

Inside the Arqadia Scholars' workshop

As three of the select few candidates to win an Arqadia-sponsored GCF Scholarship, **Jon Price GCF(APF)**, along with Jo Ronald GCF[APF] and Nicole Wall GCF[APF], were invited to a three day study workshop with framing guru Mal Reynolds GCF[APF] Adv

THOSE OF YOU with your fingers on the slow but steady pulse of the framing world will no doubt already be aware of the Guild Certified Framer Scholarships, funded by Arqadia.

For those with their fingers elsewhere, here's a brief summary. Each year, Arqadia provides funding for four successful applicants to study for and sit the Guild Certified Framer (Accredited Professional Framer) exam, as well as to achieve the initial Continuing Professional Development points necessary to recertify.

As a successful scholarship applicant in August 2017, I was aware that Arqadia's bursary would provide me with a GCF Study Guide, pay my GCF exam fee and cover the price of Guild training courses. However, in 2017 the Guild trialled taking this a step further by offering Arqadia Scholars the opportunity to attend an intensive three-day workshop in preparation for the GCF exam.

The prototype of this course was held in November and run by Mal Reynolds GCF (APF) Adv at his workshop near Lincoln. I was invited to attend alongside two other Arqadia Scholars: Jo Ronald GCF(APF), of Jo Ronald Artisan Framing, and Nicole Wall GCF(APF), owner of We Frame It.

Each day of the course was based on one of the three GCF Advanced Accreditation workshops. These are designed to prepare already qualified GCFs for the GCF Advanced Accreditations. Therefore, the course content



L-R: Mal Reynolds GCF[APF] Adv, Jon Price GCF[APF], Nicole Wall GCF[APF] and Jo Ronald GCF[APF] at Mal's three day GCF workshop

was adapted to a suitable level, but still covered many of the advanced techniques. The one-to-three teaching ratio meant Mal had time to go 'off piste' and examine specific areas requested by Nicole, Jo and I.

Day one covered Conservation Framing, from the Guild mountboard standards to causes of deterioration in artwork, and hinging with Japanese tissue paper.

This set things up nicely for Textile Framing on day two, which was concerned with many of the same conservation principles but focused on identifying, protecting and supporting different types of textile art.

In contrast to the largely theoretical first two days, Mount Decoration on day three was very hands-on, with practical sessions on ruled lines, wash panels, marbled panels and bevel decorations. Having got to know us by now and, more importantly, how much damage we were likely to cause, Mal kindly offered to let us try out some of his equipment. This meant we all ended up with either CMC or pneumatic underpinner envy.

"Before the course, I was looking forward to going into more depth about conservation and textile framing, but I found the Mount Decoration day was just as absorbing and came

away converted," Jo told me.

"The structure of the three days worked perfectly. I especially enjoyed the information about textile framing and the practical aspect of the mount decoration," said Nicole.

Personally, I found all three days indispensable in preparing me for the GCF exam. The biggest benefit for me, however, was reassurance. Like many relative newcomers to our industry, I work alone without the guidance of a more experienced mentor. I have developed my skills and knowledge by poring over study guides, textbooks, online videos and magazine articles. To have a framer of Mal's calibre teaching me and telling me that I was doing things the right way gave me a massive confidence boost in the run-up to my GCF exam.

As an additional benefit, it was good to spend evenings talking shop with Nicole and Jo. In a world where many of us have little contact with other framers with whom we can discuss the trials and tribulations of running a framing business, this was wonderfully refreshing. It added another dimension to the course and meant that we all came away with new business ideas as well as the techniques and principles learnt from the three workshops.

After all, we framers have to keep our fingers on the pulse, don't we?

Jon Price GCF(APF) is the owner of Handmade Frames handmadepictureframing.co.uk