Notes on Painting

Leslie Kent
1890-1980

Editor's note:
While compiling a comprehensive catalogue of Leslie Kent's paintings based on his own records (one a chronological listing of paintings and their sizes, the other a record of paintings sold and to whom), it occurred to us that his thoughts and technical notes on the painting process itself would be of interest too.

When he put these notes together – in the 1960s – with the help of a temporary secretary to type up his pencil notes, he illustrated the text, where he could, with relevant images. This was fine with his early watercolours and drawings which he simply stuck into the album next to the typewriten text, but not possible with oils on canvas. Colour photography was not as readily available as it is today and so the few oil paintings illustrating his notes were either professionally taken black and white photographs or else the colour reproductions that happened to have been published as cards by Medici or Royles. So we have taken this opportunity to reproduce his written notes verbatim, because they are still relevant, but for this version to add some of his later paintings to the early drawings and watercolours, to illustrate more accurately what is being discussed in the text.
BHK and CHK, 2003

Contents

Notes from my Painting Diary and extracts from my Sketchbooks

Foreword
When I started to learn how to paint I kept pencil notes in a pocket book. These are becoming so faint I have decided to get them typed. While I am about it I will try to fill in some gaps and so make a more connected account.

Though the teaching of modern art is probably very different from what is indicated in these notes, it may be of some interest to my descendents to learn of past precepts and methods.

I have always enjoyed drawing and painting from as far back as I can remember: pencil and pen and water colour. I never took to crayons or pastels and did not try oils until Uncle Arthur (Tebby) let me have a go from his garden one day about 1911. Before that my water colours were most terrible and overworked, although I was not bad at drawing. Many of the sketches have been put in to record early efforts or memories of the past, and not because they have any intrinsic merit.

My first effort was a pictorial view of Harlyn Bay, near Padstow when staying with Philip and Sybil Kent, at Tressillion in 1910. But it was very poor. I continued to strive with occasional water colours (including a large 'Leeds from the Leads' in 1912) until the 1930s when the onset of Syringo-myelia made my hand control insufficient for the delicate brushwork of water colour. Since then I have stuck to oils and felt-pen studies.

In 1918 I became ill with a streptococcal infection, probably picked up in 1915 in France (see War Diary).

After treatment by Sir Kenneth Goadby I was to go away for six weeks to recuperate before returning to work at George Kent's, Luton.
"Go where you like but do not do anything strenuous."
"May I paint?"
"Yes, certainly – a nice restful pursuit."
(How little he knew of the battle of art!)
So off I went to St. Ives with my paints.
I stayed at Tregenna Castle; in those days quite a small hotel. I visited the local art gallery and noticed several landscapes and seascapes in oil, painted in a simple, bold way and signed 'Fred Milner'. I asked if he was a local artist and was directed to No.3 Piazza Studios, off the Porthmeor Road. I knocked on the door; a small, neat grey-haired man opened it and I went in.

It was a large converted sail-loft with many paintings on the walls, and large easels in the middle. I asked him if he gave painting lessons. He said "No", but noticing my uniform (Lieutenant, R.E.) he asked what brought me to St. Ives. I explained and he then asked: "have you any work with you?"
I said: "Just two or three little studies."

"well, bring them to me tomorrow morning at ten, I will tell you if I am willing to help you."

The outcome was that he arranged to give me a lesson every morning. I was to go out and paint something each afternoon and bring it next day for criticism.

Harlyn Bay. My first water colour from nature, 1910.

Now for my notes

13.5.1918 Oil painting – Mr F Milner

1 Colours: Newmans are best, Cambridge are very good. Ordinary flake white is lead white and turns Cadmium black. New Flake White (Cambridge Oil Colours) is free of lead and is all right.

2 Use a very simple palette. Six colours will usually be enough for any subject. Set the palette treble to bass in colours like this:

3 The three primary colours are: Red, Blue and Yellow. Any two together make the biggest contrast to the third.

Blue + Yellow = Green v Red
Red + Blue = Purple v Yellow
Yellow + Red = Orange v Blue

Greys and neutral tints can be got by a combination of the three primary colours: say, yellow ochre, light red and french blue. You can often get good greys by stirring together the mixed colours on your palette, then scraping them up with a knife. This can be put aside on the corner of the palette for use.

