



The Art Workers' Guild

Proceedings and Notes – No. 32 – December 2017



Cast iron work for the new courtyard roof in production at FSE Foundry, Braintree

A MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

It is hard to know before the event just what it will be like to be Master of the Art Workers' Guild. Whatever else I expected I had no idea how enjoyable it would be. Preparing the programme of talks prompted a most useful period of reflection and the year itself has been a great pleasure. I have no doubt that without the wonderful support of the Guild staff, the Honorary Secretaries and the Committee and Trustees it could have been a very different experience.

My hope in planning the past year was to put together a series that would inform, entertain and, to use a tired and over-used phrase, be thought-provoking. I realised at an early stage that I had little idea of what might draw crowds and that populism was a poor strategy anyway. What emerged has reflected my interests and enthusiasms and I have hoped to take some, at least, of the Guild along with me.

The degree to which I have succeeded I leave to others to decide. For me it was particularly pleasing when a speaker exceeded my expectations. I hope that reading these minutes will remind you of stimulating or enjoyable evenings, or will give a flavour of them if you were not there.

Another of my duties has been to arrange an outing, or three outings as it turned out. The first, which I was unable to attend, was to PM George Hardie's retrospective exhibition in Brighton. In July, we went to Farleys House in Sussex, home to Roland Penrose and Lee Miller. We heard their remarkable and moving story from their son Antony Penrose and his daughter Amy. Antony spoke to the Guild in 2014.

Then in September there was a group visit to Venice. Arrangements were left deliberately loose, with only three organised events and all of them involving food. On our first evening we had a wonderful restaurant meal, on the second we had a perfectly good one at a different place, and the next day we had an outing to the island of Torcello. The sun shone brightly, we saw astounding mosaics in the cathedral and astounding views from its campanile. We then had a long and excellent outdoor lunch. That evening some of the group got together again and found a cafe-restaurant in a quiet piazza. The rest of our time was left unorganised so that we could wander through the city and see some of its many delights and those of the Biennale.

Master's suppers are sometimes a feature of our years. I decided to have only three. Enjoyable as they are, I felt that they reduced the opportunities for Brothers to talk at length with the evening's speaker after the talk. We held three this year, aiming to include a mix of newer and more experienced Brothers each time. I did not attend the first two as they coincided with my prolonged move to new premises. It is absolutely right that Guild activities can continue without the Master present.

It is right too that our Masters are appointed for only a year. I am honoured to have been custodian of the post and it is time to move on. I believe that with Jane Cox, Anne Thorne and Alan Powers we have a strong future. I wish them all well and I thank the Guild for the opportunities it has given me and the friendships that have been made.

Phil Abel



Lunch at Locanda Cipriani, Torcello. L-r: Monica Grose-Hodge, Monica Boxley, Peyton Skipwith, Juliet Johnson, Jacqueline Taber, Anne Hickmott, Matthew Eve, Elaine Ellis, Angela Barrett

Guild Business

The outgoing Master, David Birch, took the chair. The Minutes of the previous Meeting, written by Bro. Tanya Harrod, were read by Hon. Sec. Celia Ward and were agreed as a correct record and duly applauded. Monica Grose-Hodge reminded Brethren that there were places left on the proposed trip to Venice and still time to enter a short film of 'hands in the act of making' for a competition. Hon. Sec. Mark Winstanley announced that there was an exhibition of watercolours by PM Arthur Rackham at the Chris Beetles Gallery in St James's to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Rackham's birth. The Master took a twirl in the new robe which had been made from linen by Bro. Fleur Oakes. It had been based on a traditional smock design with much fine pleating and hand-crafted buttons. She had kept the traditional blue cuff trim and the ensemble was greeted with enthusiastic applause.

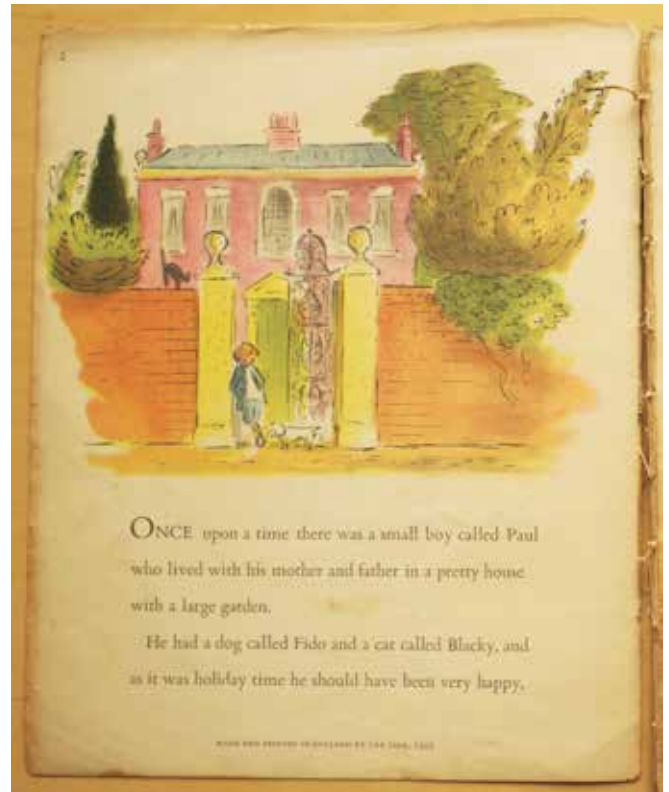
David Birch gave a short valedictory speech. He said it had been an amazing year for him. The sun had shone on his two outings and he had had great support from both his Hon. Secretaries and the Trustees. It had all gone in a flash and he felt he was ready for year two now but that was not how it worked. He left the hall to prolonged applause. In the interval between Masters, the Guild Chest made the customary and voluntary collection. PM Alison Jensen announced that £631 had been collected.

Master's Night

MASTER PHIL ABEL

Phil Abel was introduced as the new Master and thanked Past Masters Anthony Paine, David Birch and Julian Bicknell for the help they had given him. He said that he would not be following the custom that the incoming Master should talk about his early work influences and achievements for forty minutes or so. Instead he gave us a preview of the year ahead interspersed with people and things that had enthralled him over the years.

He could read before he went to school. He noticed, reading his Rupert Annuals, that the letters lined up on the page. He read Puffin books and was fascinated by the colophon giving details of printer and typeface - they seemed to be mostly set in Monotype Baskerville. He showed an early favourite: *Paul The Hero of the Fire* written and illustrated by Edward Ardizzone. He was not conscious of why he liked it so much; possibly it was because the child goes out into the world and has



Edward Ardizzone *Paul The Hero of the Fire*

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a big adventure and saves the day. He said that later in the year there would be a talk on Ardizzone by Bro. Alan Powers. He loved comics too, favouring American comics over English partly because of the lively graphics and the advertisements for bodybuilding and so on. He said that artist Gary Northfield, creator of the present day comic strip 'Gary's Garden' in *The Phoenix*, would be giving a comics workshop. Both of the Master's parents had been Central European refugees from Nazism. His father was a farmer and his mother was a lover of the arts and theatre. A teacher at school noted the Master's overblown attempts at fancy copperplate handwriting and sparked his interest in simple italic. This was his first inkling of an interest in letterforms. He had wanted to study medicine but his grades were not good enough, which he now saw as an advantage. Instead he began studying Biology at Liverpool in 1974.

James Boswell, painter, activist, and graphic artist, had taken up with the Master's mother after the breakdown of her marriage. He was to be a big influence and would be the subject of an upcoming talk. The Master helped run a community magazine in Muswell Hill - it turned out that they were more interested in the community than the community was in them. He wrote a facetious parody of a typical *Critics' Forum* review, taking as his example the, as he saw it, pretentiously titled book *Zen and the Art Of Motorcycle Maintenance* by Robert

Guild Business

Pirsig, a very popular cult book at the time. Someone urged him to read the book: 'It will change your life,' they said. And it did. It still thrills and amazes. Through the example of the book he learned how to treat machinery and to question value and quality: a subject which would be addressed by Patrick Doorly in a talk later in the year. He learned more about lettering and came to admire the work of Michael Harvey, letter-cutter and type-designer, who had used hand lettering on over 1,500 book jackets during his career, and who would be the subject of a talk. He bought a printing press and read Eric Gill who emphasised craftsmanship. He was influenced by the magazine *Alphabet and Image* as well as the work of the Curwen Press and the Shenval Press. He admired Reynolds Stone and his work and was pleased that in February members of the Stone family would be talking about their father's work as an engraver and letterer.

He bought various presses, upgrading, as the work increased, into larger and more complicated machines capable of greater outputs. He said it was a strange time to begin letterpress printing when everyone else was giving up on it. He suffered from 'metal fever' when it came to buying printing presses. He spoke about the various people with whom he had collaborated, especially PM Brian Webb and Bros Angela Barrett and Chris Brown. He also mentioned the Double Crown Club and the insights he had gained on the history of typography and printing from the dinners and talks. He discussed the Central Lettering Archive and St Jude's, the print-making and art collective run by Bros Simon and Angie Lewin, both of whom would also be contributing to his year. He praised the Underground Posters and mid-century design as well as the work of Graham Moss, also a future speaker, who had worked for the anarchist Freedom Press and was now running the Incline Press producing splendid work.

In discussion Bro. John Nash asked if he knew the work of Will and Sebastian Carter, which he did. Bro. Frances Spalding asked about problems of letter spacing. Michael Sangster discussed Romantic versus Classical in relation to the Zen book. Bro. Nicholas Cooper and PM Prue Cooper asked whether there was a problem about choosing the various characters of typefaces. Reading faces, Phil Abel said, had few differences. There were contributions from PM Paine, Bro. Caroline Bullcock, and PM Sally Pollitzer. The evening ended with convivial applause and a strong sense of anticipation for the year to come.

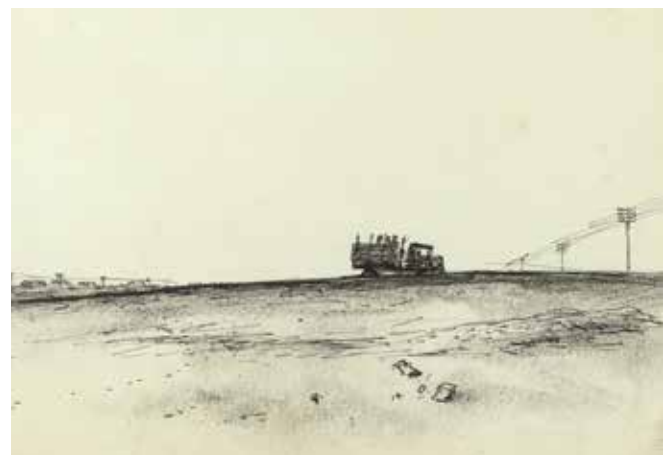
PM Ian Archie Beck

The Master opened the meeting by announcing the death of PM Roderick Ham. Given the late notice of this he proposed postponing tributes until the next meeting, but asked Brethren and guests to stand in silent tribute. Hon. Sec. Celia Ward then read the Minutes of the Master's Night Meeting on 12 January which were duly approved, seconded and signed. Hon. Sec. Mark Winstanley then announced that there would be a further fundraising auction for the building appeal on 23 November, Thanksgiving Day. The theme would be 'Giving Thanks'. PM Julian Bicknell introduced a new Brother, Iain Exley, an architect.

Lecture · James Boswell: The Artist's Dilemma

SAL SHUEL

The Master introduced Sal Shuel who was to speak about her father James Boswell, artist, *bon viveur* and outspoken promoter of radical causes. Her first image set the scene, showing Boswell *al fresco* sitting at a well-victualled table. She described him as congenial, a lover of cats, wine and women. Boswell was born in 1906 in New Zealand, where he had no exposure to original works of art, although his father was a passionate follower of the Arts and Crafts movement, modelling the family home in that style. The young James moved to London as soon as he could and enrolled in 1925 in the painting school at the Royal College of Art under the direction of Sir William Rothenstein, with whom he had little in common. However, by 1932 he had largely abandoned painting for advertising and book-jacket design at which he excelled. He joined the Communist Party in 1933 and



James Boswell *Lorry in the Desert* (detail)

contributed satirical cartoons to various publications, particularly the *Left Review*. He studied lithography at the Central School along with James Fitton, producing a series of black and white lithographs which sold for a shilling each at the AIA Gallery. Although, as we were to see, he had a fine feeling for colour, it was probably in his black and white work, whether in pencil, pen and ink, lithography or reed drawing - in traditional manner he cut his own reeds - that he achieved his apotheosis. In the late 1930s he became the Advertising Manager for Shell, but his left wing political activity, including participation in the Battle of Cable Street, was to rule him out as a candidate for appointment as an Official War Artist. Nevertheless, during the first phase of the war he made a number of poignant drawings, particularly of London's East End, recording with both humour and compassion people, buildings and bomb damage.

The speaker commented on the fact that her father was extremely lazy and did not like walking so his subjects were almost invariably on bus routes, though this did not apply to a small group of drawings made in a Paris brothel. He had an acute eye for incidental detail, which he recorded with a deft line, setting his work alongside that of Ardizzone and Topolski. In January 1941 he was called up and assigned to the Royal Army Medical Corps, spending much of the next two years in Iraq. Here his black and white drawings became sparser and bleaker, interspersed with several anti-war drawings and an extraordinary series of intense watercolours. Many of these are now in the archives of the Imperial War Museum, the British Museum and Tate Britain, and a selection was published in 2007 in *James Boswell: Unofficial War Artist*, with a text by William Feaver. In 1946 he returned to his post at Shell for a couple of years before resigning to become art editor of *Lilliput*. He allowed his membership of the Communist Party to lapse. In 1951 he took over the editorship of Sainsbury's House Magazine as well as painting a vast mural of herrings for the Festival of Britain and designing several posters for Ealing Studios, including that for *It Always Rains on Sunday*, starring Jack Warner and Googie Withers. The Sainsbury's job was only part-time, allowing Boswell to explore other areas, especially the coast line around Shoreham which he depicted in *fauve*-like colouring. In 1957 he made an ill-judged move to Hove and was influenced by the works of Jackson Pollock, Robert Motherwell and Franz Kline, which he saw in the big Abstract Impressionism show at the Tate. From this point his canvases got larger and he started mixing sand and metallic powders with his paint, showing the resulting works at both the Drian Gallery in Mayfair and the Commonwealth Institute. Many of these works remain



with the family. In his last years he designed a number of record sleeves and also master-minded the successful Let's Go with Labour advertising campaign for the 1964 General Election. He died in April 1971 and his last drawings, done for *The Sunday Telegraph*, appeared alongside his obituary.

