by way of creating coordinated promotional kits.
- . The importance of establishing an artist's file.

## **Executive Summary cont.**

The avenues of study I undertook were as varied as the topics and applications I undertake here in Australia. These areas have given me a huge platform from which to work.

They include

:

. Through the development of my own range of products I will offer a product development consultancy service for artists who wish to do the same and establish an artist file so the right artwork/lettering can be sourced to suit the product being developed.

. Approach council and corporate bodies and put forward the beautification project ideas e.g. Urban Art Trail – San Diego with the view of implementing them in local communities. NB. Since my return I've been approached by our local surf club to help co-ordinate a community based beautification project with a view to incorporating elements of projects I saw overseas to lessen the incidences of vandalism of the premises.

. Further develop the subjects for teaching with Arts West QLD-Adult Education and Calligraphy Societies in which I am a member. Continue with Work Experience programs and incorporate new techniques for training.

## Programme

- Week 1      **Los Angeles and San Diego, CA**  
Lisa Engelbrecht  
Teri Kahan  
Barbara Close  
Randy Hasson – The Urban Art Trail  
James Copley Library
- Week 2      **Flagstaff, AR**  
Dick Beasley Memorial Workshop with Ieuan Rees  
Dick Beasley Collection
- Week 3      **St Louis MO**  
Rob Leuschke – Pen to Polish Workshop  
Charles Mullins  
Patricia Dressler
- Weeks 4&5   **Fairfield PA**  
Sheila and Peter Waters  
**Atlanta GA**  
International Gift & Stationery Trade Fair  
Papermaking Museum
- Week 6      **Amelia Island FL**  
Eliza Holliday
- Week 7      **Lake Mary FL**  
Joanne Fink – Lakeside Design
- Week 8      **Boston MA**  
21<sup>st</sup> International Calligraphy Conference – Stonehill College
- Week 9      **Ripon UK**  
Peter Thornton Masterclass – Grantley Hall
- Week 10     **London and Windsor UK**  
The Royal Archives – Windsor Castle – Royal Collection – London  
The British Library – The British Museum – The Tate Modern Gallery  
Rachel Yallop
- Week 11     **Dublin – Ireland**  
The Book of Kells  
The Great Book of Ireland  
Catherine McAuley Centre  
Denis Brown  
**Amsterdam – The Netherlands**  
Van Gogh Museum – The Rijksmuseum
- Week 12     **Chartwell and London UK**  
Chartwell and The Cabinet War Rooms  
The National Portrait Gallery – The National Art Gallery  
Crafts Council – Paper Exhibition – Victoria & Albert Museum

Programme undertaken between June 8<sup>th</sup> and September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2001

## FELLOWSHIP DESCRIPTION

United States – Los Angeles and San Diego                      Week 1    – 8<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> June  
Although no formal study was organized for this week it proved to be the perfect way to settle into what was to be an incredible 12 week journey.

**Lisa Engelbrecht**.....Commercial Calligraphy & Lettering on Fabric  
Lisa is a Lettering Artist and instructor from Long Beach, CA. For the past 25 years she has operated her business from a home-based studio and teaches the only two-year intensive lettering arts program of its kind in the United States at Cerritos College in Norwalk, California.  
Lisa has developed a range of applications for the lettering arts including Lettering on Fabric, which is where my interest of visiting her lay. Although I didn't organize any formal study with Lisa, she showed her vast collection of samples and finished work demonstrating the methods and material etc she uses. The imagination seemed to be the only limit using this medium.

She also shared her portfolio of commercial lettering which included

- . logo designs
- . expressive calligraphy
- . work on fabric for several publications, and chalk art projects.

Lisa was my first contact and host in Los Angeles and I'm grateful for the effort she put into welcoming a 'stranger' into her home and sharing her extensive knowledge, philosophy and approaches to all aspects of her dynamic work. She organized my transport and many visits and meetings with around 30 lettering artists in the southern California region in the short span of a week.

I attended a meeting of the regional committees of the Southern California Calligraphy Society and gained an insight into:

1. How they promote calligraphy and attract new members and more importantly keep those members actively interested.
2. The development of the new logo (which Lisa created) and its intended use in Workshop Programme Brochures, Calendar of events and any other promotional material the society requires.
3. How they manage and solve the ongoing problem of easing the workload from a core group that continuously lend support and valuable time to activities that benefit all members. This information I intend to share with the societies I belong to in Australia as they are faced with similar problems.

All the work I saw in her studio I could envisage being utilized in some form within my own work as well as incorporating it into my teaching programs.

Other activities organised included:

- . the Getty Museum – "illuminating Color Exhibition"
- . a visit to the Venice Beach beautification mural project which included poetry and lettering on concrete feature walls.
- . A visit to Plaza Pen & Art – largest art and calligraphy supply store in LA.
- . A social gathering and potluck afternoon of around 20 calligraphers.
- . a visit to home/studio of Sadie Tusuki – Huntington Beach Calligrapher.

