

# Letterheads 2018: London Calling

In planning since July 2017, *Letterheads 2018: London Calling* came and went far too quickly following the opening party on 15 August. Now that the dust has settled, the organising team present the following summary of what happened for all those that participated and contributed to its overwhelming success. We would like to thank to everyone involved for their support.

## Facts & Figures

- Event ran 16-19 August 2018, with opening party on evening of 15 August.
- Location was Bargehouse, OXO Tower Wharf, London SE1. Bargehouse at OXO Tower Wharf is owned and managed by Coin Street Community Builders
- Organisers were A.S. Handover, Better Letters, Ghostsigns, Ampersand Alice, Luminor Sign Company and Pre-Vinylite Society.
- Sponsors were 1 Shot Paints and W&B Gold Leaf.
- Supporters were: Above Brand; Association of Illustrators; Better Bankside; Budweiser Budvar; Dalton Maag; G . F Smith; Kafka Brushes; Laithwaite's Wine; M.A.R.S Print Studio; Mack Brush; Mesh & Blade; nai010; The Nut Jumpers; Pinstriping & Kustom Graphics Magazine; Printed Cup Company; South Bank London; Stabilo; Type Tasting; We Are Waterloo; William Mitchell
- In attendance were 250 sign painters and lettering professionals from 30 countries across five continents. Many of these took the oath for the first time.
- We also welcomed hundreds of members of the public each day to The Grand Exhibition of the Pre-Vinylite Society, our screening room, ground floor activities, and tours of the meet proper.
- The event hashtag (#LondonLetterheads) received over 1,000 posts to Instagram. See <https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/londonletterheads/>



## Photos & Video

We have assembled three galleries of photos which can be viewed and downloaded full size via:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/betterletters/collections/72157694951849200/>

A short film is currently in production and will be distributed in due course.

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## Finances

Overall the meet ran at a loss of £1,876. This has been underwritten by A.S. Handover.

The following is a summary of the financial position at the end of the event.

### Income

Gross Ticket Sales	51,330
Booking Fees	(2,060)
Net Ticket Sales	49,270
Sponsorship	1,573
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>50,843<sup>1</sup></b>

### Expenses

Venue	10,135
Catering	8,325
Goody Bags	3,515
Printing, Website Etc	3,211
Transport and Logistics	843
Easels, AV & Infrastructure	11,191
Bus Tour	745 <sup>2</sup>
Sundry Expenses	2,816
Materials (non-Handover)	1,297
Materials (Handover)	2,339
Insurance	422
Cleaning	5,408
Lifting Crew	617
Guests from India	2,047
Graffiti Reimbursement Pending	(192)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>52,719</b>

Profit/Loss	(1,876)
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## Charity Donation

The meet raised a total of £10,066 for our nominated charity, the Waterloo Action Centre. This came predominantly from sales at the auction on Sunday, but also from the 'super sign kit' raffle, donations made by the public in return for their free tours of the meet, and a percentage of the money taken in sales from the exhibition. The funds raised will be used to support WAC's advice work with older people and those with disabilities. As a result of the significance of the donation, the charity is also now able to seek match funding which will hopefully make it go even further.

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<sup>1</sup> Income does not include any of the in-kind goods and services provided for the meet, which helped to keep the expenses lower than the actual costs related to everything used at the event.

<sup>2</sup> The bus tour was ticketed separately and was a net contributor to the event after this expenditure.

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## Participant Feedback

Here's a selection of the feedback from the emails and messages received afterwards.

*Loved every second of it. - Shon Price*

*Thank you for organizing a great event. I learned a lot and it was definitely worth coming all the way from Japan. - Taku Izawa*

*What an amazing event. Well over expectations. - Peter Liedberg*

*The event was absolutely amazing. - Petri Tuovinen*

*I want to thank you for encouraging me to get a ticket to the Letterheads meet as a newbie, I nearly didn't and went for it after reassurance from you - and I'm so glad I did!*

*I had an amazing four days, I especially loved all the workshops going on which anybody could get involved with, and I chatted to so many interesting and talented people because of that. Such a great friendly, encouraging atmosphere.*

*I also loved how many women signpainters were there and the talk on the pre-vinylettes.*

*I was really nervous to go because of how inexperienced I am, and I hadn't even had a chance to practice before arriving at the event, but in the end it really didn't matter.*

*I walked into an alien environment barely knowing anyone there and by the end, I really felt like I belonged, which for someone who tends to be a bit shy like me, is amazing. I have no idea how you organised such a huge and seamless event with so much action going on but still such a real relaxed and open vibe, it was like nothing I've ever been to and 10 times bigger and more impressive than I was expecting!*

- Millie Ratcliff

*For us, the meeting exceeded all expectations...by far. As representatives of the old guard, the numerous young artists we met were across-the-board welcoming and sharing. We were treated like peers, which was the highest form of respect.*

*If the event was judged by the degree of panel jamming ALONE, it was one of the best I've ever seen. All the benches were filled - with artists who in many cases were unacquainted previously, doing on-the-spot swapping projects. Friendships were begun (maybe a few romances?<sup>3</sup>) which will last decades. The lectures and seminars were excellent, as were the documentaries. The layout, with the retail area at the entry was magical. The screen printers were terrific; what a bonus that was!*

*Your guests came away knowing that discipline and openness is required of serious practitioners within our craft. They got that by observing the planning and attitude exemplified by its organizers. Your team rocked.*

Mark Oatis

*Letterheads frankly just makes me want to cry with joy, a bunch of type n paint geeks at all levels sharing their love for the craft just blows my mind.*

- Robert Walker

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<sup>3</sup> If anyone can verify this then we'd love to know... ☺

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## Appendix: About the Letterheads

In 1975 a small group of sign painting apprentices in Denver, Colorado, got together to talk about lettering, signs, and the techniques used to design and produce them. Their approach to sharing knowledge and experience quickly spread among others practising the craft, and led to similar 'meets' elsewhere. These were originally based in the USA, but eventually spread around the world to Canada, Europe, New Zealand and Australia.

These founding Letterheads started a movement that continues to this day, grounded in an ethos that promotes teaching, learning and the passing of skills from one generation to the next. This underlying philosophy is summarised in the following extract from [The Beginnings of a Movement](#) by Mark Oatis (founding Letterhead) which was published in [Signs of the Times](#) in 1985.

*My feeling is that our movement will continue to grow and move forward provided the following happens:*

- 1. That all concerned remember that this "club" was started by apprentices, and that the enthusiasm and contributions of new, often less experienced members are its life blood.*
- 2. That the key word to remember at a meeting is participation. Bring something to show, trade or demonstrate... or at least, bring your kit and be prepared to get your hands "dirty". It's impossible to learn anything from a chair positioned over in the corner.*
- 3. Leave your ego at the door. Our clients should believe that we're "the best," but we know better. People who waste time trying to convince others of their genius stop growing.*
- 4. Finally, it's important that a formal organization - with officers, dues etc. - is never made of the Letterheads. As long as things remain somewhat spontaneous, dependent on individual effort and participation, things will remain fun. Give it a president and collect dues, and it becomes an establishment to rebel against... and sign artists are a typically rebellious lot, anyway.*

- Mark Oatis, founding Letterhead, Signs of the Times, May 1985

Mark and Rose's banner now offers their 2018 interpretation of the movement's ethos...



*Through practise might mastery each student gain.*

*Every master through life will a student remain.*