The talk was very well received and provoked a number of questions and comments. Bro. Frances Spalding commented on the affinity between Boswell's political cartoons and the work of George Grosz; Bro. Juliet Johnson wondered whether he used charcoal at all, but the speaker said that reeds, black ink, his thumb and a soft pencil were his favourite tools. Bro. Nicholas Cooper asked Sal Shuel whether she thought it was having been brought up in the classless society of New Zealand that made him sympathetic to the Communist Party when faced with England's class-conscious society. Bro. Matthew Eve described a visit to Walter Hodges in Lewes years ago and seeing on his walls, among many other works, a painting of a cat by James Boswell. Visiting him some years later in retirement the only painting he still retained was Boswell's cat. On this note the Master felt it was time to draw the meeting to a close and his thanks to the speaker were followed by warm applause.

PM Peyton Skipwith

Guild Business

Brethren and guests stood to remember PM Roderick Ham, who died on 6 February.

Bro. Jeremy Sancha paid tribute, reminiscing about Rod's career and their collaborations. Jeremy mentioned that the painting on the wall below the clock was done by his father, Carlos Sancha, who was a portrait painter, in return for a summerhouse design by Rod. To the side of it is a model of the Harrow Arts Centre which was never built. When Jeremy was a penniless art student, he made a model of a theatre for Rod. He came to realise how complicated a building like a theatre is. The last project Rod worked on was a theatre in Damascus which may be still standing. He went into the Royal Engineers, went to India and learned Urdu, and then to Indonesia in charge of 320 armed soldiers. He was a big man, very authoritative, and because of that he was given that sort of responsibility. He is sadly missed.

PMs Ian Archie Beck and Anthony Paine responded with their reminiscences of Rod Ham's agreeable character, and heroic efforts to save the Guild when the Trustees seemed to be losing their grip on Guild finances.

The Guild's Secretary, Monica Grose-Hodge, is retiring having served brilliantly for twelve years. The Master was very happy to note that she is going to be made an Honorary Member.

Lecture · The Art of the Vinyl Reprint
DAVID PARSONS

David Parsons is a label manager at The Electric Recording Company which recreates classical and jazz LPs from the 1950s and 1960s. David began with a recap of the history of sound recording, from Emile Berliner's rotating cylinder technique in 1886 to the numerous technological and business developments by companies such as EMI, HMV and Decca in the early twentieth century, resulting in what David held as the golden era of vinyl pressing in the 50s and 60s.

David explained that creating a vinyl LP is a bit of a dark art involving very few people, especially at the mastering side. He presented videos showing explanations from the technical experts at the ERC, who supervise the reissue of early LPs in both mono and stereo from new master discs, cut from the original tapes, using only valve equipment. In many cases these labels did not issue many records and they are now very sought



Record labels on the press

after by collectors. It is a challenge to find the original equipment and bring it back up to spec, sourcing new capacitors, equipment that has been disused for forty years. It took over two years, starting in 2011, to restore fully the Lyrec TR18 Tape Console, an all-valve system from 1958, which was found in a garage in Romania.

The source is always the original analogue master tape. Parsons explained the three-stage process by which a record is pressed, starting from a blank acetate lacquer, carefully sealed with a vacuum to a brass disk to avoid movement whilst etching the master, immediately putting it in the fridge to keep it hard. The master lacquer is electroplated with nickel to make a 'father' plate, which is coated in silver nitrate, to make a negative with ridges rather than grooves. The process is repeated to create a 'mother' plate, an exact replica of the original master lacquer. This is then done a third time to make final 'stampers' to press records.

David explained that the recreation of the record sleeves was an equally important part of the endeavour, introducing a video of the Master, who spoke of classic record sleeves produced by Andy Warhol, Atelier Adolphe Cassandre and others. Hand & Eye Letterpress do 1950s/60s industrial printing, which has become very popular. In being asked to reproduce the original sleeve, they reset the type, and ensure that line endings and spacing are the same. Panels which would originally have been drawn and engraved are done from scans. These are then printed on a Heidelberg cylinder press, from type which is cast and set on a Monotype machine. It is an exciting challenge to get the process the same. It looks like a record sleeve from the 1950s. For those who care, and those who know, it is there.

Parsons then took questions from the floor, which were numerous, insightful and animated. Bro. Thomas Ponsonby asked how many records can be made from

a stamper (answer: 300-500). This gives rise to fanatical searches for records pressed from the first stamper, which are considered to sound amazing.

PM Ed Fairfax-Lucy asked about the possibility of copying shellac records onto LPs - this was considered to lose a lot of quality, and few shellac father disks are available.

PM Ian Archie-Beck noted that Nimbus recorded 78s from a fine analogue gramophone and then recorded them in stereo, which prompted the observation from David that stereo was a bit of a marketing thing and that for small groups, a singer or a string quartet, mono records are brilliant and can be a very good deal.

PM Julian Bicknell noted that in the sixties a disc cost a week's pocket money, and asked how the ERC made their business pay. David replied that they only make small runs, and the discs are priced at £300 each, and are mainly aimed at the Far Eastern market. He hoped that the current bottleneck in production caused by the shortage of pressing plants could be eased.

The Brethren signalled their appreciation of this edifying talk with enthusiastic applause, showing an even greater than usual level of personal interest in this exciting topic.

Antranig Basman

23 February 2017 · ORDINARY MEETING

Lecture · Reynolds Stone

HUMPHREY STONE, PHILLIDA GILI
and IAN ARCHIE BECK

This lecture broke with the more usual custom of a single speaker and was delivered by a battery of Stone descendants, including a son-in-law, PM Archie Beck, who read out his wife Emma's memoir of her father, ill-health having kept her at home. Her memoir made a most affecting start to the evening, for it was accompanied by images that echoed her words, and we were immediately drawn into a world where cats mattered, but more so birds; and where rooms smelt of books and woodsmoke. It was surprising to see that Reynolds did much of his work in a corner of the drawing-room, with his back to the world but amid the comings and goings of everyday life. Apparently no-one was allowed to touch the clutter on his desk, which included a jaw-bone of a fox. Emma's sister Phillida recalled that Jonathan Gili, while asking for her hand in marriage, had to do so standing behind

Reynolds while he worked. Apparently he paused to ask if there was any insanity in the young man's family, but, once this query had been answered satisfactorily, went straight back to the task in hand.

This extraordinary man is today renowned for many things, for he was a wood-engraver, designer, typographer and painter. Most of the recollections offered by his children concentrated on his work and way of life at Litton Cheney, in West Dorset, where, in 1953, he and his wife Janet acquired an eighteenth-century rectory with Victorian additions which, as Emma noted, 'meddled with its symmetry'. It sat within a nine-acre garden, and contained a wooded dell below the house, as well as ponds and rushing streams fed by a spring which began in the rose garden and flowed through the whole village. There were also barns in which Reynolds kept his printing presses and where he cut inscriptions in stone and wood, including a memorial stone for Sir Winston Churchill.

Phillida recalled that it had taken her parents ten years to find the house and garden they wanted, but she too affirmed the impression gained from Emma's notes, that it was a paradisaal setting, satisfying Reynolds' passion for trees and giving many visitors the sense that an English way of life had been somehow lifted out of time. In winter, fires were lit in every room, and a family habit took root of reading aloud in the drawing-room after supper. On Christmas Eve there was a ritual reading of *The Tailor of Gloucester*. Janet Stone had a practical as well as an imaginative gift for hospitality, which made even her picnics special, and those who stayed at Litton Cheney - Sylvia Townsend Warner, Iris Murdoch and



Reynolds Stone with memorial stone

John Bayley, John and Myfanwy Piper, among others - cherished their memories of it.

Humphrey Stone slightly changed the focus of the lecture by drawing attention to his father's work, showing the typeface he designed, 'Janet', and demonstrating Stone's capacity, when carving lettering, especially in wood, to produce a naturally flowing line in seemingly intractable material. He showed many of Stone's most famous designs including mastheads for *The Times* and the Royal Arms on the front of our passports. He mentioned the influence on Reynolds of the famous British typographer Stanley Morison and of Eric Gill, as well as his initial apprenticeship to Cambridge University Press. Morison tried to diminish Stone's obsession with trees by saying 'anyone can draw trees' whereas lettering required enormous skill and knowledge. But Sylvia Townsend Warner showed more understanding when she remarked: 'He [Reynolds] looks at trees with simple and deep love, trust and veneration, almost as if he were exiled from being a tree himself.'

The questions that followed came thick and fast, from Alison Jensen, Peyton Skipwith, Rory Young, Neil Jennings and Tanya Harrod, all generating further details on several aspects of Reynolds Stone's fertile *oeuvre*.

Bro. Frances Spalding

9 March 2017 · ORDINARY MEETING

Guild Business

After notices and minutes were read, the Master announced that there would be an Extraordinary General Meeting on 23 March to elect a Master for the years 2018-19, Brother Graham Rawle having had to withdraw for pressing domestic reasons.

Lecture · The Beautiful and the Good in Early Greek Culture PATRICK DOORLY

Ever since Greece was acknowledged as the ultimate source of classical art, people have tried to discover the Greeks' own idea of the beautiful. The trouble is that the Greeks never explicitly described it. By drawing on Homer, Plato, and later interpretations of Greek art, and with illustrations of sculpture and vases from the archaic to the late classical, Patrick Doorly sought to show what the Greeks thought beauty was.

Homer described his heroes not as handsome or beautiful but as god-like: Helen was 'like an immortal

goddess to look on.' In Homer's great epics, beauty is seen as an aspect of perfection and virtue and does not exist as a quality in itself. However, the lack of any objective definition of beauty leaves the idea of beauty essentially dependent on the relationship between the work and the person looking at it. Socrates confronted the problems raised by this unity of the good and the beautiful. He observed that although we can easily see that something is good when it is useful, it is difficult to know that something is good because it is beautiful if we have no comparable, objective account of what beauty is. To illustrate the problem, the speaker showed Dürer's famous print of *Melancholia*, surrounded by examples of things that are clearly good because they are useful and complete, tools, a magic square illustrating mathematics, scales for measuring things and examples of the regular solids. But the ultimate perfection, the goodness and beauty of the universe from which all virtue and existence derives, cannot be illustrated because it is essentially indescribable and beyond human comprehension.

For lack of clear authority from the ancient world, the committee that considered the purchase of the Elgin marbles in 1816 were also puzzled. In accordance with the tastes of the age, their question was whether the Parthenon figures represented either the perfect or the imitation of nature. They were baffled when the experts whom they called as advisers told them that ancient Greek authorities could not confirm that the Elgin marbles did either. Perhaps inadvertently, Fuseli provided an answer: the Greeks, he said, were Gods.

The Greeks' expression of this godlike quality developed strikingly through the 6th and 5th centuries BC. As Lethaby said: 'No great art is only one man deep.' Greek art, in modelled figures and on painted vases, was essentially impersonal, but each generation of Greek artists drew on, and improved on, the vision of its predecessor. In representing the dead and the heroes from the past, their aim was not for a literal depiction but for an image that captured the subject's essential qualities. As memorial or commemorative images, it was natural for them to idealise and thus seek to make their subjects appear more godlike. The idea of beauty was thus inseparable from ideas of the virtuous, and the figures they drew and carved combined the aesthetic with the moral. The speaker cited the art historian Ernst Gombrich: 'Artists do not imitate nature, they make things as substitutes for nature.' The Greeks were doing just that, making their figures substitutes both for the individual who was nominally their subject and for qualities which were by their very nature indescribable. Socrates' original question about beauty concerned the word *αἰσθη* [pronounced

Guild Business

Upon arrival at the Guild Hall Brethren and guests were greeted with an unusual layout. Instead of the customary formal rows of Clissett chairs, a series of tables had been convivially arranged complete with sheaves of paper and pencils. A practical evening lay ahead. The Master took the chair at 7 p.m. The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and praised. There followed a very brief Extraordinary General Meeting convened to confirm Bro. Anne Thorne as Master Elect-Elect. This had been made necessary by the resignation of Master Elect Graham Rawle for family reasons. Bro. Jane Cox had obligingly moved up a year to replace him. A show of hands was taken from the Members present and Bro. Thorne was unanimously confirmed.

Lecture · Comics Workshop
GARY NORTHFIELD

The Master introduced the comic strip creator, illustrator and author as master of ceremonies for the evening. The Master explained that he had long admired Northfield's strip 'Gary's Garden' in the weekly *Phoenix* comic. Gary began with a short slide show presentation of his career. He showed the various home-made comics he had created for fun while working in an art shop. He favoured wild story lines, exaggerated expressions, and, above all, humour. He had graduated from home-made to published when he sent an idea for a strip to *The Beano*, the comic he had loved as a child. He soon found himself working for *The Beano* and in turn *The DFC*, *Horrible Histories* magazine and latterly *The Phoenix*. He favoured stories about crazy animals doing silly jobs. He loved history and one of the facts about the gladiators of the Coliseum and the scores of varied wild animals that were slaughtered led to the creation of his popular book series about Julius the Zebra. Julius, armed with a spear and shield, fights back along with a ragged crew of other animals.