4 Starting a picture – One way
a Draw in the composition with charcoal; draw freely but be accurate as regards important features.
b Dust off surplus charcoal then go over the charcoal out-line with burnt sienna and turpentine, accentuating and rubbing in low tones. Don't worry about the light tones and high-lights.

c Lay in the main areas with paint getting the colours and tone values as true to nature as you can.

If your picture is getting 'tight' or losing its broad unity, get it into a good old mess and then pull it together again.

Don't regard brushes as implements for painting with, but merely as a means for applying paint to the canvas. A palette knife or anything else will do equally well if you can get the effect you want with it.

Always keep in mind the effect you are trying to produce.

From Uncle Arthur's garden at Heybridge 1911. My first oil painting from nature.

Now some notes in Milner's writing:
'Always have a clear idea as to why you want to make a sketch. If you don't know no-one else will.
'Have one idea in a picture. One king, and a queen and courtiers if you like, but not two kings.
'Hit hard with your one idea; detail is only necessary so long as it helps the main composition.
'A boxer gives a knock-out blow to finish his opponent and does not just tickle him.
'Use as few colours as possible. It is better to use a few properly than to misuse many. At the same time do not stint yourself if you feel you could do better with more.
'Use plenty of colour and big brushes. Be bold yet careful.'

14.5.1918 Composition, etc.
Try to have at least three planes in your picture, eg. forground, distance and sky. Two planes only are never satisfying to the eye. Do not let the three planes be all of equal size or almost equal size. Also avoid equality of spacing of features in the landscape, eg. do not have equal gaps between the trees. In outdoor work go first for the most fleeting effect in your composition: eg. put in the sky first if that is rapidly changing.

Half close your eyes to get a clear idea of the **relative tones** of the different parts of your picture and always keep these firmly in mind. They may change considerably during the process of the picture, particularly if you are taking more than one day at it.

In the ordinary way, unless you are merely making a quick sketch of an effect, do not carry the picture too far at the first sitting but just get in the chief masses and the proper relative tones.

It helps you at your next sitting if you leave a little of the colours you have been using at the side of your palette.

In order to get harmony you can sometimes mix a little of the colour which represents the main key tone of the picture into all the other parts of the picture. Do not smear the colour about the canvas: get plenty of colour on your brush and then put it on firmly, accurately with one touch, then leave it alone.

15.5.18.
Lights get warmer with distance; darks get colder, eg red sunsets and blue sky or blue distance.

Look out for reflected lights on the shady side of things.

A good ground for sky is yellow ochre and white and possibly a touch of rose madder. The sky can be worked on to this when it comes right. A good ground for a blue sky is red.

Always beware of the tendency to get down into a drab, dull, lifeless key.

Do not use Cadmium if you are using vermilion (usually use the former, not the latter).

Even in the early stages of a picture it may sometimes be desirable to put in your main highlights (possibly only temporarily) so as to give you a key for the other tones. This applies particularly when you are painting on a dark canvas or on top of a previous picture.

Stick to big brushes as long as possible; never get down to sables etc. except for a few final touches.

The chief essentials in order to get a harmonious and pleasing picture are to get the broad tones correct relative to one another.

Do not niggle up all parts of the picture with petty details. Put a certain amount of detail into your main interest (your king) if you like but for the rest broad tones are quite sufficient and help to direct the eye to the main interest.

Beware of getting distant darks too dark. Watch the values always.

The eye, or at all events my eye, is apt to reproduce colours colder than they are in nature.

Varnishing is not at all necessary and in any case it should not be done until several weeks after the picture has been finished. Mastic varnish should be used, not copal varnish.

Oil paintings often look well in a white mount and narrow frame. Some look well in all white. Silver frames are also sometimes good. Gilt frames do not by any means suit all pictures.

Keep dark masses in foreground in **transparent** colour. Little or no white.

