

## TAS Mid-Sussex Calligraphy Project in 2019.



I am the Young Arts volunteer for the Arts Society Mid-Sussex along with Jane Roche and we have co-ordinated this Young Arts Project in conjunction with our local charity funded Ditchling Museum in the heart of Middle Sussex. I wanted my idea for a Young Arts Project to include a connection with the local artisan heritage of Middle Sussex and looked to the village of Ditchling where, at the turn of the century it became a magnet for stonemasons and lettering artists to live and work. Edward Johnston, who revived the craft of calligraphy and designed the type face and logo for the London Underground Railway, pioneered lettering and typeface. He taught and was a great friend of Eric Gill who ran the commune of artists and craftsmen on Ditchling Common. Work from the community is on permanent exhibition at the Ditchling Museum.

It is the understanding of the broad edge pen which serves calligraphy as a route for all lettering which encompasses the design world in many aspects such as legibility, logo and letterhead design, illuminated addresses, benefactors books, family trees, designs for certificates, diploma and awards, monograms, memorials and remembrance books, glass

family trees, designs for certificates, diploma and awards, monograms, memorials and remembrance books, glass engraving design, stone letter carving, font design, presentation addresses, invitations, visitors books, wedding stationary, bookplate designs, decorative maps, heraldry, illumination and gilding and many more applications of this art form.

Inspired by Ditchling's past heritage, I thought a calligraphy Masterclass for a Young Arts project would be appropriate and on trend. The ancient art form of calligraphy can be beautiful in itself, as can be seen in the ancient scripts. For example, Japanese calligraphy combines the Hiku written verse beautifully to form a picture worthy of framing. Whilst calligraphy is perhaps a more traditional precise skill, creative writing is a freer modern approach. So, to broaden the appeal for younger people, we set up a one-day class for each aspect of the craft to give more choice.

I approached the museum in Ditchling, which offered collaborative support and a large learning studio space where the workshops could take place. Currently the museum only runs educational workshops for children under 10, so they were keen to support an older age group funded by us. Patricia Gidney, Ditchling renowned calligrapher was invited to teach the calligraphy Masterclass and Patrick Knowles from Brighton, to take the creative lettering Masterclass. The professional lettering artists, as part of the class, included professional career pointers.

Patricia trained at the Roehampton Institute of Higher Education and since the 1980's has worked to commissions including work for the BBC, St Pauls Cathedral and Clarence House, to name a few and taught the craft. She teaches educational workshops at West Dean and at her studio and is very aware that young people should be encouraged to help keep the craft alive. She was co-founder of the Edward Johnston Foundation, which was set up for this purpose and donated a beautiful catalogue of calligraphy along with a calligraphy pen and exemplars for each student attending her Masterclass. She has produced various books and publications and is a fellow of The Society of Scribes and Illuminators. Through Patricia, The Wynkyn de Worde Society for printers and designers were invited to sponsor the project. Wynkyn de Worde is a

registered charitable society and was set up to encourage the teaching of calligraphy and supports educational projects.

Patrick Knowles has over twenty five years commercial experience as a lettering artist, book cover designer and illustrator, working in a wide variety of media including the traditional to digital, photo-real 3D modelling and photography. He works both within book publishing and general design/advertising.

So, having achieved the teaching support of two eminent lettering artists we set about organising when the workshops should be held and what age of student should be to attend. It was decided that 15-18 yr olds would be our target age (especially to include anyone who was thinking about a career in the arts) and to wait until after the July exams. The aim was to run the 2 Masterclasses on consecutive days on a weekend from 10 am to 4 pm, on Monday August 12th and 13th.

We advertised the project with an eye catching poster, designed by Patrick with the Arts Society Mid Sussex logo on it and delivered them to young people at local schools and clubs.

With help from the Ditchling Museum the project was advertised on Facebook, Twitter and Hashtag (!) as well as a short edited video on Instagram showing a class on the art of lettering. Having developed their new skills after the workshops were taught, the students were invited to enter our competition using their artistic flair to write a short poem or text and given until the 5th of September to send in their entries. The winners were selected by a panel of judges being the lettering specialists, myself and the museum. We chose Chole Marsh to win the calligraphy Masterclass and Rosie Kingdom won the creative writing Masterclass. Chole depicted a Shakespearian text with inventive letter forms and appropriate pleasing decoration. Rosie's design was dynamic and used subtle colours for her creative lettering design; both show careful consideration of the worlds in their design. Chole wishes to pursue a career in graphic design while Rosie is open to choose any career in the arts.

An art materials voucher of £50 was awarded to each of them, along with a goody bag worth £40 from Cass Art in Brighton. Their work was printed as post cards to sell at the Museum shop and at the Arts Society Mid Sussex Meetings, to put towards funding the project again.

The project, as a pilot, was a success and we hope that it could be set up again to continue on a yearly basis, perhaps becoming a “Young Calligrapher of The Year” known project.

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*Young Arts Volunteer*

With thanks to the Ditchling Museum

*Sponsors*

Johnstone Foundation, Wynkyn de Worde, Cass Art of Brighton, Nottcuts Garden Centre Ditchling.

*Further reading*

The Society of Scribes and Illuminators

[www.ditchlingmuseumartcraft.org.uk](http://www.ditchlingmuseumartcraft.org.uk)

[www.calligraphyanddesign.com](http://www.calligraphyanddesign.com) [www.wynkyndeworde.co.uk](http://www.wynkyndeworde.co.uk)

[www.cassart.co.uk](http://www.cassart.co.uk)

<https://calligraphyonline.org>