It was then time for Gary to put the Guild to work creating characters and situations. The Guild seemed to fully enter into the spirit as we were asked to call out and suggest creatures doing unlikely occupations. Northfield found some suggestions a little too pedestrian and encouraged us to offer more wildness and imagination, to be more 'off the wall'. So began the hilarious accretion of detail around the misadventures of a snail in a space



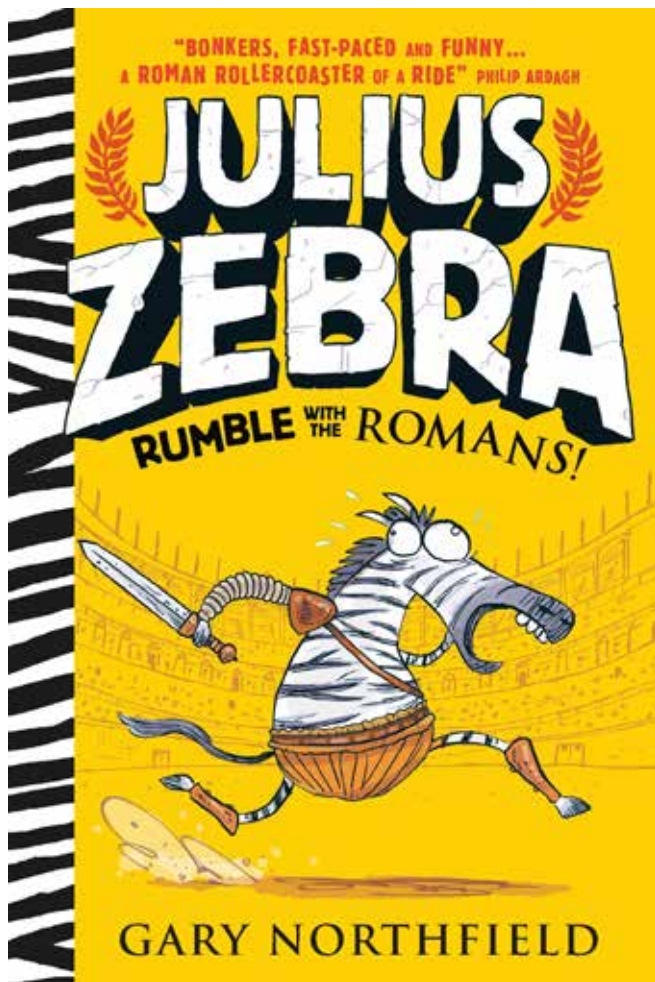
The Motya Charioteer (470–460 BCE)

'aretee'] – a word whose ultimate root is the root both of our modern words 'art' (with all its implications for creativity, beauty and skill) and 'right' (with its many meanings of duty, correctness and virtue).

In conclusion, Patrick Doorly cited Bob Pirsig, author of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* and neglected by art historians, perhaps because Pirsig might seem to discount objective analysis and the idea that originality has any merit in itself. Pirsig, like the ancient Greeks, argued that beauty is relational: that the perception of beauty is something brought to the subject by the beholder.

So thoughtful and provocative a talk naturally brought many comments and questions from the floor. Many of these concerned, in one way or another, the problems created by the denial of objective description and the subsequent issue of whether verbal analysis of Greek aesthetics is even possible. Others related to the subjectivity of judgements as against what seemed to be the paradox of an evolving objectivity. These questions are, of course, of universal applicability, and the applause with which Patrick Doorly was thanked testified to the audience's appreciation of such a stimulating discourse.

Hon. Archivist Nicholas Cooper



suit and on a space walk facing an attack by the dastardly French who were firing space slug pellets. There were hints of a Brexit theme breaking through along with all the humour and improbabilities. Gary duly added each accretion to his original drawing on the flip chart. Then it was the turn of the Guild to develop their own characters and situations and draw them. Much excitement followed as shades of the school classroom fell on the hall and cries of, 'hey stop looking at mine', and 'use your own pencil', and 'what are you doing?' echoed through the room. Gary moved among the tables encouraging and admonishing with great good humour. He was, he said, more used to dealing with classes of 7 or 8 year olds. One suspects that he found little difference.

Brethren were then encouraged to display and share their comic ideas, for example Bro. Caroline Bullock who had invented a fine rat sculptor which was chipping away at a stone statue. During the discussion period Northfield listed some of his favourite comic strips including much French material such as Asterix. He also praised the efforts of independent publishers in making much experimental graphic material available. It seemed that in this country there was still a prejudice against comics and graphic novels although this was changing. The evening was a great success and similar events should most

definitely be encouraged. The evening was rounded off with warm and prolonged applause.

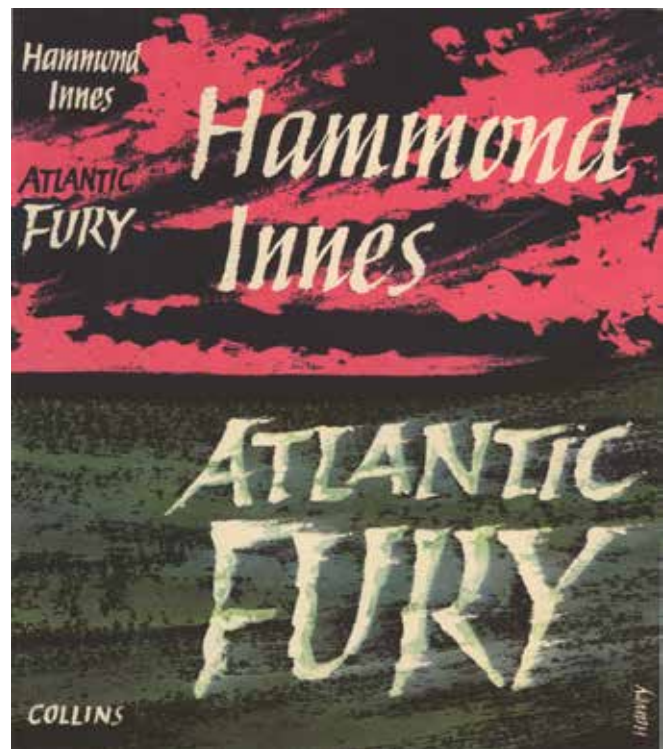
PM Ian Archie Beck

6 April 2017 · ORDINARY MEETING

Lecture · Learning and Restraint: Exuberance and Reserve. The Letterforms of Michael Harvey MBE
ANN PILLAR and NICHOLAS SLOAN

The lecture proved to be an excellent follow-up to that delivered earlier this year on Reynolds Stone. Harvey set out to be a freelance letter-carver after reading Eric Gill's *Autobiography*. Stone had similarly been profoundly affected by Gill, whom he met on a train in 1932. Ann Pillar reminded her listeners that, according to Myfanwy Piper, the two weeks Stone subsequently spent with Gill at Piggots, in the Chilterns, laid the foundations for his work as a letter-cutter and possibly also for his leading role as a wood-engraver. So it seemed fitting that in 1955, when Michael Harvey's career properly began, he took on the role of assistant to Reynolds Stone at Litton Cheney for six years, absorbing, as he said, Stone's 'exquisite capitals, lower case, and especially his italics'.

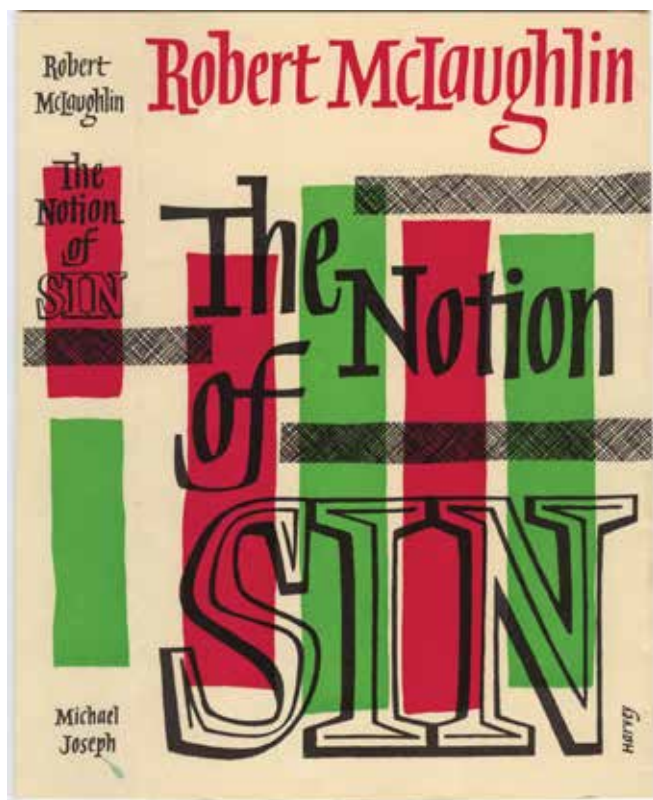
The lecture began with a slide of Michael Harvey's book *Lettering Design* (1975) his first substantial written work on the art of lettering. John Ryder, Art Director of the Bodley Head publishing house, observed in its



Book jacket by Michael Harvey

preface that Harvey throughout stresses the need for knowledge and restraint when seeking to use the Roman letterforms effectively. He adds that only after this disciplined approach has been put in place can exuberance and verve play an equally vital role. This gave Pillar and Sloan their title: *Learning and Restraint: Exuberance and Verve - The Letterforms of Michael Harvey*.

A fast run of slides followed explaining beautifully exactly what Harvey meant. Ann Pillar pointed out that when Harvey set up on his own he was heir to an Anglo-European tradition which included the sturdiness and slow, patient enquiry associated with Edward Johnston's practice and teaching. Good lettering had become refined and was seemingly driven chiefly by a desire for good taste. But then he saw book-jackets by Hans Tisdall and Berthold Wolpe which gave him a jolt of excitement. He started doing hand-lettering for book-jackets himself, working at night, partly to earn a little extra money. But eventually the creative possibilities in this field took over. Suddenly we were looking at a large array of book-jackets, all relying solely on lettering and all visually exhilarating owing to the enormously bold inventiveness in the handling of letterforms, some examples of which had been drawn freehand. What we were witnessing was a complete transformation in the book's address and presentation. It came as no surprise to learn that Harvey had designed over 1,500 book-jackets, 86 of them for the Bodley Head. Harvey understood exactly what was needed. Pillar quoted him as saying:



Book jacket by Michael Harvey

'Jackets are advertising: posters; billboards. So make 'em shout.'

It was significant that both Pillar and Sloan were themselves letterers and had trained under Harvey. Their views had authority and weight. It was pointed out that Harvey, even at his most outrageous, rarely used idiosyncratic written forms, never applied weight in the wrong place and kept his spacing immaculate. At heart he remained an Arts & Crafts purist, and when undertaking inscriptional letter-carving for memorial tablets or gravestones, he returned to Gill/Stone models: 'It's like wearing your best suit,' he said.

At question time, Rory Young congratulated the speakers on their eloquent and articulate contributions; and he probably spoke for many when he regretted that, in our digital age, the handling of lettering has become somewhat atrophied by dependence on over-mechanical methods.

Bro. Frances Spalding

27 APRIL 2017 · ORDINARY MEETING
Guild Business

The Master was in the chair and after Notices and Minutes had been read, he introduced the speaker.

Lecture · The Value of Real Things
TIM MILNE

Milne is a printer using real, physical objects to communicate in a world where not only are the means of communication increasingly non-physical, but the things we actually see are less and less real. Perhaps a recognition of the difference between the real and the non-real began when, in the 19th century, photography seemed to make painting unnecessary as a representation of actuality. But painting did not thereby become redundant, it was simply transformed: painters would now show the world as it appeared to them and their pictures would convey less information about the real world. Painting started to become code.

But our brains have evolved to receive direct messages about the physical world. A baby puts a piece of Lego in its mouth rather than pondering its creative potential. The Japanese concept of Wabi Sabi, essentially about the beauty of transience, imperfection and mortality, cannot be put into words and finds its expression in physical objects. The speaker saw a parallel in medieval, hand-copying of texts, where there were possibilities of

creative accidents that could not occur in printing.

Daniel Kahneman, in his book *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, pointed out how the more primitive part of our brain makes snap decisions that we don't think about. The other part has evolved to make calculations and works things out. It is the former, more intuitive part that reacts first to any situation, and by so doing, and largely without our being aware of it, largely pre-determines the way in which our thinking brain subsequently interprets events, objects and information. This is appreciated by those who design for the media: readers' reactions to information and news can be directed even before they have been absorbed. The speaker went on to consider speed and distance. Primitive man's world was limited by his visual horizons, and his communication by the speed of speech. The complex, modern world has no physical bounds, and the amount of information it contains and the rapidity with which it can be conveyed demand ever faster – and by implication, less trustworthy – reactions. The digital world increasingly controls how we behave and think. But people still prefer real objects. The true value of real things is that they address our unconscious, but also that they allow us time to think about how we react to them.

Such thought-provoking ideas naturally drew comment from the floor. A number of people pointed out that before the age of printing, the authority of the written word was such that medieval writers who copied texts tried to make sure that creative accidents did not occur. This, however, was a minor cavil at what was acclaimed as a most stimulating talk, exploring deeply into some of his audience's concerns about the digitisation of the world.

PM Prue Cooper

11 May 2017 · ORDINARY MEETING

Guild Business

On taking the chair, the Master announced the death of Bro. Keith Bailey, sculptor and letter-cutter. Tributes would be held over for a future Meeting, but in the meantime he asked Brethren and guests to stand in silent memory. Following this, Hon. Sec. Celia Ward read the Minutes of the previous Meeting which were duly approved and signed. Three new Brothers were then introduced:

Rachel Trevor-Morgan, a milliner. Proposed and introduced by Noel Stewart.

Aki Mizobuchi, an oriental lacquer worker and con-

servator. Proposed by Peter Holmes, and introduced by Caroline Bullock.

Tim Richards, an architectural model maker. Proposed and introduced by Simon Hurst.