## **Fellowship Description... cont**

**Teri Kahan** – Costa Mesa CA ... Lettering & Computer integration....

Teri is an award-winning lettering artist and digital designer of over 25 years. She has designed logos for many commercial and industrial clients and has created several digital fonts for the International Typeface Corporation. I first saw her work in a feature story in Somerset Studios, an American Paper/Lettering Arts magazine.

Teri earns her full time living from graphic arts and incorporates hand generated lettering with computer technology. She took me through her studio and showed me several works in progress including her work on the Southern California Calligraphy Society Logo that Lisa Engelbrecht created.

A hands-on demonstration of how she scanned Lisa's original logo design in photoshop proved most valuable, as it is a program with which I am already familiar. She used a variety of techniques to create a uniform and polished look to the hand-generated logo. Other programs she works in are Adobe Illustrator and Quark Express.

Of interest was her own self-promotion business stationery that included: bookmarks – business cards – and a spiral bound catalogue featuring her clients' list, logo samples – card design – and general graphic design work she undertakes. These were the basis of an ever-changing promotional kit that she produces in-house on her Epson Ink Printer. (A commercial printer is only used to print the covers.)

She also produces in-house, a range of calligraphic works printed on watercolour paper which utilize all the techniques of hand generated lettering and backgrounds, scanning, layering etc. A commercial service bureau is used when larger sizes are required.

Backgrounds are developed separate to the lettering then scanned and combined with the lettering in Photoshop. This application is valuable as it allows many components to be worked together with a variety of outcomes and applications possible from the same artwork instead of just one, as is the case with original work

Her client types and work practices were similar to mine and I wished I had had more time to see more of her work.

**Barbara Close** – LA Mirada/Fullerton, CA

week 1 cont.

Barbara Close is a freelance Lettering artist and teacher. My visit was organized by Lisa Engelbrecht and proved a great experience. She co-teaches the Lettering Program with Lisa at Cerritos College and in 2001 was the outgoing President for the Southern California Calligraphy Society for which she has incredible energy.

She is lettering consultant for Somerset Studios and actively seeks lettering art submissions from all over the world. (This information will be of benefit to Australian Lettering Artists wishing to have their work published in a high quality magazine).

## Fellowship Description ... cont

Of particular interest was a series of greeting cards she designed and created for a US greeting card company. The cards combined calligraphy with her own collaged paper backgrounds and photographic images.

The company still uses and resells the designs years after they were originally commissioned. She explained how a card design has a 3-year shelf life and is only reprinted if popular. This proves how important good design, colour and creative layouts are for the commercial viability of any product.

Barbara explained some of the ways of receiving payment for this type of work. Either a one-off flat fee is paid or an advanced fee plus royalty cheques are paid to the artist. Barbara chose the latter in the card design which has worked in her favour due to the popular nature of the designs.

Barbara also kindly arranged the following visits.

- . a half day visit to Disneyland which proved to be of great benefit and 'fun.' I photographed many simple but well designed building structures and various garden features that could be utilised in the beautification projects with local council groups with which I am involved.
- . to the Somerset Studio Magazine production center (including lunch with Editor – Sharilyn Miller) where I was shown all the submitted art work and given an insight into the enormous task of producing a high quality magazine plus a tour through the mail order warehouse which proved too tempting.
- . a papercraft workshop night held at Paper & Ink Art Store.

She also accompanied me to the Getty Museum Manuscript Reading Room. Something she had not been able to do until my visit. It was nice to have the opportunity to give back something for the kindness I had been extended.

## **Randy Hasson** – The San Diego Urban Art Trail, CA                      week 1 cont.

I first read about this project in Letter Arts Review and was fortunate to experience it first hand with one of the project artists, Randy Hasson, along with Jacqueline Lacy and Doug Boyd.

The Urban Art Trail, a Neighbourhood Art project was begun in mid 1998 by **Professor Candice Lope**, head of the Graphic Arts Department of San Diego City College, and her husband **Rafael Lopez**, an internationally known illustrator.

The trail was begun as an attempt to raise community pride in the downtown San Diego area, where graffiti, gang activity and drug dealing had come to be accepted as the norm.

## **Fellowship Description cont.**

Being a type design teacher, Candice wanted to convey the power of words to the community by making sidewalk poetry a major component of the Trail. It was then a group of lettering artists were organized to design and execute permanent calligraphy on the downtown sidewalks.

The project first began with the removal of graffiti from transformer boxes which was then replaced with colourful artwork. This was an important first step in the Trail's progress for two reasons:

- . the graffiti artists respect art and leave it alone.
- . these boxes were used as the local drug dealers' "offices."

By the community having formed a Neighbourhood Watch, the artwork in effect "marked the territory" for the community and the dealers found it easier to go somewhere else.

Initially it was planned to sandblast the lettering on the sidewalks but this approach proved too costly. Other alternatives were sought and a product called Relay was chosen. Relay is a resin that is mixed with cement and sand, with pigment added (usually acrylic) for colour. It can be thinned for brush application, or applied more thickly with a trowel (or as in the case of the UAT, a stencil brush) – but most importantly, it is permanent. Various methods of applying Relay were used. The most successful was achieved by slowly stippling on a thicker blend (paste-like consistency) of Relay with a stencil brush. Fine brushes were used for handwork and retouching.