'White' clouds will be lower in key (yellower or warmer) than white in foreground, eg wave crests or foam.

Do not get clouds **woolly**, or too hard and flat – **tinny**. Clouds must be definate in form and have character and yet be soft

Remember the sky is a dome – 'inverted bowl'. Clouds overhead are nearer than clouds on horizon.

Beware against getting the greens of the fields or trees too conventional in colour. Watch the values all the time.

If you get the **values** right, the **colours** right, and the **form** approximately correct, the sketch will look quite respectable even if no refinements or details are put in.

Do not get blue sky too crude a blue, or too low in tone. (There's a good deal of green and grey in most blue sky.)

Maldon, Essex 1911.

Carbis Bay, near St Ives, 1918.

Do not get the colours on your palette muddy. Always keep fresh colour and plenty of it. Clean your brushes frequently. Do not attempt to go on if your whole palette is covered in mixed colours: stop and clean it.

- Watch the values.
- Have plenty of pluck.
- Use clean fresh colour.
- Put it on firmly.
- Always put in the essentials first and leave it alone.
- Be carefully careless.
- As a rule, paint darks thinly and lights thickly.

Sky

Do not get skies too light in general tone or they won't join up with the rest of the picture and destroy the unity of pattern (or words to that effect). Leonard Richmond in the '*Artist*'.

Light showing through trees should be lower in tone than the surrounding sky. (Otherwise it jumps forward.)

Incidental figures etc., need only be put in in the broadest essentials. In the case of a sheep for instance – if you get the light on its back right, and the shadow beneath it right, it will look like a sheep even if its shape is merely an oblong rectangle.

Remember the importance of 'losing and finding' skylines and edges.

Glimpse of Poole Harbour (aka Upper Reaches, October Morning) 1969. (Detail)

Trees

Look at them broadly and get their main character rather than an accumulation of leaves. Each has its own big characteristic by which you can tell it, even at a distance.

Take care in the drawing of the trunk and branches – the form and swing of them is as improtant as the bones and muscles in the human figure.

The edges against the sky are difficult to get just right. If you look hard you see the leaves clear-cut, but if painted like that the tree would appear harsh and stiff as if cut out of metal.
NB. How delicately Corot does the edges of his trees.

A good way is to draw in the form of the tree with a half-tint composed of yellow ochre, rose madder, cobalt and white. Let the line be wide encroaching right into the sky space, then when painting in the sky paint it into the half-tone, and when painting the tree paint its edges also into the half-tone while wet, losing and finding the edge. If it gets too muzzy in parts it can be easily picked up again.

Sketch c.1919.

Late Autumn. The garden at Bonds Cay painted from the studio.

2.2.1920

24"x20" is a good size for a (smallish) picture – landscape.

This is a size which you can paint to a finish direct from nature, or it can be painted from a sketch in the studio.

If you paint on a cut piece of canvas allow about 1½" all round (beyond the 24"x20") for stretching and framing.

Squaring-up

If you want to enlarge a small sketch, it is best to do it by 'squaring-up'. This can be done by ruling pencil lines on the sketch, say 2" apart in both directions forming 2" squares. But this spoils the sketch. A better way is to mark 2" squares on a sheet of glass with pen or diamond (I keep two such sheets of glass, one 20"x16" and one 14"x10"). This glass can be laid over the sketch you wish to enlarge. If the sketch is say 12"x10", and you want to enlarge to 24"x20" (ie twice the size), then you would draw in 4" squares on the larger canvas and so on in proportion.

Eg 18"x14" to 24"x20" – 18/24 = 1.33.

so 1" becomes 1.33"

2" becomes 2.66" – so draw squares 2.66" or again

18"x14" to 30"x25"

1' becomes 1.7"

2" becomes 3.4" – so draw squares 3.4" or again

14"x10" to 20"x16"

1' becomes 1.42"

2" becomes 2.84".

Knitting Girl 1932.
The sitter is clearly Margaret.