Lecture · St Jude's

BRO. SIMON LEWIN
AND BRO. ANGIE LEWIN

The lecture turned out to be a two-part talk, devoted to printmaking and textile production, a duet between Bro. Simon Lewin and his wife, Bro. Angie Lewin. The audience had to wait until question time to be fully enlightened regarding the title, which originated from the name of the cottage in Norfolk in which they had set up their textile and printmaking business, rather than a tribute to the patron saint of lost causes, which St Jude's clearly was not.

Simon Lewin kicked off by showing the type of work which had originally inspired Angie and him: Henry Moore's designs for Ascher silks, Graham Sutherland's for Foley ceramics, Kenneth Rowntree's for Edinburgh Weavers, and especially the work of Edward Bawden. It was the rich possibility of the hand-printed image which attracted and inspired him and his wife, particularly images which could not only exist as prints for framing, but could also be adapted for wider uses such as textiles, wallpapers and ceramics. At St Jude's, apart from Angie's own work as artist / printmaker, they enjoyed collaborating with other artist / printmakers, especially those who worked in the traditional method of lino-cut-



Angie Lewin *Goat's Beard and Grasses*



Jonny Hannah's installation for a St Jude's exhibition in Edinburgh

ting. He showed images of work by Mark Hearld, including his large lino-block *Harvest Hare*, which, along with *Bird Garden*, was one of his most popular designs, both for wallpaper and textile. Apart from reviving and reprinting some earlier wallpaper designs by Sheila Robinson, done in collaboration with her daughter, Chloë Cheese, they preferred working with contemporary artists and he continued by showing works by Emily Sutton, Christopher Brown and Peter and Linda Green. Apart from the latter pair, who collaborated in building up carefully controlled, non-figurative designs, most of St Jude's products were firmly based in the natural world, which raised the question as to whether they were truly contemporary or nostalgically retro, or whether it is possible to be both. Clearly there was a strong element of nostalgia in references back to Bawden and Ravilious, but the resulting works were both fresh and unmistakably of the present day.

Simon then went on to talk about pop-up exhibitions and the installations they had mounted, in particular working with the artist Jonny Hannah. He also spoke of their intermittent journal, *Random Spectacular*, before handing over to Angie who talked about her childhood from the age of ten or eleven roaming the countryside with a school-friend, observing and sketching nature.

This was an experience which marked her life and a practice which she still pursues, seldom being without a sketchbook, and usually having more than one, of different sizes, on the go simultaneously. One aspect of her approach to nature sets her apart, quite distinctly, from that of the great English tradition of landscape painters, which is that she always sits on the ground to draw, thus getting more of a sheep's eye view than that of her fellow human beings. The immediate result of this is that she often sees landscape and sky through a web of grasses and other plants. This, combined with her preference for the skeletal forms of plants rather past their peak, imbues her drawings and subsequent designs with an often overwhelming sense of pattern. At this point she showed an image of Dürer's great watercolour of dandelions and grasses, one of her favourite works.

By good chance Angie's tutor at the Central School had been Bernard Cheese who, with his erstwhile wife, Sheila Robinson, and their daughter Chloë Cheese, had been part of the Great Bardfield artist community associated with Edward Bawden and Eric Ravilious, with which their St Jude's project has such a strong affinity. Pattern, particularly pattern abstracted from nature, is at the heart of Angie's approach to design, and she showed an image of a random assemblage of shells, sea-

weeds and driftwood which she had collected over the years as inspiration. Both she and Simon love roaming in remote places in Scotland, Ireland, France and Spain observing nature, and she went on to tell of one occasion, while sketching on the west coast of Scotland, when she had felt an uncanny sensation of being watched. Turning slowly, she became aware that her audience was an otter.

The audience in the hall was clearly as entranced as the otter and a lively discussion developed with questions regarding the use of modern media such as Instagram. PM Robin Wyatt asked about the continuing availability of good quality lino and the possibilities of vinyl as a substitute. Bro. Rory Young enthused about lino as being totally organic. The difficulties of the use of flooring linoleum were highlighted by several members of the audience as it was easy accidentally to cut through to the webbing. Bro. Christopher Brown said that it was necessary to degrease the surface in order to achieve the free flow of the line. The Master then thanked the speakers, who were warmly applauded for what had been a thoroughly Guildian evening.

PM Peyton Skipwith

25 May 2017 · ORDINARY MEETING

Guild Business

Following the Master's introduction, Brethren and their guests were asked to stand for a minute's silence to remember Bro. Daphne Boothby, a sculptor of carved wooden priapic abstract forms, and the victims of the Manchester bombing. Afterwards, Bro. John Nash delivered a short eulogy about Bro. Keith Bailey, the recently-deceased sculptor and letter-cutter, whom Bro. Nash remembered most fondly through long conversations over warm pints in the cosy pubs of Cambridge. Bro. Nash then introduced a new Brother, Michael Rust, a letter-carver in stone and wood, a skilful sculptor and an organic farmer. The Master duly welcomed Bro. Rust who was warmly received by all those present.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read by PM Prue Cooper, who was deputising for Hon. Sec. Celia Ward, and these were proposed and seconded by Bro. Eve and Hon. Sec. Winstanley.

Bro. Patricia Lovett announced that the Heritage Craft Foundation had launched a website on the importance of craft, and mentioned a red-list of endangered crafts. Brethren were urged to take a copy of the Foundation's booklet and also to look at its website and note any crafts

that had been omitted with a view to working with the Guild via its mentoring scheme to nurture certain crafts.

Hon. Sec. Winstanley noted forthcoming exhibitions by: PM Sally Pollitzer, Brothers Susan Aldworth, Aaron Kasmin, Silvia MacRae Brown, as well as a large exhibition at Court Barn about PM C.R. Ashbee, titled *Cockneys in Arcadia*. Brethren were also directed to look at a news update on the Guild website and the Guild's auction website which would be going live at the end of the week.

Lecture · Words, Shapes or What?

JOHN NEILSON

John Neilson, letterer and calligrapher, had been trying for the past seventeen years to write a book about the German-born letter-cutter, sculptor and teacher Ralph Beyer (1921-2008) who fled Nazi persecution, first to Crete in 1932, and then to England in 1937, when he became apprenticed to Eric Gill. Beyer most famously worked for Basil Spence on the lettering work for the interior of the new Coventry Cathedral, creating a unique letterform known as Felt. By the time of Beyer's death in 2008, Neilson was convinced that he would have finished his book but to this day he is still trying to define what makes Beyer's work so enticing and so good. By example, the influence of Beyer's unique style continued to provide inspiration for Neilson's own lettering projects, blurring the boundaries between the shapes formed by the letters and their comprehensibility.

Neilson had been taught lettering and calligraphy at Roehampton, where historical examples such as unevenly-spaced Roman capitals - slack and lacking graphic drama - still had a quality that was evidently more clever. Neilson showed a verse from Rilke's *Duino Elegies* which he asked us to read until halfway down when our eyes rested on the words 'confusion loomed'. Neilson then showed his interpretation of the text, carved onto stone in italic letters with little spacing, creating a confusing block of letters. One reviewer described it evocatively as ceaseless mess, but Neilson countered this by saying that such work was not so much about clear reading as slowing down the reader.

Neilson continued by saying that a lot of his work is of a practical nature, such as tablets, plaques and headstones, which requires clarity. Examples were shown: of a carved tablet for Ruthin Craft Centre with Welsh and English texts in a freer, more jaunty mixed upper and lower case italic style; lettering carved into sandstone and incised with shadow for a school in East London; and headstones and tombstones, with different inscriptions and lettering, some lacking horizontal serifs,



John Neilson, 12m-long inscription in floor of church in Bath, Somerset, 2007. Carved with assistance from Malcolm Sier.

which Neilson described as objects in their own right. He noted that one always had to make a compromise on headstones, and preferred those where, with the client's agreement, he could impart something of the person's personality, such as a bold, upright text for recently deceased collar-and-tie-wearing Edward Griffith; or a looser, more playful style for jeans-and-t-shirted Nick Jones.

Moving from the graveyard, Neilson showed examples of larger architectural and sculptural work featuring his carving. For a church in Bath he had created a long, snaking, beautifully-incised floor inscription, each carved letter drawing people inside the church from outside. To commemorate the Merthyr Rising of 1831, the National Poet of Wales, Gillian Clarke, was commissioned to write a poem, *The Rising*, which Neilson carved in Celtic-esque letters into four large slabs of pennant sandstone which were laid in front of a large gold standing heart in Merthyr Tydfil town centre. Neilson had also designed and carved the inscription around the base of Mark Richards' sculpture of Captain Matthew Flinders standing on platform 7 at Euston Station of which images were shown. Neilson pointed out that

he liked sculptural work produced in the second half of the twentieth century in Germany - large stones featuring lettering and a figure, which together formed a sign. While his design inclinations are, he stressed, two-dimensional, he was not averse to working in-the-round and showed photographs of the three-dimensional gold lettering that he had created to sit above the main entrance of The Queen's Gallery in Edinburgh. There was also a semi-three-dimensional piece for the town of Barry in the Vale of Glamorgan, again featuring a poem by Gillian Clarke in Englyn (a traditional Welsh and Cornish short poetry form) carved into a circular group of standing monoliths - starkly beautiful. Photographs were shown of the isolated and romantic Welsh countryside in which Neilson lives and works. One photograph featured a rickety outdoor shack which is his garden workshop. Another showed Neilson pushing a sledge of large stone slabs up a steep snowy hill, which was the only way to transport such things to his workshop in wintertime.

There were also examples of uncommissioned work. Neilson described his fascination for the poet R.S. Thomas, whose life was a bundle of contradictions, and whose poetry was both fresh and hesitant. Taking an extract from Thomas' poem *The Sign Post*, Neilson had carved the piece using impacted lettering and the stone's inherent structural texture as a means of illustrating the text's meaning. This was letter art that revealed itself slowly and falteringly to the spectator. Neilson explored this notion further, saying that lettering, if read as a text, is read sequentially and has a direction of movement: one letter leads to another in a predetermined sequence. But the brain likes irregularities and these can be best discerned in calligraphy: hand-drawn endlessly modified shapes and forms, exemplified in Chinese lettering; Ralph Beyer's deeply irritating, constantly changing letter 'E'; or the unconventional amalgam of image and thick and thin lettering in Paul Peter Piech's unified prints. In letter-carving such irregularities also give life to the work, and Neilson singled out Tom Perkins, whose sublime letterforms are given life through a visible web of chisel marks.

Neilson finished his talk by showing some photographs of himself carving lettering on a large slab of stone at a public workshop. Neilson left us with the understanding that carefully wrought lettering can be read in multifarious ways, that less is more, and that 'words in stone are what is cut away'.

For such a fascinating, dynamic and rich talk John Neilson received the full applause he rightly deserved from an appreciative audience.

Questions followed the Master's warm thanks. Bro.

Patricia Lovett wanted to know how a piece with curved shapes is carved out. Neilson replied that initially he used a v-cut chisel, followed by bull-nosed, curved and flat chisels. Hon. Sec. Winstanley asked if the speaker regretted that there are not three languages in our land. Living in Wales as he does, Neilson said that he does enjoy working on combined Welsh/English pieces as Welsh looks so good carved, and it doubles the income. Asked how long a piece takes to complete, he replied that with an ordinary v-cut he might manage forty letters a day but the speed is dependent on the complexity of the design and the hardness of the stone. Hon. Archivist Nicholas Cooper commented on the free form carving of the speaker's 'E's and 'L's and asked whether he had deliberately worked this out for himself or if they had just evolved. Neilson replied that they had developed though looking at rustic scripts, especially Roman, and the letterforms of the Irish calligrapher Gareth Colgan. Bro. Thomas Ponsonby wanted to know if the freshness of a stone hewn from the ground made carving any easier, but it did not seem to make much difference. The Master asked about the speaker's lean-to workshop, but while the speaker stressed that he liked working outdoors due to the quality of light, he now spends far less time carving than he does working on his computer. Bro. Annie Sherburne asked the speaker how far he would go to obscure the meaning of the letters and quotation. Neilson replied that, although pattern and texture are perfectly legitimate in the art of lettering, if you have a text that can only be read by a carver then it is personal therapy.

Bro. Matthew Eve

8 June 2017 · ORDINARY MEETING

Lecture · Posters Telling Stories
SUSANNAH WALKER

Susannah Walker opened her talk by explaining that she runs a blog on vintage posters and sees herself at the opposite end of the creative spectrum from the makers of the Art Workers' Guild.

Her interest in posters is in seeing things as an historian: less how they are made, and more how they are read, in some ways like Freudian dreams of everyday life with meaning seeping out in ways their designers perhaps never anticipated.