The artists soon realized the limitations of time and the pitfalls of directly applying the lettering to the sidewalks so with the purchase of a plotter the artists could now work on their designs in their studios. The finished artwork was then scanned and processed in Photoshop, converted as vector art then cut as stencils. The plotter and computer allowed the creation of complex compositions to be easily transferred to the sidewalk.

The project has won a number of prestigious awards but more importantly it has made a difference... the area seems to have a smile on its face and it has created a place of urban magic. Quite a contrast to the previous 'feeling' of the area.

I can provide more detailed information and contacts for anyone wishing to pursue this type of project within Australia. I will approach our local council body to see whether some of the "Trail features" could be incorporated into any future beautification projects particularly any lettering features.

## **Fellowship Description ... cont.**

Week 1 cont.

### **The James Copley Library – La Jolla CA**

Randy Hasson very kindly organised a special viewing of 4 hand-lettered and bound one-off edition artist books of American calligrapher, **Suzanne Moore** that are part of the James Copley Library Collection. It was a thrill to be able to see her work first hand as I'd only previously seen reproductions in my books at home.

The quality of the letterforms, page design and decoration, and paste paper backgrounds were superb. Of the four books I viewed, one featured Australian wildlife, particularly birds, which whilst exquisitely beautiful, made me realise just how much I was already missing home.

I was fortunate to be granted permission to photograph some of the pages of the books for my own personal record.

This was one of many side trips that made for some wonderful surprises.

### **Ieuan Rees 'Italic Variation' – Flagstaff, AR.**

Week 2 18-22 June

*This was the first workshop I attended abroad and it was quite an experience. The workshop was the third annual Dick Beasley Memorial Workshop held in Flagstaff and organized by the late Dick Beasley's wife, June. Twenty participants from all over the States came together for this unique workshop.*

Ieuan Rees is an internationally known calligrapher and designer from Wales. His teaching style is vastly different to what I have experienced before and one that held a fascination for me in observing him. It will take months, or perhaps years, to digest all of the information he gave.

He doesn't just teach an alphabet but rather calligraphy and he teaches it through observance more than anything else. Like the other participants, I signed up for this class to hone and expand on my Italic hand but learned much more than that. An important lesson was one of the ability to sharpen our observation skills for use in self criticism/evaluation. He adds...the ability to get it right may take a while and he says "Never get too good too quickly" – very good advice.

According to Ieuan, workshops are too short so he teaches for the future. He teaches students to create letterforms that represent their own individuality and vitality. *(Something that is all too often lacking in many peoples' work.)*

## **Fellowship description cont.**

The first exercise we did was in the form of an introduction and Ieuan used this to gather information about us so he could understand the best teaching approach that would suit us individually.

Questions like:

- . Who are you and where are you from?
- . What do you hope to achieve?
- . What are your strengths and weaknesses?

were asked, but he advised us, to above all, be honest. This was a very revealing exercise, as most people wanted the same outcome. This being, to have a greater sense of purpose and 'spirit' to their lettering.

Ieuan interwove his teaching with pearls of wisdom. One that particularly struck me and I feel summed him up as a tutor was...

"A good teacher doesn't teach...he leads... and if he doesn't know an answer he will become a 'student' and explore possible solutions and will share with enthusiasm.

The important lessons learnt in this workshop were –

- . how to evaluate my own writing and be confident with my ability at whatever stage I am at.
- . Ieuan's use of visuals and stories to get a point across. This is a great teaching method, one which I wish to incorporate into my own teaching style more..
- . think through everything you do before you commit to paper.
- . always ask yourself "why?"
- . don't compromise your integrity
- . For more advanced students, teach without exemplars so there is no tension – only comfort, no labour in having to achieve same as teacher. Students achieve more satisfying results when they can write – then think.
- . drawing makes better calligraphers. It is the difference between craft calligraphers and art calligraphers..

## **Dick Beasley Calligraphy Collection – Flagstaff AR**

Week 2 cont

The late Dick Beasley, noted calligrapher and multi-media artist, was the initial reason for my visiting Flagstaff. I made enquiries to his wife, June, as to whether a viewing of his collection could be arranged. She said it was the first request she'd had of this kind and would gladly be of assistance. I planned it to coincide with the memorial workshop

I have always been influenced by Dick's work so it was a privilege to see the enormous body of work that Dick had produced over some twenty years

**Footnote:** June organized my transport to and from Phoenix and accommodation with Mary Finne, another inspiring calligrapher who was one of the workshop participants. Mary shared her philosophy and approach to her teaching at Northern Arizona University. She continued teaching the calligraphy program at NAU after Dick passed away. My grateful thanks to Mary and Jack for a most memorable stay.

### **Fellowship description cont.**

In viewing the collection, I became more aware of his high level of artistic ability and innovation that led him to explore many mediums including graphic design, painting, printmaking, ceramics, weaving, metalworking, wood carving and fine art computer imaging. For him the alphabet was a means through which he could explore abstract forms and prove that letterforms could become abstract carriers of emotion. His use of vibrant colours and complex images were also unequalled in their time, and possibly still are.