Note

A simple palette for ordinary landscape work:

(White)

1 Yellow Ochre
2 Burnt Sienna
3 Rose Madder
4 French Blue
5 Lemon Yellow
6 Viridian
7 Vermilion or Cadmium
8 Cobalt

The first four are quite sufficient for simple landscapes which have no very bright colours.

Black is a useful colour in lieu of blue, particularly for grey pictures.

A simple palette helps to give a harmonious picture.
(I now get my colours, brushes and canvases from C. Roberson & Co. Canvas no. 117 preferred).

A fine, simple composition by Sir Charles Holmes (LHK's copy).

3.2.1920

Raw Umber is also a good colour to use for roughing in your main composition; and it is not so 'hot' as burnt sienna.

A 'rigger' is a fine long haired sable – useful if you want to do accurate drawing of detail, or for fine lines in a picture, eg. rigging of ships.

Referring to yesterday's notes on colours – Vermilion and Cadmium can be used together, but not mixed. If you can avoid using both however, all the better.

Mahlstick or hand-rest; useful in doing large pictures, or if your hand is not steady (like mine today!)

I did not have any more lessons from Mr Milner after 1920, but saw him frequently on my visits to St. Ives.

Mill Pool, Bembridge.

In 1935 H. Septimus Power, the Australian artist, was in England and gave me advice.

H.S.Power – 1935 – From my diary
Composition or Design
Consider design or pattern well before you start. It is the pattern of light and shade which makes or mars a picture.

Colour is the mere musical accompaniment to the design. It may be pleasant, or unpleasant in itself; but however pleasant it cannot make a picture if design is lacking.

Strive for a bold or striking design. It is no good recording a view – a slice of landscape – just as everybody sees it. A coloured photograph can do that.

The genius of the true artist enables him to see and portray hidden beauties which are missed by the casual observer.

It helps to avoid unfortunate designs if you mark the centre lines on your canvas at the begining and see that no accent coincides with them.

As regards light and shade, don't get it half and half (either in placing or in quantity) strive for inequalities. Something like three-quarters of the area dark and one quarter light – or vice-versa.

Usually dark predominating looks richer and the lights tell more forcibly.

NB. Give time to **consider** the best design before starting.

Small Boat Anchorage, Totnes 1958.

The thought or concentration of your artistic brainpower, given before starting, deciding on the design and the effect you wish to achieve is more important to success or failure than anything else.

Having roughed in your composition in charcoal, go over it in paint, drawing loosely with turps and a smallish brush, to fix it. Use, say, brown for foreground objects and blue for distance.

Then go straight for the main interest or chief light and shade effect – the heart of the picture – and put it in strongly and loosely, using palette knife, or brush or what you will.

Don't worry about covering the canvas; don't paint in the whole sky, until the essence of your picture has been achieved. Then work forward to completion, keeping all parts going on and not completing one part in advance.

Keep the whole broad and loose, clean and bright.

Watch relative tones and avoid too much detail.

Don't mix the colour too much on the palette, and **draw** with the paint brush; don't pat it or tickle it on the canvas.

Don't draw a subject and then paint it. Forget what the subject really is, regard it as a pattern of flat shapes of certain tones and colours; put these down, true in key and then **draw the subject out of them with the brush** (ie. by the variations of tone, colour and accents). This is the great secret to get a painterlike picture, with charm or mystery.

Forget what it is you are painting: regard a head as a rock of odd shape with some accidental lumps and holes (nose and eyes). Smack it in broadly in true tones (values) and colour as if it were a brick. Then with the brush draw the variations or niceties. (Don't carry too far – keep loose).

Draw the head **out** of the paint. Don't draw a head (or anything else) and then paint it.

Forget local colour – the fact that we know fields are green or flesh is pink only hinders us in registering the subject in true light and shade as affected by the prevailing light. Actually in a head (or anything shaped or rounded) the true local colour only occurs at the junction of shadow and light in the rounded surface.

When you start the painting, get true the colour and value of adjacent tones, in some important part of the subject, ie. the main interest. And proceed all the time matching tone with tone, in each small area.