The first slide was of a newly unblocked passage at Notting Hill Tube Station, still pasted with 1950s posters. The image 'went viral', the speaker argued, because



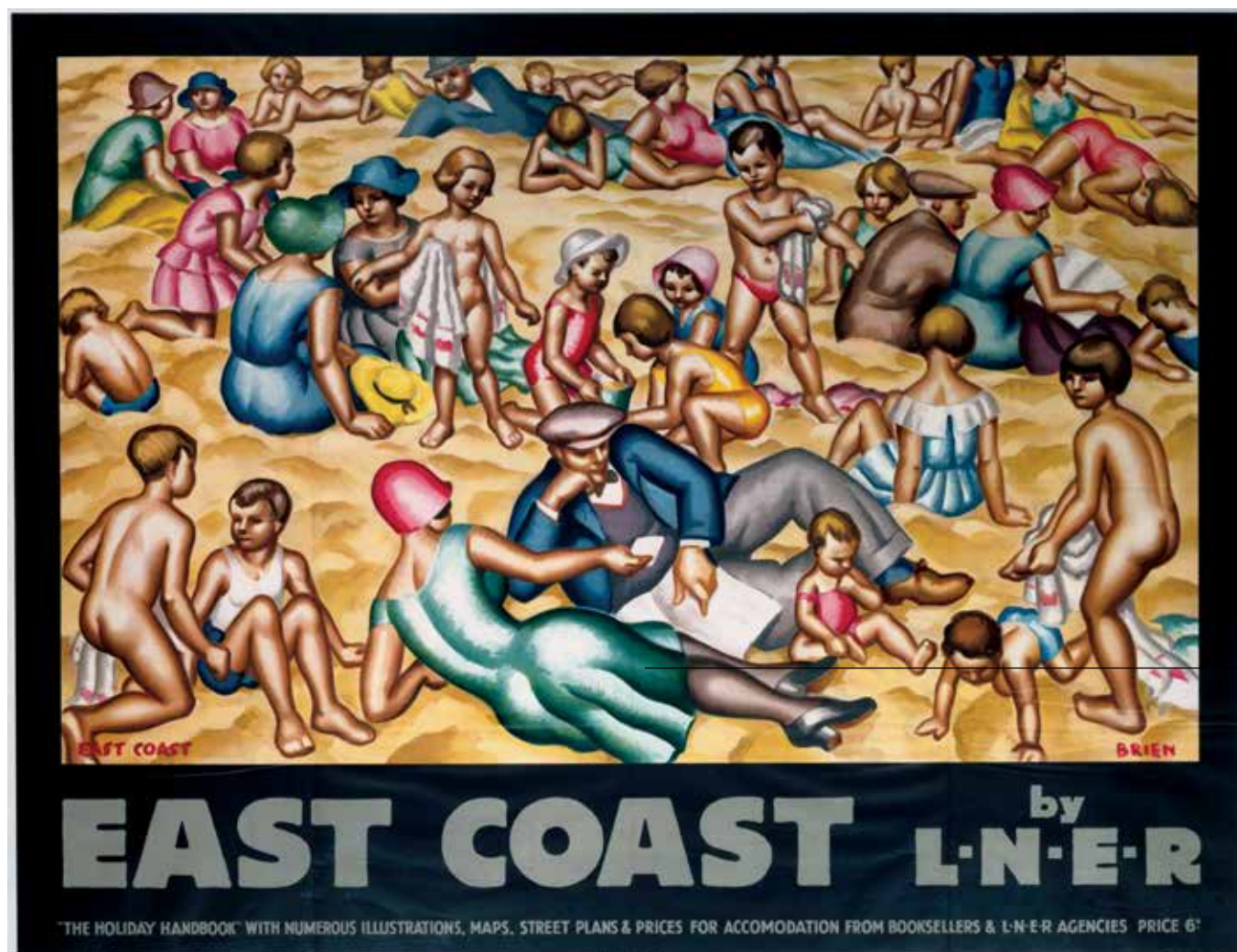
Alfred Lambart Roker and Seaburn BR poster, 1953

posters are the most democratic form of art imaginable, not just to be looked at but to stimulate dialogue with the viewer.

The 'Stories' in the title of this talk are the stories of our daily lives, not politics and culture, but shopping lists, decorating, and holidays, the history of everyday life in the twentieth century.

This is not a new idea. The first poster exhibition in Britain was held in 1895 organised by Joseph Thacher Clarke who wrote that 'the finest posters are national records of daily life.' His collection was left to the V&A in 1921. Ten years later they were exhibited as examples of lithography, which, as the speaker pointed out, is as helpful as looking at clothes as examples of stitching.

The talk continued by looking at seaside posters by Alfred Lambart and examining the stories behind their surfaces. Before the Second World War 15 million people took an annual holiday and by 1951 this number had risen to 25 million. A group of slides illustrated not just seaside holidays but train destinations before the advent of car ownership. The crowded beaches close to rail-



Stanislaus Brien *East Coast* LNER poster, 1932

way stations of the 1930s gave way to images of empty beaches in the 1960s. Hell was now other people.

Also worth looking at is clothing. A 1950s poster shows a woman in a bikini. The reality, as the next photographic image illustrated, was a beach full of people wearing suits, coats and hats. Was this because smart clothes did not equal working clothes, perhaps a status symbol which proved that you could afford clothes that went simply beyond the practical?

More poster images showed 1950s aspirational families, which were compared with the even more aspirational swimsuit wearers illustrated by Tom Purvis in the 1930s. Posters also define class. Southport for example was 'upmarket' with its lido and theatre, in comparison to 'downmarket' Blackpool.

Susannah next showed what she described as her favourite poster, in the style of Fernand Léger, by Stanislaus Brien, for *The East Coast by LNER*: a beach scene of parents and grandparents in hats and coats, and the children naked; the only poster that bears any resemblance to a photograph of a beach scene between the

wars. Nowadays we fail to see swimsuits as daring and shrink from the idea of crowded beaches. If we take the time to see what these images might have meant in their own time, how much more interesting they become.

A series of *Then and Now* posters from 1931 by A.R. Thomson illustrate the modernity of travel by rail. While showing trips to the seaside and railway itself as old ideas, illustrated with Victorian images in one half of the poster, the other half is illustrated in the most up-to-date of styles, Art Deco. The typeface used is Gill Sans, which a year later was adopted by the LNER for use in leaflets, signs and advertisements: an early example of brand consistency.

We were shown a photograph of Eric Gill in tweed coat, stockinged legs and beret standing next to the *Flying Scotsman*, together with some bowler-hatted LNER Directors. Gill had agreed to hand paint the *Flying Scotsman*'s signboard in exchange for a ride to Edinburgh on the footplate.

The speaker said these posters are rich in meaning. Victorian clutter is contrasted against streamlined

Guild Business

modernity and there are, 'serious issues' although not provable beyond doubt, which have clues in the Victorian scenes teeming with humanity contrasted with the sparsely populated scenes of the (then) modern world. This is because the people simply were not there, a legacy of the Great War.

We tend to overlook the aftermath of war. Virginia Woolf, Elizabeth Bowen and T.S. Eliot dealt with this sense of loss in their work. The journalist travel writer H.V. Morton wrote about everyday loss as he set out to explore Britain in the 1920s. He saw ship-builders racing to finish ships and worried about another war. He saw hundreds of war memorials to which we give little thought today, but which were then loaded with meaning. Two million women would never marry.

When we look again at Thomson's *Then and Now* posters we see he includes children in all his Victorian scenes. In the 'modern' scenes not a single child is illustrated. One could assume that the lack of people in Art Deco design was to avoid clutter, but people missing from the sleek world of modern posters is more profound.

The Master thanked Susannah Walker and asked how conscious the lack of people was. The Thomson posters made this explicit but not provable. The speaker said that Thomson was deaf from birth and possibly thought in a visual way without spoken language. Bro. Coleman disagreed with the speaker, saying that fewer children post WWI was due to birth control. PM Peyton Skipwith suggested that in the first *Then and Now* poster, the gentleman was clearly accompanied by his secretary, rather than his wife, as she was taking down dictation while they sat in their first class carriage.

Bro. Nicholas Cooper added the experience of the slump. WWI affected every family at whom these posters were aimed. J.B. Priestley's *English Journey* (1934) was discussed together with early opposition to garish posters, the regulations relating to the siting of posters, Shell Oil appealing to car owners without despoiling the countryside. A visitor pointed out that Vanessa Bell's Shell poster was turned down.

Altogether, a thought-provoking talk.

PM Brian Webb



The Master opened the meeting with a minute's silence for the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire and the terrorist attacks in London and Manchester. Bro. Meredith Ramsbotham introduced Prue Bramwell-Davis, a textile artist and professor in Industrial Design at the RCA.

Lecture · Dear Edward

PM IAN BECK and PM PEYTON SKIPWITH

The Master introduced PMs Ian Archie Beck and Peyton Skipwith for an evening of reading letters between Peyton and the artist Edward Bawden. The correspondence is to be published in a book designed by PM Brian Webb and printed by the Master. Peyton wrote as employee, then director of the Fine Art Society, friend and eventually executor of Bawden's estate.

In 1967 Edward Bawden was the first artist in a long time to have a solo exhibition with the Fine Art Society. Skipwith gently encouraged the first show and catalogue, working with such responses from Bawden as: 'I am so sorry to have taken some time to answer your letter but the truth is I don't quite know what to say...'

The second show was organised around such practical difficulties as Bawden finishing a mural at Blackwell's in Oxford, and struggling with painting trips because he did not drive a car and kept experiencing bad weather. As the second show emerged, and monies from previous sales were settled, the two became friends.

One wrote: 'Thank you for dropping my surname - and may I have the courage to do the same.' The other replied, 'I had not meant to be the first to drop surnames but it does make relations less formal so do let's continue so.'

Bawden enjoyed his meetings with Peyton: 'Your doll-like daughter is a charmer and shows great promise of becoming a famous beauty' and 'What a splendid lunch you gave us! Not since I was last in Italy have I had anything like it.'

By 1974 Peyton was raising Bawden's prices, assuring Bawden that it was the right thing to do and buyers would adjust. The economic uncertainties of 1975 meant that Peyton put extra emphasis on publicity and attracting potential buyers to the exhibition. Bawden's worries about the recession were practical, he writes: '...and may I remind you that second class mail can take as long as twelve days to get here if the posting happens to be from London.'



Peyton initiated many projects for Bawden, some of which never came to fruition, where he managed costings, Bawden's time and any problems arising. Edward had complete confidence in him: 'I feel sure you are right about prices and am more than willing to rely upon your business judgement, and that difficult matter is after all your job - and I am mightily glad it is not mine.'

Deeply appreciating the part Peyton was playing in his career he also wrote: 'Another matter concerns the painting of a geranium you bought two or three years ago. Will you please consider it as a gift because I want nothing for it: you like it and I should like you to have it. You must realise by keeping me busy and even selling some of my work you have extended my life by several years. I am therefore deeply grateful to you.'

Together Peyton and Edward continued to navigate the art world and all the funny people in it. Edward wrote, 'Let me know if Bettina's cheque bounces and I will repay you at once. In reply to my letter she gave the excuse that they were getting a computer, a cursed contrivance that no doubt slows down normal business activities...'

More ideas for Bawden projects come to Peyton and he was always patient with Edward's shyness when appearing in public or committing himself to collaboration. Bawden writes: 'Pottery. My experience of working for Wedgwood was not happy. The present chairman of

the company, then a salesman, had an infallible instinct for what would be mediocre and popular: I hated the man.'

What we learn through this correspondence is how a gentle partnership of artist and agent can work. We see them pulling together groups of work, reframing old pieces, making new works, taking on book deals and working with other galleries. Both men flourished through this partnership.

One of them writes, 'How kind of you to pander to my lust for expensive books.'

Hon. Sec. Mark Winstanley asked what kind of person Edward Bawden was. Peyton explained that in today's world he would be considered autistic. Bro. Carrie Bullcock reminded us that Edward Bawden could be quite contrary, giving PM Glynn Boyd Harte a difficult time when he painted his portrait. Some brothers remembered his violently orange shirt.

Bro. Rachael Matthews

6 July 2017 · ORDINARY MEETING

Lecture · Public Lettering

PHIL BAINES and CATHERINE DIXON

Phil Baines and Catherine Dixon lecture at Central Saint Martins where they curate the Central Lettering Record containing around 10,000 photographs. Nicolette Gray, together with James Mosley and Nicholas Biddulph, were instrumental in shaping it and Alan Bartram later donated to the collection. In their book of 2003, *Signs: Lettering in the Environment*, Phil and Catherine put forward criteria for assessing good and bad signage and this theme was central to the Guild's evening lecture. As designers, our speakers also enjoy photographing and collecting a range of images. They took it in turns to present us with well-known and lesser-known examples of signage in order to present their case for good and bad lettering. Familiar London buildings such as the National Gallery extension, Michelin Bibendum, the Royal London Homeopathic Hospital, Olympia and St Olaf House on the Thames were praised. Loose groupings were presented under the headings of Informing, Remembering, Embellishing, Patterning and Enlivening.

The Glasgow Eye Infirmary in mosaic lettering was a perfect example of Informing; likewise, the signs at Florence Railway Station, with their consistent use of sans serif. Lettering as opposed to typography was considered more acceptable so the signage at Bristol

Temple Meads Station came in for some criticism. Phil and Catherine showed a particular liking for materials that are close to the heart of Guildsmen, such as mosaic, metals, stone and glass. Embellished buildings, for example carved stone figures intertwined with numbers for housing at Amiens, Arabic script around an arch in Marrakesh, the Arbor Hill memorial in Dublin, were all favoured.

Fascia signs, as opposed to those that are often praised for their architectural integration, can be attractive and useful and examples were given. Under the heading of Enlivening we were shown three-dimensional street lettering in Barcelona. The now sadly defunct Irish Life Centre mosaic mural was well favoured by the speakers together with lettering by Jenny Holzer on the South Bank, the Millennium Centre in Cardiff, and the esplanade at Blackpool with its generous array of comedians' quotes which has great appeal to the public at large.



'Uscita', sign in Santa Maria Novella railway station, Florence. 1934

Remembering was illustrated by a WW2 French war memorial at Oradour-sur-Glane where the original village has been preserved as a burnt-out shell. Phil showed us the lettering for the 7 July London bombings national memorial at Hyde Park which he designed for Carmody Groarke Architects. It comprises fifty-two stainless steel *stellae* and the plaque with the dedication and names of the deceased.

Some heritage signs, termed as pseudo signposts, came up for criticism. Given that it had what Catherine termed as 'status anxiety', the previously unnamed National Gallery has been more recently attributed with very constrained, modified letterforms based on the Roman script. But the speakers particularly liked the *in situ* stone-carved lettering to the new extension to the Gallery. Lettering around the stone drum at the centre of the British Museum was liked neither for its Rotis typeface nor for its positioning. The speakers worried about the high street that was, in their words, 'blanded out by corporate identity signs'. They also cared about

the effect of the ego of the architect on the potential of signage. Their lecture did not allow for more detailed analysis of some of the signs and buildings shown, but the statements and questions raised by Guildsmen at the end made for further interest.