I extend my sincere thanks to June Beasley for the opportunity to see this most amazing collection and share an insight with her into the incredible life of 'Beas', as he was affectionately known. Sadly Dick passed away in 1992, ironically at the annual calligraphy conference, but lives on in those peoples' lives he touched. I paid my respects by visiting his grave and seeing the beautifully carved headstone that June had commissioned Ieuan to do.

**Rob Leuschke** – 'Pen to Polish' St Louis, MO

Week 3 23June-2 July.

Rob Leuschke is a freelance lettering artist and graphic designer with emphasis on typography and hand lettering. He has been director and creative artist for companies such as Hallmark Cards Inc. His work consists of a variety of products in industries such as social expression, advertising and visual communications and multimedia.

He has extensive computer experience using software programs like Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe PageMaker, Adobe Dimensions, Typestyle, Fontographer and numerous other utility programs.

Rob kindly organized his 'Pen to Polish' Workshop to coincide with my visit. Rob introduced the workshop with his biography and review of work samples. There were several demonstrations throughout the workshop that showed the methods of scanning images and working them to a more polished state. He also demonstrated briefly how he develops his own fonts in the program Fontographer.

He took us through the following procedures in business practices.

- . studio set-up – tools and equipment
- . creation of a sample sheet of your work – portfolio building
- . how to get new clientele through networking
- . pricing
- . building your business – the importance of risk taking.

We covered all aspects of creative lettering including

- . the creation of roughs
- . ideas for expressive lettering
- . digitizing the design on a Macintosh computer
- . what a client looks for in commercial lettering.
- . redesigning poor quality package design
- . elements of good design
- . advantages of working spontaneously

## **Fellowship description cont. ....Rob Leuschke cont.**

The most important goal learned was

- . how to bring a piece to a polished state both manually and with the use of a computer.
- . the development of my own lettering styles as fonts for reproduction.

Whilst in St Louis I met with noted calligrapher, Charles Mullines, and watched his work in progress for a client who didn't want calligraphy, but a calligraphic computer font. It was interesting to see a 'word processing job' being done from a calligrapher's point of view, the addition of a myriad of flourishes that were in his font library transformed the piece out of the normal word processing realm.

Other places of interest I visited included:

- . The Saint Louis Art Museum and the St Louis History Museum
- . Cathedral Basilica of St Louis – with the largest mosaic collection in the world
- . St Louis Galleria – Shopping Centre – showcasing one of the largest private commissions of public and contemporary art in America.
- . The Gateway Arch
- . various specialty gift stores that provided a wealth of product range ideas that could be utilised in my own product development.

**Sheila Waters** – Fairfield PA

Weeks 4 & 5 2<sup>nd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> July

Sheila Waters is an internationally known teacher and calligraphic artist. She trained at the Royal College of Art, London and was elected a Fellow of the prestigious London Society for Scribes and illuminators in 1951. Her work has been widely exhibited and is owned by royalty, private collectors, libraries and institutions around the world.

*In 1988 I was privileged to be part of a 12-day workshop on the Gold Coast, Qld with Sheila on her first and only visit to Australia. She greatly influenced the direction my work and career took after her workshop and the knowledge gained is still in use today.*

I contacted Sheila with regard to the possibility of undertaking private study with her as part of my trip and she kindly obliged. I was the first person to do so, so I was very grateful for the opportunity. The time spent in her studio and home was the highlight of my fellowship.

We set a study programme for the 12 days and kept spare time available each day for the purpose of critiquing my work and viewing the large volume of her life's work. I gained a much deeper insight into the variety of commissions she has undertaken over the past 50 years. The commitment and dedication she has extended to the calligraphic arts is unsurpassed.

## **Fellowship Description cont.**

### **Sheila Waters cont.**

The study programme included:

- . Fine tuning of known calligraphic hands (including variations).
- . Introduction of new hands and their variations.
- . Understanding colour charts and colour mixing – the preparation of colour charts based on a double primary palette (for future reference).
- . Simple gilding – non-traditional method more suited to commercial applications.
- . Aspects of layout and design.
- . Studio layout and organization – *this is something I put into place immediately upon my return. We drew a floor plan of my studio and redesigned the workstation areas to maximize efficiency*
- . Work on computer with husband, Peter, demonstrating the requirements for in-house printing, e.g. scanning, resolutions, colour adjustment etc.  
*(They presently print a range of Sheila's work. I work on the same computer at home so this was very beneficial)..*
- . Constant self-evaluation and formal critiquing – teaching methods.
- . Time viewing and reading the huge resource material and library of books in her collection including Peter's beautifully designed and hand bound books.

These 12 days were, as they say, what dreams are made of. The wealth of information Sheila and Peter shared went beyond what I could ever have expected. The resource material alone will prove invaluable in both my own growth and in my teaching for many years to come. I feel very honoured to have shared the lives of these two highly talented and professional people even if only for a short time.