Don't dab on paint – draw with the paint brush keeping it in flowing contact with the canvas, by following the form (of any one tone). Use clean, fresh paint, not mixed too much on the palette. Wipe brush when changing colour (or use a clean, fresh brush). Also 'hatch' areas with the brush – to and fro like a pencil.

Don't repaint darks; paint them true and leave them alone or they lose their depth and luminosity.

'Watching edges' means watch adjoining tones for trueness. Keep actual join (edge) loose and fluid – 'losing and finding' it.

The Breakfast Room (aka Interior) 1948.
Margaret in the kitchen, through the door.

Other advice

I joined the Artists' Society (Langham Sketch Club) in 1932 and in 1936 one of the members, Edwin Byatt, gave me some hints.

Edwin Byatt, 1936 – From my Diary

1. Filbert brushes are the best for general work.
2. Use linseed oil (only) for a medium.
3. Use much **more** colour. Slam it on – spoon the colour up with the brush. Sometimes mix the colour **on** the canvas.

Approaching Rainstorm.

4. Don't be frightened of accidentals or of little touches of pure colour here and there.

I am too timid and too much the slave of a rigid palette of three or four colours. I use the same ones all the time too much.

Arthur Hayward , St. Ives 1938

1. A nice board for painting on is a 3-ply panel covered (or primed) with gold size. (Gold size is amber coloured and gives a nice tone to work on.) (NB. Halliday's gaboon mahogany sized with gold size must be tried.)
2. Another way of preparing wood panels is to get gesso medium, put some in a cup or vessel, add a lump of white distemper, warm it and stir it up and put it on to a wood panel while still warm.
3. Try working without medium. If New Flake White is too stiff (consistency) try Newmans Flake White consistency C.
4. I am inclined to paint too much in flat tones; too much stirred on palette. Try mixing colours more on the canvas. And don't paint so horizontally (Brush strokes); be freer and try painting skies and seas vertically – or after putting on colour with horizontal strokes, niggle the brush vertically up and down across it.
5. Note Ernest Proctor's method of painting a sky (against the light) – touches of very pale viridian and white (or possibly blue, yellow and white) intermingled with apparently vermilion and white – giving very pale pucy colour. Get out of the habit of laying muddy colour in flat tones. And don't be too tied down to same old three or four colours. Be a bit more enterprising in colours and brushwork – not to mention subjects, e.g. the way they are placed on the canvas.
6. Watch the edges and the insides will take care of themselves.

John A. Park, St. Ives, 1939

1. Lay down the main construction in charcoal, feeling for it firmly and marking the essential features. But don't worry about any detail.
2. Rub in the main tones thinly with turps, boldly marking in the low tones and darkest darks (in foreground) with full strength of paint.

Sailing Days.

3. Go for the main features first and work outwards from them. Keep full strength from the first.
4. While you are painting one thing be watching the next thing, i.e. the next thing to it to observe relative tone and colour. The whole time watch the relation (in tone and colour) of one thing with another. Forget local colour entirely. Just observe apparent tone and colour in the prevailing light.
5. Don't worry about 'keying it up' and don't get chalky. Don't be afraid of colour and be more dashing and experimental in the use of colours. Don't be afraid of getting full darks – even black.

Thoughts after Royal Academy Varnishing Day, 1941

1. It is strength that tells if you want to be noticed. The quiet works are used to show off the strong ones, e.g. how Dugdale uses me!
2. Interesting colour or colour pattern tells more than tone or chiaroscuro, e.g. Dunlop.
3. Dunlop at his best is very good. His palette knife technique gives both strength and light. His colour is nearly always subtle and very nice. Creams, greys, many pinks and viridian greens.
4. Laura Knight, nude, is very well done. (The tired model).
5. Tidiness and finish are not in the least necessary. It is feeling, not precision which is wanted.

July 1943 – Arthur Friedenson, Corfe Castle, Highways, East Street

1. I paint a bit dry.
2. Blue sky rather a crude blue. It can be toned (when already painted) by rubbing over medium in which is mixed a little black.
3. To get more freedom, strength and juicyness try preparing canvas with medium mixed with a few pure colours – cobalt in sky parts, yellow ochre or raw sienna, viridian, golden ochre etc. Place them judiciously (e.g. no bright green in sky area) and paint into them while wet. Painting into opposite colours helps – warm into cool and vice versa.