Tom Ponsonby spoke of James Mosley's typefoundry. blogspot.com and No. 10 Downing Street. David McLaughlin admired the church lettering praised by Nicolette Gray at North Stoke, Somerset and drew attention to Graham Finch's survey of shop fronts in Bath, now part of the Bath archive at the town hall. Alf Fisher said he expresses delight when he sees interesting signage in the high street. Nicholas Cooper reminded us that in past times signs were made by locally-based, apprenticed craftsmen. He also asked whether the speakers encourage their students to 'unlearn', to which there was a positive reply. Sally Pollitzer asked about the value of the computer for letterforms and was told that it was used when appropriate, although hand drawing was also encouraged. Mark Winstanley said that on a visit to Highgrove, where photography is not permitted, he was forced to make a record by drawing. Corina Fletcher said that patterned letters, such as Arabic and Japanese inscriptions, are not always legible, but was assured that the vernacular is in itself of interest. The speakers were thanked and applauded for their contribution to the continuing Guild debate about the appropriateness of lettering and decoration in general.

PM Sally Pollitzer

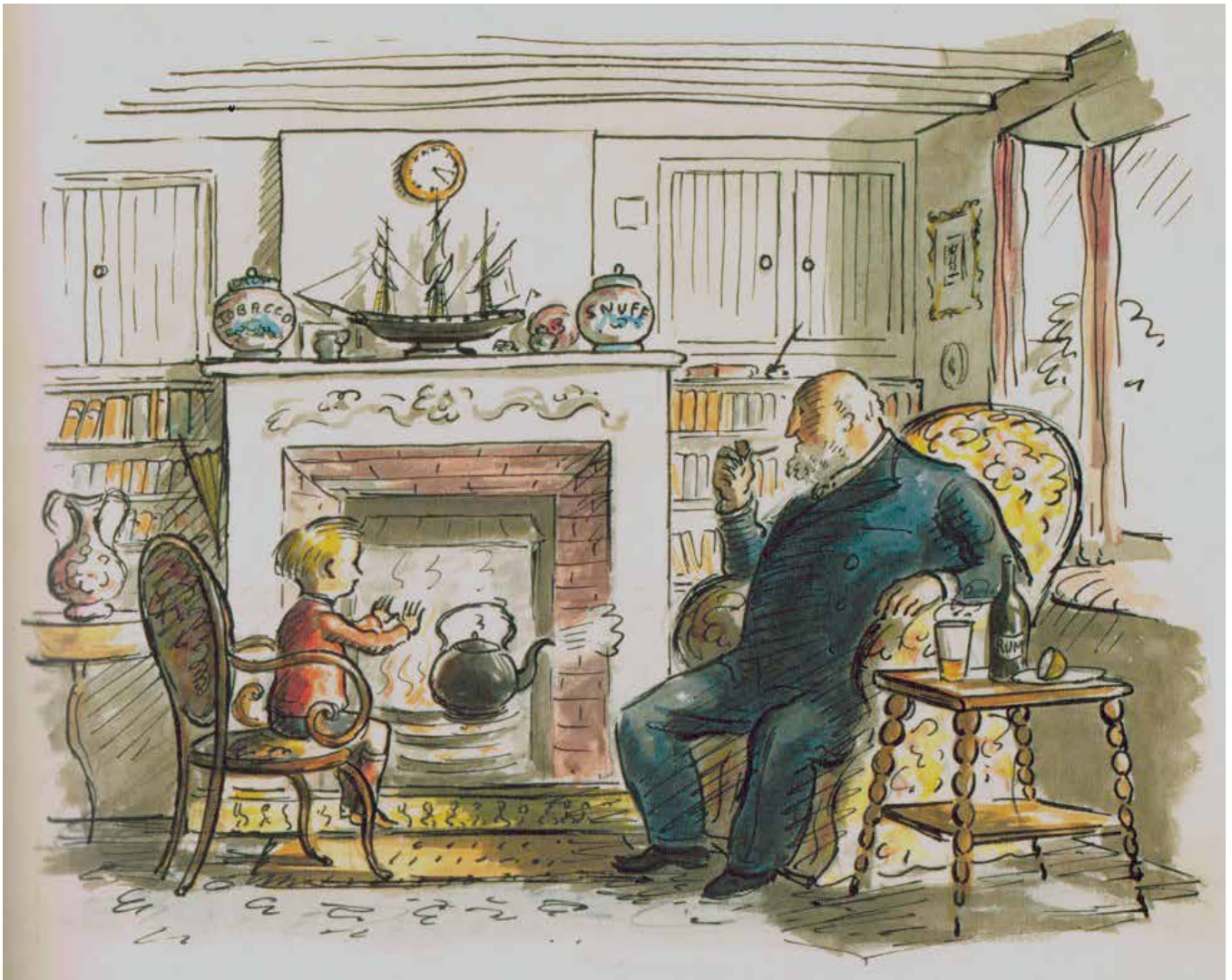
5 October 2017 · ORDINARY MEETING

Lecture · Edward Ardizzone

BRO. ALAN POWERS

On this joyful evening Bro. Powers began by letting us hear the modulated jovial tones of the painter and illustrator Edward Ardizzone on *Desert Island Discs* in 1972. Bro. Powers' book on Ardizzone came out a year ago (Lund Humphries 2016) but Powers had known and loved his work as a child. Noting Ardizzone's essay 'The Born Illustrator' which appeared in *Motif* in 1958, Powers echoed Ardizzone's distinction between the illustrator and the artist who illustrates – the former dependent on the written word and make-believe rather than a dependence on the visible world. The illustrator is in essence a storyteller. For example, Eric Ravilious was not a storyteller, unlike his contemporary Edward Bawden.

Bro. Powers provided a vivid picture of Ardizzone who was born in Haiphong, Vietnam, to a father who



Edward Ardizzone *When it Was Wet, Tim Would Visit Captain McFee*
 Copyright © Estate of Edward Ardizzone, by kind permission

was a naturalised Frenchman of Italian parentage and an English mother. His father worked for a telegraph company; his mother had been to art school in Paris. Powers showed a tantalising group portrait of the family in East Bergholt where Ardizzone and his siblings were partly brought up by his formidable maternal grandmother Mrs Irvine. As a boy he explored Ipswich docks talking to the men minding tramp steamers – an experience that was subsequently to bear fruit.

He loved Beatrix Potter's illustrations for their delicate colours and precision. Bullied at school, drawing became a refuge for Ardizzone. His figurative gift was not for likenesses but to capture stance and body language. In 1918 he left school, and tried unsuccessfully to enlist. He worked as a clerk and lived in the house his father bought at 130 Elgin Avenue, Maida Vale and left in trust for all his children. This was to be Ardizzone's home for over fifty years. He shared the house with his sister Betty and her husband Gabriel White, later director of art at

the Arts Council.

Bro. Powers gave a vivid description of Ardizzone's working practices, his chair and desk in the front room on the first floor of Elgin Avenue, stopping at 6 p.m. for a drink but never able to stop drawing entirely. He had attended evening classes at Westminster School of Art, taught by Bernard Meninsky, alongside Gabriel White and Augustine Booth. Dressed as a costermonger at an art school dance he met a beautiful girl in the same costume, Catherine Anderson, whom he married in 1929. His paintings, though praised, did not sell. His subject matter was Maida Vale, grand and sleazy. His dealer was eventually Lillian Browse.

He was fond of the illustrations of Cruickshank, Doré and Daumier but disliked the fashionable lithographs of McKnight Kauffer. Bro. Powers reflected on the stage-like quality of Ardizzone's work. He apparently told PM Brian Webb that when at work he would imagine he was in a theatre. His children set him on a course as a great

Guild Business

Ironically, considering the subject of the evening, the Minutes of the previous Meeting did not arrive so Bro. Alan Powers gave a quick *résumé* of his lecture on Edward Ardizzone, encouraging us to buy his new book.

Lecture · *The Death of Writing*

EWAN CLAYTON

Handwriting is something so ordinary that it can often be overlooked. Growing up near Ditchling, Sussex, surrounded by Gill's type, at the age of twelve Ewan Clayton was put back a class in handwriting. His grandparents encouraged his love of calligraphy by giving him a biography of Edward Johnston and Gourdie's guide to handwriting.

Twenty-five years of research led to his book *The Golden Thread - the history of writing from Hieroglyphics to iPad* which is translated into many languages and published in all media from paper to tablet with stylus. At Xerox in Palo Alto, California, Clayton consulted in the development of the computer from a calculator to a writing machine. Working with David Levy, he studied the triangle of relationships between artefacts, work practices and technology. This Arts and Crafts based notion, that the forms of the objects be in a direct relationship with the materials they are made from, clarifies that changing the technology starts the creation of new artefacts.

Our speaker held up his hands to pose an absurd question: Does handwriting have a future? Astonished how, after 2000 years of writing being so central to our culture, this question has arisen at all, Ewan Clayton warned that if handwriting has no future, resources in schools will be pulled back, and our children will lose a special form of communication. He does not think handwriting will disappear, but we need to provide articulate guidance in teaching. The italic hand is a good model



Writing using a brush, a wall from Pompeii 79AD

illustrator for the young, *Little Tim and the Brave Sea Captain* (1936) being written for his son, *Lucy Brown and Mr Grimes* (1937) for his daughter. He was something of a new man, his wife going out to work to help support the family while he remained at home. An early War Artist in WW2, he recorded the German invasion of France and witnessed the North African and Italian campaigns. Physically he was brave and may have captured Taormina by mistake. Bro. Powers showed us some of his darker war art, and his move towards more formalist landscapes under the influence of Edward Bawden.

Post-war saw a triumphant run of Little Tim stories that displayed his mastery of the drawn line and his sensitive use of colour, often well reproduced by his printers, as well as playful storytelling. *Tim All Alone* (1957) was his darkest story, for which he won the Kate Greenaway Medal. Ardizzone voted Labour and belonged to the Artists International Association: Bro. Powers suggested he could be defined as a social realist, keen to depict the dignity of labour. Bro. Powers gave a fascinating account of Ardizzone's other work as an illustrator including jobbing work of a high standard for Guinness and the Radio Times, and his backdrop for the Chelsea Arts Ball in 1947 – claiming him as an exponent of neo-Baroque, and admiring his work as muralist. As Maurice Sendak noted, his talent was 'totally original' and Bro. Powers left us with a much greater understanding of the special nature of Ardizzone's art – he emerged as a social realist indeed.

The Master gave warm thanks and there was much applause in a crowded room followed by lively questions. PM Brian Webb's memories of Ardizzone were a delight, Ardizzone claiming that he metaphorically sat at the back of the theatre of life and that when writing for children he always put in one difficult word (as did Beatrix Potter).

Bro. Archie Beck commented that Ardizzone found income tax a terrible burden and told a touching anecdote about Ardizzone, snuff and a sneezing dog. Bro. Alan Powers noted that this gifted man suffered money worries all his life. Technical questions followed, among which pens and intractable India Ink were discussed. The Master recalled Ardizzone's fondness for having fish and chips with the printers at the Curwen Press. A very British discussion about Ardizzone's accent followed, inspired by the clip from Desert Island Discs.

Bro. Tanya Harrod



Some of the resources used by Ewan Clayton in writing his lecture

for learning how to write, with pen-holding and posture being fundamentally important.

After studying all the great changes in communication, he does not mourn ideas of a lost past. A cheque dated 16th Feb 1659 reminded us that our whole banking system was invented by people writing notes. Apple's iMessage users currently send 200,000 messages a second.

He mourned the disruptive closure of local libraries. People have bought the idea that books are just holders of information, which you can then extract, compact onto a computer and thus save on the costs of running the building and people's jobs. The library is a functional institution housing classes, information centres for employment, and a place for homeless people to read the newspaper. Librarians themselves are skilled people who know how to help you find the information you want. There is an art to finding things, and without librarians we could be left just staring at a screen.

Once technologies become digital, we are faced with threats to privacy and security. Old technologies had elaborate ways of sealing letters, and filing systems were housed in locked rooms. Publishing and advertising are changing because of information technology. Technology is changing the process of education, and how do we assess and resist plagiarism? These changes even have huge political implications for how we run democracy. Handwriting is linked to all these issues.

It is important to think of writing in a diverse way, as a whole ecology of things. Handwriting does not exist in isolation from print, sign-writing and the skill to type. An ecology is like a landscape, criss-crossed with roads and footpaths, all allowing a free flowing of movement and information.

When our speaker was working with Xerox, they developed an information system for San Jose airport. First they looked at the ground support staff, passport

control, the luggage handlers, refuelling of planes, clearing systems for planes to come in. As this happened on the ground, the flight control tower concentrated on what happened in the air.

Airports operate through a multitude of partial, fragmented information sources. An assemblage of artefacts, from Post-it notes to phones and walkie-talkies, work with the practices of scribbling, shout-outs, and simply looking out of the window.

So why should the ecology of these forms be persistent? The study of San Jose airport proves that we need to handle information in multiple contexts. Someone who knows how to write by hand will always have an advantage over someone who does not. Writing carved into a piece of stone stays put. As the Kremlin reverts to using typewriters to avoid computer leaks, our speaker noted that, as an NHS patient, the written hospital notes at the foot of his bed were of great value to him and his family.

Writing is not just transcription. If you are writing to understand something, speed may not be the most important thing.

Brothers Roger Kneebone, Iain Exley, Katharine Coleman and Alan Powers all contributed to a discussion about the preservation of handwriting in Europe and America and China. The speaker explained the workings of the National Handwriting Association, and the work they do with schools. We ended with the thought that writing is a window into the soul of the writer, except if you were a slave in the ancient world, stone carving someone else's words. To write is to be a free person.

Bro. Rachael Matthews

2 November 2017 · ORDINARY MEETING

Guild Business

Printed notices were distributed and read. The Guild Christmas Party was announced for 11 December when the recently roofed-over courtyard would be officially opened and celebrated. A hat should be worn to the party if possible.