## **International Gift & Stationery Fair – Atlanta GA**

13<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> July

The Atlanta International Gift & Stationery Fair is an annual event on the world gift fair calendar. It is one of the largest trade fairs of its kind in the world so I was glad of the opportunity to attend,.

I made valuable industry contacts and networked with many of the exhibitors. Resource material was readily available which I collected for idea prompts for my own product development and marketing

### **Fellowship Description cont.**

The benefit of attending a Fair this size was the opportunity to see the very diverse and unique product lines on display. e.g. general gifts, handcrafted products, stationery, collectibles, accent furnishings, home décor and furnishings, and paper

### **International Gift & Stationery Fair cont.**

products. The opportunity to meet with artists, manufacturers and reps to discuss their individual process of research, development and marketing of their products for the retail trade also proved beneficial.

I gained new ideas for utilizing the same design for many different products and it also prepared me for my visit with Joanne Find.

I attended the mini workshops/demonstrations that were held throughout the day which included:

- . Dramatic retail display &
- . How to maximise sales through creative display.

Whilst in Atlanta, my wonderful hosts were **Carol and Ken Gray**. Carol is a freelance commercial calligrapher, teacher and is an active committee member of the 'Friends of the Alphabet' - Atlanta's calligraphy society. I visited her studio, which is one of the few that weren't home based. She undertakes all manner of commissioned work from citations to wedding stationery.

She arranged a visit to The Robert C Williams' American Museum of Paper Making which takes you on a journey in history from 200BC, and follows paper making from its earliest forms to the manufacturing technology of today. Most interesting displays.

An exhibition of US paper artist, Marjorie Tomchuk, 'Paper Waves' featuring her exquisite embossing on handmade paper was one of the nice surprises I encountered along the way.

**Eliza Holiday** – Amelia Island FL – Brush Lettering      Week 6      18th-20<sup>th</sup> July]

Eliza Holliday is a freelance lettering designer and instructor specialising in brush lettering. Her client base for the past twenty-five years has principally been in packaging design, advertising and book publishing. She is co-author of the instructional manual Brush Lettering with Marilyn Reaves.

## **Eliza Holiday cont**

My studies with Eliza covered the techniques and applications of pointed and edge brush lettering. *Like my time with Sheila Waters, this was the first time Eliza had taken in a private student.*

As this was my first instruction in Brush Lettering, Eliza taught me as an advanced beginner because letterform and construction was already part of my skill base.

A study programme was set which covered more than I expected possible in the five days I was there. This included:

- . introduction to the edged and pointed brush – styles included Roman Capitals, Foundational, Flourished Caps, Italics and a variety of styles Eliza has developed.
- . application of brush lettering for different surfaces – i.e. papers, canvas etc.
- . disciplined writing exercises – for control and consistency of form, weight etc.
- . consistency and paletting technique for brush lettering.
- . paste paper techniques.
- . viewing her large collection of client work as well as her own creative portfolio or work which included her new word painting technique and hand made book journals.

Since my return this study has proved very beneficial, allowing a more varied repertoire of styles for incorporation to my work with local Council. It will be an inclusion to my teaching programmes as its versatility and varied application make it suitable for students who wish to incorporate it in commercial work.

Eliza did several ‘live studio’ demonstrations whilst I was there which were immensely important in learning the finer characteristics of this letter form. She is a gifted teacher and professional in all aspects of her work. My sincere thanks to her for giving me the opportunity to expand my knowledge so greatly in such a short time period.

**Footnote:** Eliza kindly organized a ‘potluck’ and gathering of calligraphers from the region. I gave a talk about the Fellowship and my travels thus far, and heard of their involvement and work in the lettering arts. I met up with three of these people again in Boston at a conference so it was a great opportunity to catch up and exchange stories once again.

## **Fellowship Description cont.**

**Joanne Fink** – Lakeside Design-Product Development      Week 7   21<sup>st</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> July  
Lake Mary, FL

Joanne Fink is a prolific designer, lettering artist, consultant, lecturer and writer of several industry related books. She is a three time Louie Award winner for her greeting card designs. She is a leader in her field and her dedication and vision for the lettering arts and greeting card industry was what led me to include a visit to her studio.

Lakeside Design is the studio of Joanne Fink which offers a full range of services including:

- . concept and product development
- . line planning
- . art direction
- . co-ordination of the production process and product launches
- . catalogue and web site design
- . lettering and logo design
- . vendor sourcing
- . artist sourcing by way of the studio's extensive artist files.

I oversaw works in progress which included:

- . catalogue design – a new cover for a recipe book for an ongoing client
- . product development and art direction – clients visited the studio and I sat in on the meeting while they discussed the stage their product was at and the next strategies needed to bring the product to its finished state. This included its launch date, marketing and tailoring its place in the market.
- . Kattubahs being inscribed = these are Jewish wedding certificates that Joanne has designed and printed then individually inscribes with client's details.

