

Chair's Report of 2023

CHAIRMANSHIP

Since the AGM in November last year, the duties of the Chair have been shared between Elaine Gillingham, Cathy Stables and myself. Cathy has volunteered to be our Acting Chair for the next few months, but if any member feels they would like to share the role, please contact the Honorary Secretary..

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee, which handles all aspects of the Society business, conducts business via Zoom and we have recently obtained a Zoom licence for society business. Thanks are due to everyone on the Exec including all those who are co-opted Members.

MEMBERSHIP

SSI membership stands at 407 We have 42 Fellows, 290 Lay Members, 54 Friends and 21 Honorary Members and organisations.

Whilst Just over 80% of members live in the UK, we are pleased to attract members from around the world. We have members in Jersey, Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Egypt, Hong Kong, China, Japan, Singapore and Korea. Many thanks once again for Nicky Tait who devotes a great deal of time, care and attention to our membership base.

FELLOWS' MEETINGS have continued to take place online at regular intervals. These meetings give the Fellows opportunities to discuss our work and topics have included work pre-fellowship as well as work post-Fellowship.

EXHIBITIONS:

A Joint exhibition for the Fellows of the SSI, Society of Wood Engravers, and the Society of Bookbinders is planned for early Spring 2024 organised by Susie Leiper and Sue Hufton. This will take place at the Crafts Council Galleries in Islington.

EDUCATION:

After ten years in post as Education Board Chair, Jilly Hazeldine has decided it is time to step down, and Cherrell Avery has agreed to be her replacement. Many thanks to Jilly for her work in this important area.

Calligraphy Correspondence Course: The rewriting of the Calligraphy Correspondence Course is underway, and all eight Italic lessons are written. All the diagrams are with the printer for scanning. The first three lessons have been proof-read and set by the printer. Topics that can be clarified by a short video still need to be identified and will be accessed through QR symbols at the start of every lesson. It is hoped to be able to film these in the near future. The general introduction which will need to go out with the course needs rewriting and updating. With thanks to Jilly Hazeldine for both rewriting and running the course, and to the tutors of the current course - Tony Curtis, Jane Addison, Mary Noble, Sylvie Gokulsing and Vivien Lunniss.

The Advanced Training Scheme has been renamed the CDC (Creative Development Course) in an attempt to appear more 'user friendly'. Selection Day has likewise been renamed Introductory Day. This took place in May when six new members were brought into the course. With thanks to Frank

Zobel for efficiently administering the scheme and to dealing with the venues, and to the tutors Juliet Bankes, myself, (as Convenor) Mary Noble, Vivien Lunniss , Cherrell Avery and Tim Noad. Cathy Stables has stood in for Tim when she was unable to attend in April 2023.

The Writing and Design course has also been renamed ECS (Essential Calligraphy Skills) but we were unable to offer it in 2023 because the venue had no additional availability. The intention is to continue with the course in September 2024.

The Current Study Days are led by Juliet Bankes, with the focus on work in the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. The first meeting took place on 25 February 2023, with the second to take place later this month.

As a result of the Post ATS group weekend held in 2021, a few people are currently working towards Fellowship.

EDITORIAL

Vivien Lunniss has stepped down from the role of Editorial Board Chair after a tenure of several years and Susie Leiper has offered to replace her for a 6 month trial period. Thanks are due to Vivien for her expertise in this area.

Website: The new SSI website is nearing completion and will be launched as soon as possible. The design is in place and will be more streamlined and simpler than the current structure. Sue Hufton and Sharon Shaw have provided the web designer, Abi Fawcett, with the text and a selection of good quality images. Testing and training will take place then once all feedback has been received and everything proofread, Sue and Sharon will approve the site going live. They will continue to update the text and the images.

Social Media: We have received an offer from Iris Yuen, a new member in HK. Susie Leiper will liaise with her about the post.

The Scribe: The publication dates for the Scribe have been moved a month later to avoid coinciding with the CLAS publication 'The Edge'. The spring issue is now published in June and the winter journal in December. A December Scribe marked a technological first with access to a recording of spoken Anglo-Saxon via a QR code to accompany Alma Swan's piece on the Exeter Book. Scribe 114 will be arriving in a few days. This will be an issue of 32 pages, due in the main to a fascinating article by Ewan Clayton and Keiko Okusa, and sadly the many people who wanted to pay tribute to our dear friend Stan Knight FSSI. Many thanks to Vivien Lunniss our editor, to Sarah Morgan for her design, and to the proofreaders for their time and equally skilful checking.

eNewsletter: There have been no offers to organise the eNewsletter and we are currently relying on Mailchimps which are sent out by Julie Chaney whenever needed. Thanks to Julie for her efficiency.

CL DAY 2024:

There are currently no volunteers to organise this. If no one comes forward, there will be no CL Day.

ARCHIVES AND LIBRARY

Thanks to Donna Foster our Librarian. Donna, Sharon Shaw and Sylvie Gokulsing met with the Librarians at the LCC to discuss the future of the collection as they move to their new building in 2-3 years. There has never been a written agreement about our collection being housed there, and this is something we are now working on with the college. We then identified a number of books, mostly duplicates, no longer needed in the library, which are on offer today. (Free!) Other material will be dealt with in future visits.

SALES: the SSI shop continues to sell items produced by the Society and other items that are difficult to buy elsewhere. Most Sales are now online with top online sales by value being vellum. Thanks are due to Helena Bryant who conscientiously and efficiently runs our sales.

CLAS/SSI Initiative: Following discussion by the ATS Tutors and with the agreement of the Executive Committee, Tony Woodhams (CLAS Chair) and Josie Brown (Head of CLAS Education) were approached with a view to consider how the two societies can best respond to the current lack of Calligraphic Education at a higher level. An exploratory meeting consisting for those who are Fellows of both societies took place on 31 May.

Address: Following the death of Elspeth at the AWG, no one now lives on site. We have therefore arranged for the AWG to continue to be our postal address. Any post will be forwarded to the Treasurer each month. The need for this was recently made significant by an envelope containing the information that the SSI has been left a bequest by one Elizabeth Whittle amounting to £79,000. The Executive Committee will be discussing ideas for the use of some of the money.

And finally, we operate with a great number volunteers and cannot run the society without you. Sincere thanks to everyone who generously offers their time and expertise and we are always ready to take on new volunteers. Going forward, we need volunteers to run Capital Letters Day 2024.