Lecture · The Ethics of the Copy JAMES JESSIMAN

It is rare during a lecture at the Guild to sense the sudden collective rising of hackles but this happened more than once during James Jessiman's thought-provoking

essay and the discussion that followed.

After stints at art school and a master's degree from the RCA, James had set up as printer. He had been involved in the reprinting and republication of classic children's books, mostly American and from the 1950s. These had originally been printed lithographically from hand-drawn separations which were now lost. James had forensically scanned and rebuilt these separated layers. It was at this point that he posited the idea that he had remade the images and textures so completely that perhaps they were partly now also his own creation as well as that of the original artist. In his talk he would examine this area further. He had made multiple copies of artist's prints which were later signed by the artist who had originally drawn or designed them and sold for large sums of money. He discussed the studio practice of the past where the master only finished the hands and face of a figure and assistants carried out the rest of the work. For instance, Perugino employed the young Raphael as an assistant. He cited the contemporary practice of artists such as Damien Hirst, who employed a set of artists to carry out his famed 'spot' paintings. He examined the notion of the 'bootleg', showing examples of the popular Super Mario games from Nintendo. There were only three or four authentic Mario World games but there were sixteen bootleg Mario World games using parts of the original all muddled up with other elements. These all sold in huge quantities in the Far East where copying and forgery were commonplace. He discussed the rise of technologies which enabled copying, such as the tape cassette which allowed multiple copies of music tracks to be made, and the anti-pirating movement. He cited the rise of 'bootleg chic' and *faux* fashion which had travelled up the scale as far as stores such as Selfridges. Certain designers had even taken to parading knock-off designs such as the DHL delivery logo on their garments on the catwalk. He said that in his own work and practice he often used sampled images from printed sources such as religious flyers and other found ephemera. He discussed the work of Elaine Sturtevant who 'appropriated' Andy Warhol's Marilyn Monroe silk screens by taking them from his studio and repainting from them, issuing almost identical works though by her not Warhol. Her sampling of the original was enough to claim that this was an original work. He went on to cite many more examples of this odd grey area, including the photographer Sherrie Levine, who had taken images of well-known Walker Evans photographs from a catalogue and exhibited them as original art.

In his own work he was interested in the gap between the original and the almost accurate copy. He concentrated on the minutiae of printing errors and misalign-

ments. He argued for a code of ethics showing where and how these appropriations should be handled by artists. 'If', he said 'appropriating from a culture, one must be most respectful in this. It can mark the end of a career for an artist if cultural appropriation happens *laissez faire*, without the care it demands. Of course', he added, 'this is a heavy subject, enough for another talk in itself. Should there be at least guidelines, lessons learnt from the past, or morals and ethics to consider?'

He concluded that the copyright laws were not really up to the job and that this was not something which was going to go away; that bootlegging, copying, and appropriation were now a fixed part of the fine art world and we the viewers must learn to discriminate; that artists should where possible always copy from 'below'.

A lively discussion followed with many interjections and comments from Guildsmen and guests who had suffered from similar 'appropriations' in their own work and practice. Many joined the throng, including Bro. Anne Hickmott, who had seen her work stolen without permission. PM Ed Fairfax-Lucy discussed the practice of copying paintings at the National Gallery and the strict rules that were laid down for this. Bro. Tony Wills spoke of how his own work had 'inspired' many others, and his daughter's jewellery designs had been copied, and the terrible costs of pursuing through the legal system. The identical nature of Russian icons was discussed, and PM Sally Pollitzer questioned whether this was an intellectual challenge signifying a challenge of perception. Was this an issue of Patenting? The speaker replied that you could only patent an invention.

A hall-of-mirrors-like argument developed about how the artist's intention could be conveyed within the copied work. PM Prue Cooper summed it up succinctly: 'How do you convey that the intention is difference? This is the original, this is the copy.'

PM Ian Archie Beck



The Master opened the Meeting and welcomed everyone. The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and notices were given.

Lecture · The Book, the Whole Book, and Nothing But
GRAHAM MOSS

Since the late 1980s Graham Moss has been a typesetter, printer and bookbinder, 'producing decent books in an indecent world'.

'Typography, by which I mean the arrangement of type on the paper for general reading, needs to be controlled by only two rules: Simplicity and Clarity. With that understood, a meaningful conversation can begin.' So began an entertaining and visually stimulating talk. Moss explained that he started his working life as an office boy on *Fishing News*, going on to work as the office manager for the Freedom Press, having been a heating oil distributor and working in a library in the 1960s along the way.

Somewhere along the line Graham became the Head of History in a Manchester secondary school, but after some time became disaffected by teaching. He learned bookbinding, bought himself a small printing press and established 'Papersafe'.

He went on to set up Incline Press and his leaving present from the school was a set of Baskerville type. Graham regards himself as an artisan, which means that he controls the whole process physically and intellectually, selecting the appropriate typefaces, colour, paper, layout and so on. This, he said, brings a spirit of joy into his work.

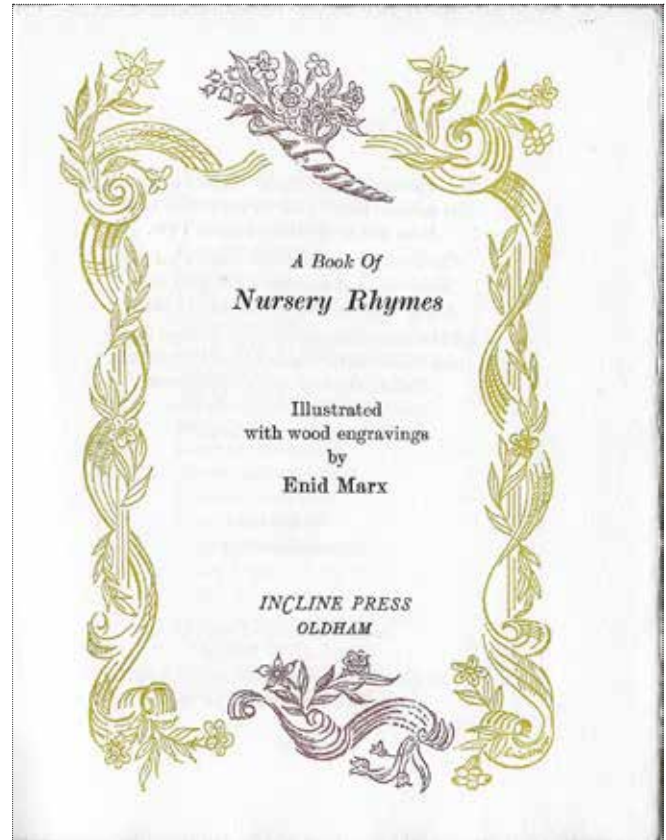
Then followed a series of images of book pages and bindings which delighted the eye and lifted the spirit. The balance between type and white space, between image and text, and the position of all on the textured paper was inspiring. Graham explained the background to each book, who wrote the text, why a particular typeface was selected, the choosing of images and decoration and the colour used if any. Even when enlarged to the size of the screen at the Art Workers' Guild, as opposed to being pages in books held in the hand, the designs were exquisite.

Names of great poets, designers, wood-engravers and artists cropped up in Graham's talk such that it was difficult to keep up with the illuminati: Elizabeth Friedlander, Enid Marx, Eric Ravilious, David Blamires, Helen Binyon and more.

Graham concluded by saying that good books were

one of the graces in life, especially when life is ungracious. Seeing the treats that he showed on screen proved how graceful book pages can be.

Graham showed a bookbinding of yellow buckram decorated with a precise coloured pattern. He had found the buckram in a skip. Hon. Sec. Mark Winstanley



Enid Marx *A Book of Nursery Rhymes*
The Incline Press's first publication

asked for the slide to be reshown and stated that he had a quantity of this buckram, to which Graham would be most welcome.

The bonus for all us who were there was a beautifully printed keepsake of the quotation with which Graham started his talk.

Questions were asked, first on the prevention of cockling when tipping images into books, the answer to which was ensuring the grain direction is from head to tail in both instances, and he used Pritt Stick. How to cope with binding a book with different lengths of pages. How to allow for tipped-in images not bulking out a book when binding. Inserting guard sheets to ensure similar thickness at gutter and fore-edge was the answer.

It was a most interesting and stimulating talk by someone who clearly has his life:work balance sorted.

Bro. Patricia Lovett

Lecture · American Night
BRO. ELAINE ELLIS

The subject of the talk was Elaine's father, Norman Hirschl (1915-2002), art dealer and philanthropist.

Norman Hirschl was not always going to be an art dealer. His first love was music, possibly as a result of nearly being born on a piano bench; his mother, a piano teacher, went into labour whilst playing. The family tale is that she was playing Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*. He wrote music at High School and at College and five of his College songs are in the collection of the Library of Congress. He also had a deep interest in journalism at High School and College.

He went to work as an intern for his uncle Fred, an English art dealer who had married his aunt. After a while there he asked his uncle which path he should take; he still had a great interest in music and journalism but was intrigued by the art world. Uncle Fred advised that, although he would not make much money as an art dealer, there was a good living to be had and a fascinating one, surrounded by beautiful things. That appealed to Norman so he became an art dealer working for Fred who gave him a further key piece of advice: never to look at a picture and ask what is right with it but to look at it and ask what is wrong with it.

At that time art dealing meant going out on the road, with regular trips west of the Hudson to show stock to curators and collectors. After his uncle died, Norman continued to work there and in 1938 he married Elaine's mother, Barbara. Her background was in fashion and together they founded the innovative Decorators Picture Service, making connections with interior designers, decorators and architects. He then met and worked with Albert Duveen and together, in upstate New York, they found, promoted and exhibited the Hudson River marine and landscape paintings of Thomas Chambers, a hitherto virtually unknown artist, now regarded as a national treasure. Elaine showed us a photograph, taken in the family home when she was a small child, of a painting by Chambers lent for that ground-breaking show, which she continues to live with at home today.

In 1940 he became the manager of the John Levy gallery, staying for twelve years, interrupted by wartime service in the Philippines. When time allowed, he wrote music and drew. After the war Norman championed contemporary artists including Arbit Blatas, a Jewish Lithuanian artist who had studied with Bonnard, Matisse and Soutine before escaping to the United States in 1941. Blatas, who was fascinated by theatre and



music, designed the sets for *The Threepenny Opera*. His mother was killed in the Holocaust and he created a wonderful and moving series of bas relief sculptures outside the synagogue in the Venice Ghetto.

Norman thought that he would take over the gallery upon John Levy's retirement but it instead passed to a nephew, so in 1952 he founded Hirschl and Adler with his friend Abe Adler. The scope and ambition of the gallery was extraordinary, showing all schools of western art from the renaissance to the present day. Norman realised that he still needed to travel to find stock and clients and on one of these trips he discovered, on the walls of an enormous baronial home in Cincinnati, the four *Voyage of Life* paintings by Thomas Cole. He sold them to Paul Mellon on the understanding they would be given to the nation and they are now in the National Gallery of Art in Washington. There were many other artists rediscovered and championed by Norman, including Frederick Carl Frieseke and Louise Herreshoff.

Barbara also had a gallery, promoting the work of contemporary artists. Norman and Barbara made significant gifts of paintings to institutions and neither ever retired in the conventional sense but taught, organised and participated in education, theatre, journalism and politics.

Bro. Juliet Johnson had been delighted to see PM John Skelton's sculpture *Fallen Warrior*, given to the

City of Coventry by Norman and Barbara in memory of their son, on display at the Herbert Art Gallery, and Bro. Alan Powers drew attention to the Skelton carvings on the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry. *The Sower* by Millet, given by Norman and Barbara to the Clark Art Gallery, Williamstown was much admired by Bro. Michael Sangster.

The talk concluded with a further round of applause. Elaine had shown us the achievements of her father and mother, but also conveyed to us their warmth and generosity.

Bro. Neil Jennings

OFFICERS' REPORTS

Chairman of Trustees

My thanks to Past Master, Chairman and Trustee Julian Bicknell. Julian resolved many of the difficult issues facing the Guild before passing the baton to me. I have only one complaint: his shoes are too big to fill.

I am pleased to report that the Guild is in even better shape than last year. By carefully managing the finances and putting safeguards in place, the Trustees have continued to protect the Guild in uncertain times. To that end, the Trustees, Hon. Secretaries and staff have:

- Updated Guild rules
- Written new expenses procedures
- Completed the courtyard and other building works
- Tidied up our graphic identity
- Finalised the website
- Installed a new Sage accounting system
- Raised funds including via the Guild Auction
- Instigated a series of risk limitation procedures

None of the above could have happened efficiently without the hard work and dedication of Catherine and Leigh in the office, or the clarity of mind of our Hon. Treasurer Alec McQuin, whose report will provide the detail of our improved finances. Special thanks are due to Julian for masterminding the rules and to Hon. Architect Simon Hurst for his designs and management of the building work. And of course, our thanks to Elspeth for her brilliant organisation and catering.

I can also report that the Guild has received a generous donation from the estate of Past Master Roderick Ham for which we give thanks.

As Julian pointed out at last year's AGM, we are steeped in history with our forebears looking down upon

us. Our past is important, but having made great strides in securing the Guild's future, our next task is to shape that future.

'Plan for the future because that's where you're going to spend the rest of your life.' Mark Twain

Bro. Tony Wills

Hon. Treasurer

The year has been another successful one for the Art Workers' Guild and I am pleased to submit my second annual accounts as your Hon. Treasurer.

Income has increased from £317,502 to £447,557, an increase of £130,055 (41%), and I would acknowledge the hard work undertaken by the Guild Secretary Catherine O'Keeffe, the Guild Administrator Leigh Milsom Fowler, and the Guild Steward Elspeth Dennison and their team for this excellent result.

I must also acknowledge the fantastic support of the trusts, foundations and individual donations and bequests which made the completion of the Courtyard Project possible.