Leaving Harbour (Bembridge) 1970.

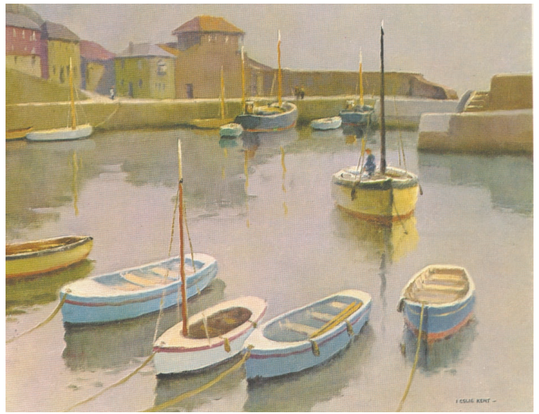
4. Pastels are useful for trying out alterations on dry sketches. (They dust off easily.) Or one can put glass over and paint on that.
5. Try mixing colours more on canvas.
6. Watching the edges means getting delicacy in the edges, avoiding rawness, losing and finding them.
7. Scumbling is useful. Scumbling means brushing on transparent colour and medium over dry paint and then partly brushing off in order to improve the tone of a passage.
8. Dragging, i.e. pulling nearly dry colour lightly over a tone with a brush (very lightly) so that only a little adheres to the projecting roughness of surface. It is very useful in places e.g. for giving life, light and texture to a dull passage.
9. The general tone of my skies is rather too warm.

Frederic Whiting, 1947

1. Don't mix paint so much. Flick it lightly together then straight to canvas. Or any mixing you do, do on the canvas, e.g. a deep shadow or dark – flick on red first and paint blue into it.
2. Foreground shadows – very blue at edges (with blue sky) warmer and paler inside and more local colour in foreground.
3. Paint more with broken touches – putting it on instead of laying it on in flat tones.
4. Look for accents of dark (or light) in large masses, e.g. trees, to give liveliness.

5. In the masses or features of a subject, e.g. trees, either start by putting in lively nervous touches and accents and then broaden them before finishing, i.e. 'pulling it together' or vice versa – namely broad tones first then enlivened.

The Summer House, Bonds Cay.



Morning at Mevagissey 1971.

An Anecdote

Munnings, admiring his own R.A. landscape:

"and to think there are some damned asses who say I can't paint a landscape."

Adrian Stokes, meditating on a couch nearby:

"Never mind Munnings, there are some damned asses who think that you can!"

Whiting, 1947 – Doing a portrait head

1. Mark with charcoal (or paint if you are sure enough of yourself) size of head and positions of eyes, nose and mouth. Get these accurately, allowing for foreshortening if head is turned or tipped.
2. Put tone round head, indicate with paint hair, neck, shoulders.
3. Mark size and shape of eyes, nose, mouth and ears more precisely.
4. Rub in warm half-tone over face.
5. Go for modelling of half-tones and lights. Do dark tones last.
6. Model broadly, looking for greenish, greyish or bluish tones in shadows and for reflected lights.
7. Give rounded effect by keeping edges – especially outer edge – soft, losing and finding; avoid hard edges between darks and lights.
8. Keep details till end, e.g. highlights on pupils of eyes, and of nose, lower lip. Don't get whites of eyes too white. Keep to modelling as long as possible. Don't try for likeness too early.

Self-portrait c.1943.

Harold Workman, 1948

1. Most of my ordinary work shows no vision or new viewpoint. Too humdrum. It is the same stuff that has been done again and again.
2. Try for bold pattern and broken colour. Surfaces should not be flat washes but should have touches of warm and cool colour in them – touches of pink and blue and yellow in the grey masses, etc.

Hesketh Hubbard, 1949

To get mildew spots off etches and watercolours:

Apply Milton to each spot with a small soft brush, then blot, and then go round again several times until spot disappears or nearly. Then set aside for a few days and if necessary, repeat. For drawings use Hydrogen Peroxide.