I spent time browsing through

- . the artists' files which gave me an insight to ways of developing my own artist's file and portfolios.
- . original artwork used for products such as mugs – greeting cards etc.
- . Joanne's extensive library of industry magazines and lettering arts books
- . the products that have been developed and sample products sent to the studio.

This was a week well spent. It set firmer lines of direction and approach for my own product range and how to advise other artists who wish to do the same. Joanne also offered to give support, if needed, in any stage of this process,. Her extensive knowledge, energy and dynamics set her apart in the field.

To Joanne, my sincere thanks.

## Fellowship Description.. cont

**2001: A Calligraphic Odyssey .. Boston MA**  
August

Week 8 28<sup>th</sup> July-4<sup>th</sup>

The 21st International Conference for Lettering Artists marked the last week of my time in the USA and was quite the grand finale.

*In making my class selection for the conference I deliberated about the benefits of each course for both myself and for usefulness in my teaching. I chose **Randy Hasson**'s class – Text & Texture : Calligraphy on Artist's Canvas which was the 'best' workshop I attended whilst away.*

Randy Hasson is an award –winning lettering artist and illustrator in one very dynamic and powerful, yet modest, package. He was a participant in the Urban Art Trial sidewalk calligraphy project in San Diego. He has been a lecturer for several calligraphy societies and conferences since 1990. His artistic style incorporates calligraphy and illustration into paintings on large canvases using acrylic paint and inks.

Prior to the conference, all class participants chose a subject/theme, researched and collected suitable quotes to base their painting on. I had initially chosen 'Children' in a general sense, but my painting soon became more personal and featured images of my two sons, Jacob and Jordan, and the emotions I, as a mother, had experienced since leaving them in June.

*I might add that my work was not the only one to create such emotion. All participants were female and it was quite an emotionally charged group, to say the least.*

We experimented using a variety of media to achieve staining effects and coloured backgrounds, layered lettering, imagery and textural effects.

As the canvases developed we had daily group discussions and critiques that allowed us to talk about the decisions we'd made concerning composition, design, colour and textural effects. It gave us the opportunity to hear the viewpoints of others in regard to how they worked through their creative process as well as offering ideas and solutions if required. (This was a highly valuable exercise for us all.)

We covered all aspects of creating a calligraphic painting.  
These included:

- . message – research/background, theme, and interpretation
- . style – e.g. realistic/abstract or the combination of both
- . contrasting elements of lettering – image/design and transparency vs opacity
- . composition
- . creation of depth and texture
- . image – style of painting, methods of transfer, stamping etc.
- . levels of viewing – overall impression, feature, image and text etc.

## **Fellowship Description cont.**

Randy also had several handout sheets which acted as ‘things to consider’ when beginning new works. As an instructor, Randy has the unique ability to ‘bring out the best’ in each individual. He dared us to attempt things we didn’t feel we had the ability to do and helped us maintain our confidence at all times. His teaching style creates a relaxed atmosphere in a class that is paramount to allowing ideas to develop. No two canvases were the same and our work didn’t become a clone of his.

He is one of those rare finds – a gifted instructor who leads – but doesn’t control. For his professionalism and inspiring nature I am grateful for choosing his class.

## **UNITED KINGDOM**

**Peter Thornton**

Week 9      4<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> August

Calligraphy Masterclass – Grantley Hall – Ripon UK.

Peter Thornton has been a professional calligrapher and teacher for the past 24 years. He has taught in the US for 20 years attending International Conferences and Societies for Workshops. He regularly teaches at several Adult Education Residential Centres in the UK.

I wanted to undertake study with Peter because of the spontaneous and lively nature of his work. He has developed a very individual style of expressive lettering and I wished to learn the methods for developing it for my own lettering.

He organises an annual 5 day residential course at Grantley Hall. The peaceful setting at Grantley complimented the experience of attending an intense workshop like this. The course structure enabled work to be at our own pace and Peter critiqued and offered solutions as required..

What would happen if we”.... Was a base we worked from in making decisions about letter design based on the historical models. This gave several platforms for contemporary styles to be developed.

The course covered many subjects including:

- . White-on-white on Japanese paper.
- . Roman Capitals and their variations.
- . Built up Capitals using a pressure and release technique with pencil and nibs.
- . A calligraphic autobiography project
- . Design and layout.
- . Using lettering to create emotion and a mood reflective of the written content.
- . Tool adjustment and suitability.
- . Creating contrasts in letter design.

Peter did several hands-on demonstrations including some exquisite gilding due to the perfect ‘gilding conditions’.

## **Fellowship Description cont.**

The timing of this course was suitable to all I had learnt over the previous 8 weeks. It allowed a greater freedom to be obtained due to the intense discipline I had sustained to this point. From the discipline came a new confidence and freedom. There was a noticeable change in my perception and execution of the construction and form. This will allow a broader range of styles to be created which is necessary for the many disciplines to which my work applies.

### **London – UK**

Week 10 11<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> August

London marked the last of my formal study. This allowed me to use this time to visit the many museums, collections, galleries, paper merchants and art supply stores that are to be found in this culturally rich and historic city.

I was met by close friend, David Wheeler, who is Senior Conservator of Furniture and Decorative Arts for the Royal Collection.