The income was mostly made up as below (2016 figures in brackets):

- Donations, bequests, fundraising £154,622 (£34,385)
 - Hiring of rooms and catering £151,763 (£149,042)
 - Investment income was £91,753 (£94,640)
 - Gift Aid £8,567 (£2,971) - a significant increase
- many thanks to everyone for signing the necessary forms!

Expenditure for the year was £388,624 (£253,251) - an increase over last year of £135,373 (53%).

Expenditure was higher than expected in several areas, the key ones being detailed below:

- Legal and professional £15,871. We have reviewed several areas of the Guild resulting in associated legal works.
- Building repairs / courtyard works £34,610. Other than general repairs and maintenance of the building, notable items of expenditure were: the creation of fire cupboards around the gas and electrical areas, overhauling of the sound system for the hall, replacement of the stairclimber for disabled people's access to the first floor and the fitting of new carpet to the stairs and first floor landing.
- The completion of the new website.

Despite these costs, the accounts show a surplus for the 12 month period of £59,153 (£64,251 – 2016) for the year, a small decrease of £5,098 compared with last year.

This is despite the full cost of the Courtyard Project being paid (£141,617).

The balance sheet stands at £286,115 as compared to £227,182 last year, an increase of £59,153 (26%).

In addition to the above, the works detailed below were completed during the year:

- A debtor system is now well established and working well. The total number of debtors at year end was only 8, with no bad debts during the year.
- The hiring rates that were reviewed last year have made the administration easier and this is reflected in the excellent revenues we have received from our hirers.
- The new systems and processes have been implemented within the administrative and financial disciplines of the office and all is working well.
- The membership has increased to 377.
- We have progressed well with the processing of our own accounts and our monthly P&L management accounts are accurate and timely.

In conclusion, I am happy to report that the Art Workers' Guild is in good health, as reflected in our year-end financial accounts.

May I conclude by thanking everyone for their support and encouragement in the year, in particular our Chairman Tony Wills, the Master Phil Abel and our Guild Secretary Catherine O'Keeffe, who has done a magnificent job of organising the office and implementing the new processes.

The year has started well with our figures on budget and I look forward to the year ahead.

Bro. Alec McQuin

Fundraising Committee

On 5 October, the Sub-Committee met for the 27th time since 2011 and decided that, as the planned fundraising for the Courtyard Project and associated works had reached a sufficient level, it should wind itself up. The Guild has achieved the funding necessary for the work to be carried out on the front façade and railings next year. As and when further improvements to the fabric or other needs arise, a new sub-committee might be established.

I am most grateful to PMs Prue Cooper, Ed Fairfax-Lucy, David Birch, Julian Bicknell, and also to

Simon Hurst and Margaret Richardson, all of whom have given up their time to play a part on the Committee over the years. However, most of the practical work – such as making applications to trusts (generally very successfully) and making arrangements for events – has fallen on the office staff, and the bulk of our thanks for the success of the campaign must go to Monica, Catherine and Leigh.

There was a party to celebrate the completion of Phase I on 22 September 2015 and that for Phase II ('Raising the Roof') happened on 11 December this year. A bound book to record all financial gifts to the appeal has been kept up to date by John Nash.

Perhaps the most enjoyable parts of the fundraising have been the four annual auctions, including one of postcard-sized work, comprising largely work by members of the Guild, sometimes with great ingenuity. The 'Thanksgiving' auction held on 23 November this year, added some £6800 to the appeal (£8800 gross). Thank you so much to everyone who took part. It has been decided not to continue with these for the present, although the idea of raising money for brethren by selling their work in this way is a potentially useful one.

One legacy of the appeal is a database of over 200 contacts, apart from Brethren, including press, donors, purchasers and kindred organisations that use the Hall. This should be useful for Outreach and in other ways in the future.

Bro. Christopher Claxton Stevens

Hon. Architect

This has been a momentous year for the building with the courtyard roof coming to fruition. It has been a truly rewarding project and I am very pleased with the way it has turned out. It is sometimes easy to forget what a cramped, dank, bottle-neck of a space it was before the railings to the lightwell were removed and the glass roof put in.

In other works around the building, we have enclosed all the gas and electrical meters and fuse boxes in the basement corridor with fire-rated cupboards as part of our Fire Safety Review, and also fitted a new high security wider door to the front lightwell increasing the fire escape width to the maximum.

We have also raised up the display cabinet in the Master's Room to make it more practical for exhibition purposes. We have a new central light fitting in the Graddidge Room and DAB are considering a commission for a Brother to make lampshades for this.



Views of the Courtyard before works began



A view before, one of the card model, and then completed



Photographs taken of the cast iron in production at FSE Foundry in Braintree



Photos of the completed roof with curved laminated glass barrel vault and fused glass louvres

Next year we have plans to refurbish the front elevation, the last part of the external envelope that has not been renovated. This will include repair and overhaul of the 13 sash windows, and it is hoped that we can use Bro. Jane Muir's generous donation to fund the 2 wrought iron lanterns to stand sentry either side of the entrance.

We also plan to redecorate the Master's Room and DAB are currently contemplating options for the colour scheme. The track lighting will be upgraded to accurate colour-rendering LED fittings.

Last but not least, we are looking to upgrade the cushions in the main hall with plumper versions for increased comfort for all.

Bro. Simon Hurst

Outreach Committee

The spin-offs from the two *Thinking With Your Hands* events here at the Guild have multiplied. The message that craftsmanship has transferable values, and that an arts education is not a mindless way to pass the time after double maths, is clearly demonstrated in such cross-disciplinary events. It is frustrating but true that the Great and Good (who influence policy) do take more notice when they see surgeons and astro-physicists exploring parallels with craftspeople, but with the help of Bro. Roger Kneebone that prejudice can be exploited, with benefits all round.

A third event, which Bro. Kneebone organised at Imperial College in October, followed directly from the

one here in March, and similarly involved many Guild members; and it did indeed, being at Imperial, draw an even greater and gooder audience. Imperial also funded a virtual reality film of Bro. Fleur Oakes at work to present at this event, and later in October, as a further part of this work, Roger chaired a conversation at Tate Modern with Fleur and Bro. Rachael Matthews, titled *Transformation and Value*.

The Guild has collaborated on two events with Bro. Celia Ward's East London Textile Arts, drawing in dental students from Kings College London, who are keen to continue the project. It teaches them about the understanding of materials, and 'Close noticing' - essential, one would think - but the students all start the course having given up any hands-on education, and find the project a revelation.

Another offshoot of all this cross-disciplinary stuff is the Guild's involvement with a V&A Research Institute working party, made up of 30 craftspeople, artists, curators, academics, musicians and medics. The aim is to articulate aims and hopes, both practical and theoretical, large-scale and small-scale, for the arts in general; to pinpoint difficulties, and to suggest ways to address the huge range of problems facing artists and makers and designers. The project is funded for 5 years, and the V&A's aim is to engender useful projects and to further aims which are very similar to those of the Guild.

PM George Hardie and Bro. Stephen Fowler masterminded the second Table Top Museum event, where makers and designers showed collections - not of their own work, but of objects collected for some particular focus, or unexpected connection. There were some

extraordinary displays, and several hundred people attended, many of them design tutors and students. This event had much in common with the Thinking With Your Hands events, in illuminating connections, and widening perception.

The Outreach programme has been running for four years and various other projects are now under way. The sociable structure of the Guild engenders the goodwill and sense of common purpose which makes teamwork possible; teamwork makes the outreach projects possible; and outreach projects reward recipients and participants alike.

Anyone who would like to be involved please contact Catherine, or anyone on the Outreach Committee.

PM Prue Cooper

Hon. Archivist

The pencil sketches of past AWG members by Frederick Lawson c.1892-1935, and the photographs of past members, c.1900-1914, have been digitised at high resolution and copies sent to the Bridgeman Art Library. A list of all of these images (amounting to around 400), and the images themselves, are available to members of the Guild and to visitors to the archive.

The photographs are bound into three albums. Two are by the distinguished bookbinder Douglas Cockerell. The third, which was a poor quality commercial album, has been rebound by Bro. Mark Winstanley.

The Guild has adequate photographs of only a small proportion of the Hall portraits. Images are needed in case of loss or damage, and for possible reproduction. An estimate has been received from a highly recommended specialist photographer, and work will proceed in the new year.

An estimate has been accepted for the retyping of C. R. Ashbee's unpublished memoir of past masters with a view to possible publication of this important source for the history of the Guild and of the arts and crafts in the early 20th century.

Bro. Nicholas Cooper

Hon. Librarian

Once again, very little book buying was done, total expenditure being less than £200. But there were notable donations, principally from Bro. Keith Bailey, who died in the spring leaving 15 boxes of books at the dis-

posal of the Guild. I spent a day in Cambridge in July going through them, painfully conscious of the fact that it would be impossible, for reasons of space if nothing else, to take more than a very few. In the end, I came up with a list of 10 which fitted the guidelines, as well as two albums full of Keith's very beautiful layouts and drawings. A choice item which did *not* fit the guidelines exactly was Ben Shahn's *Love and Joy about Letters*, which I could not resist. All the others had contributions by or references to (among others): Milner Gray, John Dreyfus, Jerry Cinamon, David Kindersley, Gilbert Ledward, MacDonald Gill, A. J. Ayres, Walter Crane, Reynolds Stone, Gordon Russell, Percy Smith, Edmund Ware, Harry Parr, Alan Durst, C. F. A. Voysey, George Mansell, Lida Cardozo, Paul Woodroffe, Robert Austin... etc.

Other donations: Brother David McLaughlin presented the Guild with proof copies of a two-volume work of 1912, *Byzantine and Romanesque Architecture* by Bro. Sir Thomas Graham Jackson, full from the title-page onward with notes, rearrangements, corrections and terse comments in the vigorous hand of (we assume) Sir Thomas himself. John Shaw, former Guild Librarian, contributed *Think of the Words*, a survey of his own career as a letter-carver. He also offered three books for sale at a cost of £120: memories of Eric Gill by Donald Potter and David Kindersley, and an early work by Past Master Percy Smith, *The Beatitudes*, signed and inscribed by Smith himself.

Bro. John R. Nash

Guild Secretary

This has been a very busy year at the Guild. Not only do we have a new roof on the courtyard, we have tidied up the brand, restructured the website and given it more visual impact, made the initial steps in setting up the mentoring programme and taken part in several craft and design related events.

Of these, the ones that stand out are our collaboration with Fortnum & Mason during London Craft Week, when several Brothers displayed work inspired by Highgrove at the shop in Piccadilly, and the Table Top Museum, an inventive celebration of the individual and extraordinary rules of those who collect. Fortuitously coinciding with Open House weekend, it drew a large and lively crowd, who were able to enjoy museums of groovy flutes, coastal curiosities, shopping lists, gay dolls and the Chinchilla's Museum of Crypto-Zoology, to name but a few, along with a few glasses of very good

value wine.

The Guild Auction at the end of the year crowned a highly successful year of fundraising for the courtyard, including a JustGiving campaign, which drew in several substantial donations.

After Monica's departure in February, Leigh and I have divided up the office work between us. While we miss Monica, and her invaluable in-depth knowledge of all the Brothers and their work, I hope we now have a team, including Elspeth of course, which is working to provide seamless administration and the all-important friendly face that is the essence of the Guild.

Thanks as always to Alec McQuin, whose steady hand has kept us all on the straight and narrow financially, our affable Chairman Tony Wills, and Master Phil Abel, who was a complete joy to work with this year; not forgetting our indefatigable Hon. Secretaries, Mark and Celia, and all the other volunteers who keep this rather complicated show on the road.

Catherine O'Keeffe

NEW GUILDSMEN IN 2017

New Brethren

Prue Bramwell-Davis *Textiles*
Hannah Coulson *Illustrator, Painter*
Marianne Fox Ockinga *Artist, Printmaker*
Zebedee Helm *Illustrator, Cartoonist*
Simon Henley *Architect*
Edwina Ibbotson *Milliner*
Thomas Mayo *Letterpress, Printmaker*
Aki Mizobuchi *Oriental Lacquer Worker*
and Conservator

Timothy Richards *Model Maker*
Michael Rust *Letter Carver, Sculptor, Printmaker*
Russell Taylor *Architect*
Rachel Trevor-Morgan *Milliner*
Helen Whittaker *Stained Glass*

Honorary Members

Peter Cormack
James Maloney

Affiliate

Shanti Gorton *Artist*

VALETTE

Keith Bailey, Daphne Boothby, Milein Cosman, Paddy Curzon-Price, Richard Gilbert Scott, Roderick Ham, Derek Shiel

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 2017

Master Phil Abel
Immediate Past Master David Birch
Master Elect Jane Cox
Master Elect-Elect Anne Thorne
Past Masters Julian Bicknell, Prue Cooper Anthony Paine
Chairman of the Trustees Tony Wills

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Hon. Librarian John Nash
Hon. Archivist Nicholas Cooper
Hon. Editor Thomas Ponsonby
Hon. Chaplain Rev. Alan Carr

Jinny Blom, Christopher Claxton Stevens, Rosemary Ransome Wallis, Flora Roberts, Frances Spalding

Guild Secretary Catherine O'Keeffe
Guild Administrator Leigh Milsom Fowler
Guild Steward Elspeth Dennison

THE ART WORKERS' GUILD CHEST

The Guild Chest is a benevolent fund for Guildsmen in special need. It is financed by Legacies and donations from Brethren, and the annual collection that is made on Master's Night. It is administered in strict confidence by the Guild Chest Trustees who at present comprise PM Alison Jenson, Bro. Angela Barrett, Bro. Jane Dorner, Bro. Simon Smith and PM Phil Abel.

The Trustees of the Chest are keen that Brothers should use this facility if in need of materials or studio equipment, or perhaps to purchase frames for an exhibition. A loan might be seen as a stop-gap in difficult times. When money is borrowed, it can be paid back, without interest, entirely at the convenience of the borrower.

Please contact the Guild Secretary or one of the Trustees, whose contact details are in the Directory.