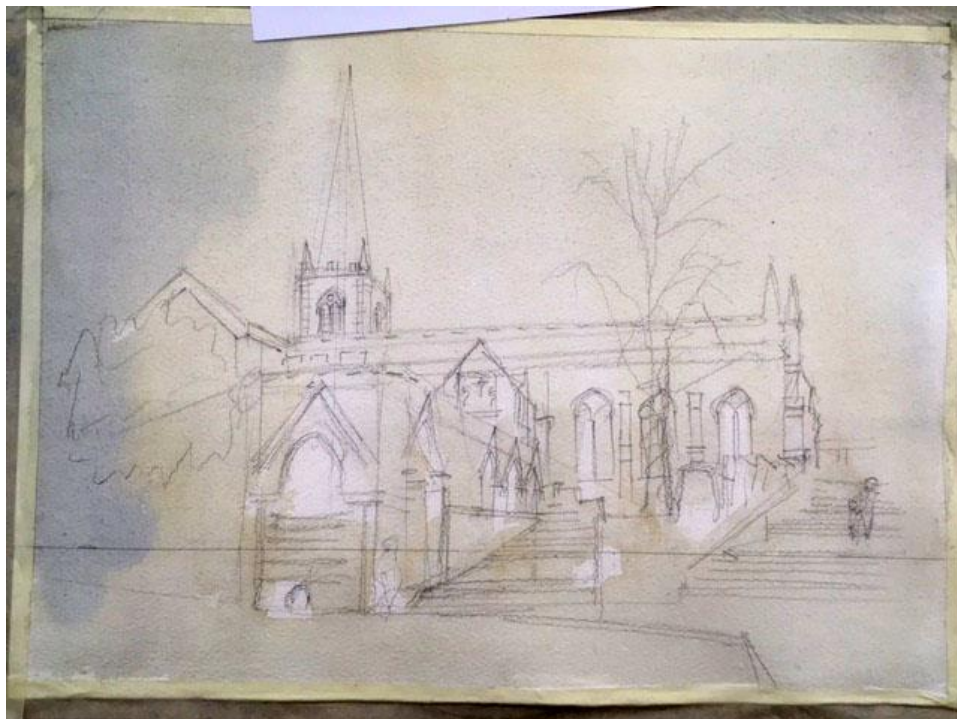


14 Sep 2021 - Peter French – Line and Wash

It was fabulous to be reunited after a prolonged time of separation, with chairs suitably distanced. Peter had prepared a sketch of St Catherine's Church Frome from a photo he had taken, before arriving and set it up on his easel. Every seat was occupied by members only for this first 'post covid ' demonstration.



Firstly, Peter encouraged keeping the sketch 'rough and ready' and not too much like an Architect's drawing. He began life as a disciplined draughtsman and cartographer working with accuracy. Soluble inks 'Pelikan 4001' are his preferred choice that offer more versatility than waterproof permanent inks. It quickly became apparent Peter uses a mix of Rotring calligraphy pens with a reservoir (expensive but will last a lifetime), mixture of brushes, trimmed Norfolk reeds, spit on his fingers to enable soluble inks to blend together. He began with a mix of Alizarin Crimson and Ochre on the spire, working from the top down. " Don't worry too much about accuracy, scribbled suggestions look plausible". The paper was a 2Rivers 300gsm which accepts line drawing work and washes in equal measure, unlike 'hot press' papers which will accept line work but not wash.





He regularly used his fingers and the handle of the brush to move the ink around, and often swapped between brush and pen. Never use black, use a mix of Ultramarine and Burnt sienna in different measures, to offer variety of warmer and cooler greys. 'Suggest what is there' was a liberating phrase, if you want something more accurate, take up photography, instead 'show your working' as you would in a maths exam! Keep your hands off the paper surface or your skin oils will interfere with the washes. Try to avoid hard edges, put water onto the paper first then use Soluble inks over the top to run into it. The Norfolk reed, cut twice creates an interesting point, as you rotate it, it alters the line width and shape. Use a gel pen or biro to cross hatch, and kitchen roll is useful to experiment with.

I use gouache occasionally white, red, blue and yellow which you can mix to give opaque coverage. I use Escoda or Jackson 505 brushes, if you use permanent inks wash out pens or brushes immediately with soap to create a point as it dries.

Masking fluid is best applied with a ruling pen or dip pen to create clean lines. Don't over-do it or put in too much detail. Reed pen doesn't offer the best line in the world, work quickly with fluidity, not too accurate, sketchy, apply ink and wash together. Don't put too intense colour on your background initially, don't make it too dark, and don't worry about leaving whites. I advise not to put in too many colours. Ultramarine blue and lemon yellow for green hues applied with a hog hair brush which I cut at 45 degrees makes a good stipple, followed by a flick!

Don't put straight lines at the bottom of buildings it looks terrible, let the paints run, and know when to stop so you don't over-do it.

Brooke Snell

September 2021



The completed picture

Some more of Peter's Paintings