*Justin, my husband and 1996 Churchill Fellow, had met David when on his Fellowship. He has visited us in Australia twice since, so it was lovely to catch up again in his part of the world.*

A tour of the Marlborough House workshops left me speechless as I viewed the priceless works of art being repaired and prepared for the exhibition for the opening of the new Queen's Gallery at Buckingham Palace. To say I got the 'royal treatment' is indeed an understatement.

I was fortunate enough to watch David on several occasions as he worked. His conservation work on a highly decorated and painted cabinet was being painstakingly restored to a standard befitting of the exhibition. I gained a wonderful insight into the work carried out in the workshop and I have a greater appreciation of the skill and dedication of the staff who work on these priceless treasures.

The many places in London I visited included:

- . The British Museum
- . The British Library – an illuminated manuscript exhibition
- . The Victoria & Albert Museum – time spent in the Print Room viewing over 50 historic manuscripts.
- . The Tate Modern Gallery
- . The Crafts Council Gallery – Paper Exhibition – a fascinating collection of works created from paper, including sculpture – casting – collage etc.
- . Cornellisons Art Store – one of London's oldest art supply stores
- . Faulkner Fine Papers – a specialty paper merchant
- . The National Art Gallery
- . The National Portrait Gallery
- . Harrods Department Store
- . Cabinet War Rooms
- . Numerous gift and stationery specialty stores.

## **Fellowship Description cont.**

I also arranged to meet with London-based lettering artist and teacher **Rachel Yallop**. Rachel works as a freelance calligrapher/designer and has written and co-authored several books.

Her time was limited as she had just returned from the US having attended the Boston Conference - so a day visit was arranged prior to leaving Australia. I was shown through her extensive portfolio of works and her home studio. Her work applications include logo design, expressive lettering for packaging, advertisement and graphic design studios etc. We shared a fascinating insight into our calligraphic approaches and philosophy and discovered many parallels in how we work and deal with working alone, our creative process, how we overcome creative block etc. Although only a short visit it was well and truly work it.

## **IRELAND**

**Dublin**

Week 11

18<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> August

My time in Dublin was probably the most rewarding city experience I had whilst away. Experiencing the Irish arts, culture and history was one I won't easily forget. I also had the chance to be reunited with my younger brother who I last saw at my Fellowship Ceremony at Government House twelve months prior. He has graphic arts background also, so this made for a memorable visit to the Book of Kells.

I stayed in the accommodation quarters of Trinity College, which were central to all activities I wished to see. My initial reason for wanting to include Dublin in my itinerary was to see first hand the '**Book of Kells**' housed in the Trinity College Library. I didn't factor into it the surprises and opportunities which would be made available to me once there.

**The Book of Kells** – 'Turning Darkness into Light' Exhibition was, to say the least, a very moving yet inspirational experience. I had, throughout my Fellowship, been discussing the emotion and philosophical approaches many calligraphers go through when working and I found here I wished that I had the opportunity to know more about who the scribes, who worked on this monumental work, were as 'people'.

We spent over 3 hours in the Exhibition and I got much more viewing time than I thought would be possible, given it was the height of the busy summer season. Enquiries were made as to whether a tour and visit of the College Bindery could be made possible. I was met by Ray Jordan and taken through various works in progress and shown all manner of restoration techniques they undertake. It was rewarding to know some of the bookbinders they spoke of, and they were pleased I'd had the opportunity to meet and stay with Peter Waters in the US and meet briefly with Richard Day from the Windsor Castle Bindery.

## **Fellowship Description cont.**

### **Dublin cont.**

A chance enquiry while in the Bindery led to a phone call being made to Poetry Ireland at Dublin Castle that located 'The Great Book of Ireland'. It's location had alluded me before leaving Australia, so it was wonderful to find it and have the opportunity to view it uninterrupted for 3 hours.

The Great Book of Ireland was published in 1991 and contains the work of 140 poets, 120 visual artists and 9 composers and was unified by calligrapher, Denis Brown. (*I had previously studied with Denis during his two visits to Australia*).

It is a single volume hand made book of poems, on vellum, which contains artists images interpreting the poems and when all contributors had finished their work on the pages Denis, along with design consultant, Trevor Scott, worked calligraphy onto the pages to provide the flow of continuity throughout the book. To say it was a daunting task is an understatement as each contributor worked directly onto the vellum pages, and in some cases the vellum had a life of its own.

It is a great work showcasing contemporary calligraphy in a mediaeval form.

Permission was granted to photograph as much of the book as I wanted and it became difficult to decide which not to photograph.

My thanks to Ray Jordan for making a visit possible and to Joe Woods, Director of Poetry Ireland, where the book is now housed.

Whilst in Dublin I had the opportunity to meet with Denis Brown and spend time viewing his latest work and hear of the direction his work has taken since undertaking music studies 3 years ago. He will be incorporating the music he has been composing with a new website of his current work. A very exciting concept that I feel will be worth seeing when complete.

