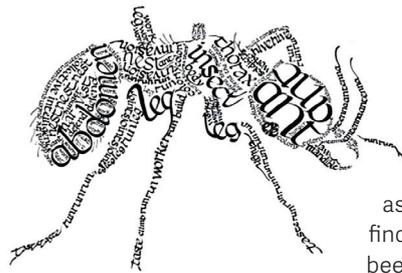


Lockdown learning surprise success

At Aboyne Academy, in the valley of the River Dee, halfway between the royal residence of Balmoral Castle and the oil city of Aberdeen, art teacher Mr David Woods was looking for ways to motivate learning for his students at home during the pandemic lockdowns.

Inevitably, setting inspiring tasks was becoming harder as the second lockdown wore on, but then his friend and beekeeping mentor Yvonne Davidson of Tarland Bee Group raised the subject of bee calligrams (an image made up of letters representing the complete image).

Preparing for her bee anatomy module exam, Yvonne had been looking for diagrams describing bee anatomy and came across a calligram of an ant's anatomy. What a great way to learn, she thought. But, search as she did, she couldn't find a single example of a bee calligram online.



So, Yvonne posed the idea to David, who had just joined the Tarland Bee Group: "With a small idea from me, Dave took it and created an amazing brief for the kids at school. I wanted to create a bee calligram even more than ever!"

Although at first, hardly any students understood what this strange word calligram meant, a glance at a finished article explained all. David Woods saw calligrams as an excellent form of interdisciplinary learning with multiple layers of appeal, but how would the students, aged 10–12, react?

The project proved hugely popular, more than 100 students created their bee calligram, and many said they found the task very calming. They also became intrigued by bees. The parents soon learned what this strange word meant too, and Yvonne was stopped in the village to talk about it, many hoping that their child's entry might win the prize – which was of course local Deeside honey, beautifully packaged by Yvonne, plus an introduction to beekeeping at the new Tarland apiary.

The winning entry is to become the logo of the Tarland Bee Group's new educational facility and the Scottish Beekeepers' Association has plans to display some calligrams at the next (2022) Royal Highland Show.

The varying skills of drawing an accurate insect outline, freehand calligraphy and a scientific understanding of honey bee anatomy and its terminology proved appealed to students with a range of different skillsets.



How to create a calligram David Woods

- 1 Choose an image of a worker honey bee.
- 2 Draw or trace your outline as lightly as possible using the image.
- 3 Decide what typeface you want to use.
- 4 Fill the relevant section of the honey bee worker with the relevant word. For instance, if you were writing a word in the top wing you would write forewing.
- 5 Repeat this process for the entire bee drawing until it is entirely made up of relevant words in the correct part of the bee. Double check this! Look back at the reference images.
- 6 Rub out any outlines.
- 7 Fill the text with ink.



Yvonne Davidson and David Woods in the Tarland Bee Group apiary