

The Spencerian Study Group

Dear Friend

This unique study group was established in September 2000 with the help and enthusiasm of the late Mrs Rita Blood, an accomplished Copperplater and member of East Yorkshire Scribes. The sheer simplicity and beauty of Spencerian Script and the breathtaking skill of its artistic cousin, Ornamental Penmanship, struck us both forcibly. This was highly skilled pointed penmanship we hadn't seen the likes of before. We were immediately hooked! The catalyst for our enthusiasm was Michael Sull's book "*Spencerian Script and Ornamental Penmanship - Volume II*"

The aim of this special group is to promote the understanding, appreciation, study, practice and creative extension of a period of American artistic endeavour now regarded as the **Golden Age of Ornamental Penmanship**. This outstanding period of American penmanship flourished for seventy-five years from approximately 1850 to 1925 when its demise was brought about by changes in commercial practice and the invention of the typewriter though it continued to a lesser extent into the 1950s. Even in America today this prolific period of penmanship is something of a lost treasure and yet is of both historical and practical interest to those involved in the Lettering Arts, especially those interested in the pointed pen. The master penmen of the time were equally skilled in Engrosser's Script (Copperplate), flourishing, amazing signature writing, drawn portraiture, engrossing and illuminating. The Golden Age gave rise to some of the most gifted and versatile artist/penmen of the age. Their artistry and skill with the pointed pen, even today, is unsurpassed, yet much of it is never recorded in modern calligraphy books. However, there is currently a revival of interest through IAMPETH and a worldwide internet Ornamental Penmanship group of around 2000 subscribers.

The Spencerian Study Group holds two major workshops a year in the City of York. Meetings are held at St Lawrence's Hall, Lawrence Street, Walmgate, York. Fixed dates are the second Saturday in April and the last Saturday in September. Between times, members are encouraged to develop their penmanship skills by not only corresponding with others, but exploring creative ideas in a modern context from study day initiatives. Tools and materials are readily available through the group. My own collection of resource material (much of it precious original American penmanship from the late 1800's and early 1900's) is available to members for study purposes.

POSTAL MEMBERSHIP has now been running for two years for those enthusiasts interested in this period of penmanship yet for whatever reason are unable to attend study group meetings. Annual subscription is £6.50 (£9.00 overseas), due each September. Members receive the quarterly 'Spencerian Review' full of news, interesting articles and scans of original penmanship and calligraphy from the period. If you are at all interested in becoming a member of our postal group then please get in touch with me at the address below. Encouragingly we now have a growing overseas membership who keep in touch.

The group also has links with enthusiasts throughout the World. We have members in the United States Canada, Belgium, Australia and New Zealand and we are in contact with others via the internet. We have friendly links with **IAMPETH**, the **Copperplate Special Interest Group** here in the UK, the **Japan Penmanship Association** in Tokyo and its magazine *Yoshodo* as well as with the supportive UK calligraphy magazine *Pen People*. We have a regular exchange of newsletters between groups.

Our friendly ('family') group welcomes **keen** enthusiasts. If you're as hooked as we are on this unique American pointed pen period as well as other calligraphy from the **Golden Age** then I'm sure you'll derive just as much pleasure from the subject as we have done.

Sincerely

Brian G Walker
Dip Ed (Adv), HFCLAS, Master Penman (IAMPETH)



32 Braemar Croft
South Hiendley
Barnsley S72 9DB
bgw13@btinternet.com