Another visit I had partially organized before leaving proved to be yet another surprise. The Yamba 'Star of the Sea' Retreat and Conference Centre run by the Sisters of Mercy Centre, Yamba, commissioned me to design and calligraphy their mission statement. When I delivered the piece I enquired about the beautiful illuminations that adorned the walls. The Director, Rosie Carroll, told me they dated back to the 1830's and were by one of the Sisters of Mercy from the Catherine McAuley Centre in Dublin. She added that she was taking a 3 years appointment as Director of the Centre and that she'd be there when I was there.

I arrived and was treated to a memorable afternoon going through the archives that contain the history of the Centre and the manuscripts and illuminations I had seen in Yamba. A tour of the Centre including the Chapel Gift Shop and Catherin's room and grave gave me a greater insight into this wonderful organization. Several Australian Sisters were there at the time and it was an opportunity to speak about the Trust and my Fellowship.

My thanks to Rosie for extending me such a warm welcome.

## **Fellowship Description .. cont.**

### **THE NETHERLANDS**

**Amsterdam**

Week 11-12 cont.

24<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> August

The Van Gogh Museum has the world's largest collection of works by Van Gogh. It houses more than 200 paintings including many famous masterpieces. Throughout my art studies at school I was highly influenced by Van Gogh's life and work so felt it important to include as part of my Fellowship studies.

The collection is exhibited in chronological order which gives you a tremendous insight into his own development as an artist. The struggles, that are well documented in his life story, are clearly evident at times in his work and I found myself feeling very emotional when contemplating the effect it must have had on him when his work wasn't being accepted by his peers and the art world in his time. I related it to mine and others struggles when, at times, we doubt our own ability. But it is his legacy that saw me only one of millions that wish to reverse the work of such an extraordinary and passionate person and above all, a truly original master.

The Gift Shop offered another dimension to his work and I wondered how he would feel if he could see the appreciation and value his work carries to this day.

It has many product items available and I was able to purchase some for samples to prompt me upon my return. The presentation and packaging ideas were of particular interest.

An exhibition at the Van Gogh Museum of works by artist, Paul Signac, in the pointillist style was another surprise. There were over 40 large works on display, which showed Van Gogh may have influenced him in developing his style of painting.

Another highlight was my visit to the Rijksmuseum where I was able to visit the Furniture Conservation Workshop and meet with Paul and Dominique whom Justin had worked with whilst on his Fellowship. It was wonderful to still see evidence of Justin there by way of sample marquetry panels and drawings he had completed whilst working there 5 years ago. They showed me their works in progress and spoke highly of Justin and the achievements and opportunities that have been made available to both of us through the Churchill Fellowships.

## **Fellowship Description cont.**

**Chartwell == Kent**

week 12

28<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> August

*My return to London marked the last week of my travels with the final destination being my return flight to Australia. My close friend and colleague Margot Irwin made a promise four years earlier that if and when I 'got' a Fellowship she would fly to England and share some of my travels with me. I left some of my London sites to share with her and one of those destinations was Chartwell.*

We spent a full day meandering around the estate and just soaking up the atmosphere of Sir Winston's home and magnificent gardens. I introduced myself as a Churchill Fellow and one of the gentlemen volunteers talked to us more in depth about Sir Winston. I was quite taken by his studio and of how prolific a painter he was, but could appreciate how necessary it must have been at times to have this release when the pressures of his work became too great.

I felt extremely honoured to be a Churchill Fellow whilst at Chartwell and gained an immense feeling of pride and felt indebted to the greatness of this man who influenced key moments in the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The Gift Shop became a great source for product and display ideas and once again I purchased several gifts for use as samples. I also saw there was an opportunity to develop a new product for them so when things quieten down a little, I will further explore and research the possibilities of developing another line for the Gift Shop and Cabinet War Rooms in London.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The experience and knowledge gained from my Churchill Fellowship has been of considerable benefit.

The opportunity to undertake intense study of this nature is presently unavailable in Australia so I will be interested in helping address this problem, initially through further development of my teaching programs.

The Fellowship provided me with a wealth of information that included:

- . product development and resource information
- . industry contacts

a wider application and skill base of hand-generated lettering and its incorporation with computer technology.

business planning and marketing strategies

a greater appreciation of the calligraphic and visual arts throughout history

new concepts in teaching methods and subject matter

promotion ideas for calligraphy societies in Australia

I will develop a range of my own calligraphic products for the gift and stationery industry and work in a consultancy capacity offering assistance to other artists who wish to develop products of their own.

I will continue to participate in Work Experience Programs through schools and TAFE, and incorporate knowledge gained.

I will provide workshops and offer to speak to calligraphy societies, schools and art and craft groups, community organizations and fellow lettering artists of my experiences from the studies as a Churchill Fellow.

As a result of this Fellowship I have made lifetime friends and acquaintances from the many places and institutions I visited. Many opportunities made available to me were as a direct result of being a Churchill Fellow.

I offer my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Churchill Trust of Australia and look forward to a continued association with the Trust and the Churchill Fellows' Association of NSW.

**Vanessa Crisp – 2001 Churchill Fellow**