Norman Wilkinson, 1949

1. To keep hair of brushes from spreading: after washing, wrap each brush flat and tight in a piece of toilet tissue, then twist the paper to hold it.
2. Use a brush-washing grid (with lid) and turps (or paraffin). Then lightly wash in soap and water and wrap flat brushes.

Emile Cammaerts, 1950

Don't paint obvious picturesque viewpoints. Choose something unobvious and see what you can get out of it by observation and imagination (or aesthetic instinct).

Sailing on the Arun (sketch) (aka Sailing in the Harbour) 1948.

Edward Swann, 1957 – (At Luton Artists Preview)

I tend to get my foregrounds too cut-out and assertive. (I think this is caused by my anxiety to bring the foreground forward, to get good recession and true values.)

Let foregrounds be looser – "brush the paint to and fro", overlapping and melting areas together.

Don't have all parts of picture equally interesting; simplify; get interesting design; omit inessentials. But put extra force into the most significant form – the thing that made you want to paint that subject – the 'King' in fact.

Detail of Sailing on the Arun.

There is a saying: "Good shapes deserve good colour".

Mediums – don't use much – or fancy ones. Linseed oil and a little turpentine best. Don't go 'Turping it in'.

Work at all parts of the composition – keep it all going. Brush it in, brush it back; melt it all together, and simplify, but with one emphasis on the main interest. E.g. Never say: "Now I'm going to **do** the house!" – or boat, etc.

Thoughts on the Royal Academy

Most paintings are too 'full' (of objects or incidents) for me. They are restless. (This particularly applies to John Bratby and his colour is hot and awful. Mrs. Bratby is a bit better.)

The ones that appeal to me most are simple with dignified design, good tone and usually fairly low in key.

Rodney Burn gets a lovely grey-blue in sky and water, e.g. Chateau Gaillard.

Battrick's Bakery, Corfe Castle.

On the Deben, near Woodbridge 1965.

Blue Pool, Wareham. One of several versions.

Frames.

French frames of my tone and colour are safe. So are Savage type - but very few are white or nearly white.

Light frame on low tone painting and darkish frame on light painting (i.e. contrast) still seems best.

St Ives Harbour – Morning.

On reading through these diary notes, my weaknesses are all too clear. In summary form, my future endeavours should be:

1. Try for more telling compositions.
2. Use more variety of colour.
3. Mix colour less on palette.
4. Paint more loosely with broken colour.
5. Keep all parts of the work going forward all the time.
6. Get unity by melting features into one another by free brushwork.

PALETTES

I have always been interested in what colours one should choose to make up one's palette and I give below the colours used by various artists. (This does not mean that they did not sometimes use other colours.)

Harold Workman
Alizarin Crimson
Prussian Blue
Yellow Ochre
Burnt Umber

Leonard Boden
(a palette for nudes)
Pale Cadmium
Vermillion
Alizarin Crimson
Ultramarine
Black
or
Zinc Yellow
Light red
Alizarin Crimson
Cerulean Blue
Viridian
Ivory Black

R. O. Dunlop
Yellow Ochre
Burnt Sienna
Cadmium Yellow
Rose Madder
Viridian
Cobalt
Ultramarine
Deep Burnt Umber

Prof. Laurence Gowing
Yellow Ochre
Venetian Red
Indian Red
Cadmium Red
Cadmium Yellow Pale
Burnt Sienna
Viridian
Cobalt
Windsor Blue
Blue Black
(Raw Sienna, Alizarin, Crimson)

Augustus John
(for a portrait)
Crimson Lake
Ultramarine
Cadmium
Viridian

John Constable
White
Pale Cadmium
Raw Umber
Burnt Sienna
Black
Sap Green
Emerald Green
Blue (unspecified)
Lake
Vermilion
(This list is given at the Albert Hall, Colchester, where they have Constable's actual palette – or one of them.)

Sir Arnesby Brown
(According to Hugh Boycott Brown, who had lessons from him)
Transparent Golden Ochre
Aureolin Yellow
Rose Madder
Chrome Orange (4)
Burnt Sienna
Raw Sienna
Cobalt
French Ultramarine
Viridian
Ivory Black
(Not all these would be used in every picture)

Rowland Fisher
(basic palette)
Cobalt
Yellow Ochre
Light Red
('The Holy Trinity')
Black (ivory)

Renoir
Chrome Yellow
Naples Yellow
Yellow Ochre
Raw Sienna
Vermilion
Crimson Lake
(? or Rose Madder)
Veronese Green
Emerald Green
Ultramarine Blue
Cobalt Blue

Leslie Kent
(usual palette)
Yellow Ochre
Burnt Sienna
Cobalt Blue
Cadmium Yellow
Viridian
Rose Madder
and sometimes a little Ultramarine
Light red
Naples Yellow
Vermilion, as needed

Lelie Kent's suggested ways to produce any desired colour from his own preferred palette.

Brief biography

Perhaps at this point I should explain about my main (non-art) activities.

I left Bedales School in 1908 and early in 1909 went out to South Africa to see my brother Geoffrey who was a Lieutenant in the !st K.O.Y.L.I. stationed at Wynberg near Cape Town. I did a trip to the Victoria Falls but as far as I can recollect did practically no drawings, being busy with my camera.

During 1910-12 I was at Leeds University (where I painted 'Leeds from the Leads'). In 1913 I passed the A.M.I.C.E. examination and joined George Kent Ltd. Then came the 1914-1918 War.

I was already a Lieutenant in the Territorial Royal Engineers so was called up and after doing coast defence work on the East Coast I got to France in March 1915. There I did a few pencil sketches (see War Diary, now in Imperial War Museum). I was called back to Luton later in 1915 to help with shell fuse production.

There were no opportunities for art work until 1918 when I went to St. Ives as explained at the beginning of this record.

In 1919 I spent several weeks in a nursing home having a rest cure; after a virus infection, where I did a lot of copy-drawing.

I got married in 1921 and continued working at Luton, doing painting in my spare time.

In February 1930 Margaret and I went to New Zealand and Australia for the firm, going out by Panama, and I painted at weekends and after returning home in October (via Suez) I had a small exhibition of my overseas paintings in the Works.

In 1931. encouraged by Bernard Adams, I exhibited for the first time in London at the R.O.I.

This led on to my first one-man show in 1932 at Walker's Gallery in Bond Street.

I have exhibited at London Exhibitions every year since 1931. (R.A. 1934, and several times since.)

I exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1936, 1938 and 1939 but did not send again because of the expense.

I also exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy in 1936 and once or twice later.

In 1938 I was elected a Member of the Society of Marine Artists and in the following year I became a Member of the Royal Society of British Artists.

I was elected to the Council of the Royal Society of British Artists in 1940.

In 1941 I was elected a Member of the St. Ives Society of Artists and I also exhibited at the Royal Academy – 'Studland Heath'.

In 1945 I retired from George Kent Ltd and became a professional painter (age 55).

In 1953 I had one-man shows at the Royal Society of British Artists Galleries in London and at Worthing Art Gallery, and in 1958 I had another one-man show at the RBA Gallery.

In 1960 I resigned from the Council of the RBA owing to my difficulty in attending meetings. In 1963 I had another one-man show at the RBA Galleries and at Luton Art Gallery and in the same year I was appointed Trustee of the Royal Society of British Artists.

In 1964 I resigned from the St. Ives Society of Artists because of the difficulty of sending works so far and in 1965 I was appointed Honorary Vice President of the St. Ives Society of Artists.

19.9.1967.

Today I finished my 1,000th oil painting.

Where are they now?

Sold	567
Presents	122
Hanging at Bonds Cay	40
On Exhibition	2
In Studio and storeroom	64
Destroyed	205
	1,000

In September 1968 I had my fifth London one-man show, again at the RBA Galleries.

Leslie and Margaret in the studio, March 1970.

Bonds Cay, Radlett, showing the studio window on left. Taken by Barrie on 15 June 1970, my 80th birthday.